

Reflecting on 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

November 15, 2020

Introduction: In the first chapter of 2 Thessalonians, Paul reminds the church about the second coming of Christ and describes a period that some call The Great Reckoning. Through the course of our study, we can identify four truths about this Great Reckoning:

1. At the Great Reckoning, God will reverse the unjust state of current affairs. (5-6)
2. At the Great Reckoning, God will bring relief to those who suffer for their faith. (7a)
3. At the Great Reckoning God will bring eternal judgment on those who have not accepted the free offer of salvation. (7b-10)
4. The Great Reckoning should motivate believers to live up to their calling and act upon the Lord's promptings to do good. (11-12)

The Big Idea of the message is this: *Christians should take refuge in the fact that at the Great Reckoning, our just God will make all things right, bringing relief to believers and judgment to those who reject him.*

Up for Discussion:

1. If you were preaching/teaching this passage, which part of the message would you have spent some more time on? Why?
2. The Thessalonian church was being persecuted for their faith. While our problems as Christians in this country fall short of persecution, in what ways are Christians marginalized and/or disadvantaged because of our faith?
3. The premise of today's message is that Paul's teaching on the Great Reckoning intends to comfort suffering believers. Which of the following objections would you have included in your return letter to Paul if you were part of the Thessalonian church?

Question continues below.

- *We know Christ is coming, but how does that make today's suffering easier?*
- *How long do we have to wait for Jesus to come back? Not knowing makes this less of an immediate comfort?*
- *But if God could stop all of this suffering right now, why doesn't he?*

Now spend some time talking through these objections. Try to answer them from this text and other verses in the Bible.

4. This passage starts with the theme of God's righteous judgment (v. 5). How is God righteous when he condemns people to eternal judgment? Is it fair for God to do this?

5. In verses 11-12, Paul prays for two works in the Thessalonian church. First, he prays that God would make the Thessalonians worthy of God's calling, and second, Paul asks that they would follow through with every good work that God prompts them to do. Which of these two is more challenging for you in your walk with the Lord?

6. This passage presents two categories of people: Those who will be comforted and those who will be judged. From this text, what is the difference between the two? Or to ask it a different way, how does someone find his/her way into each group? (Hint: Consider at the descriptions in verses 8 and 10.)

7. How should the realities of this text motivate us to share the gospel with those we love? Who are you going to share the good news with this week?