

“For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me.”

“For it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity* is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:15,16)

*The Greek word translated “necessity” here, carries the idea of an aching intensity to the point of distress that constrains action.

WE LEFT OFF OUR LAST SERMON – RAN OUT OF TIME – shortly after the reading of a lengthy sentence in expounding **Psa. #2**; to wit: “Therefore, and in light of the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and God the Son, and the King of Zion, (i.e., the Head of the Church) – the Church has some advice for the kings and judges of the earth, referred to in **Psa. 2:10**; to wit: ***“Thou (i.e., the Lord Jesus) shalt break them”*** (i.e., all the heathen and all the people, and all the kings, and all the rulers of the earth – see, **Psa. 2:1,2**) – ***“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psa. 2:9.***

Breaking them with a rod of iron, speaks of absolute, inflexible rule and law, without exception, without fear or favor, applicable to all; and such is the government of our Lord Jesus Christ – both presently, and throughout eternity, AS TO THE WICKED, alive and dead. ***“But now we see NOT YET*** – (i.e., it’s there, we just don’t see it yet) – ***all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower,***” – (i.e., for a short period of some 32 or 33 years when he lived on earth in a lowly, servile condition) – ***“We see Jesus who was made for a little while lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, (but now) crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man (whose name is written in Heaven).” Heb. 2:8,9.***

“Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psa. 2:9. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel – speaks of the ease and thoroughness with which the Great God Almighty can and does – in time and throughout eternity – ***“DESTROY”*** the wicked. It is called ***“EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION”*** – a strange concept – dreadful to consider; to wit:

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking VENGEANCE on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” (2 Thes. 1:7-9)

Note that this EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION – whatever it is, exactly – is a part at least of the punishment, recompense, and tribulation that the Lord Jesus pours out in time and throughout eternity, in fiery VENGEANCE upon those who trouble His people on earth.

It is said to be *“a RIGHTEOUS thing with God”* thus to pour out His VENGEANCE, – His *“EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION”* – upon the wicked BECAUSE THEY TROUBLED HIS DEAR PEOPLE while they were alive upon earth; to wit: *“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.”* 2 Thes. 1:6.

Beloved, this is indeed a glorious passage of Scripture, the contemplation and diligent study of which guarantee rest and relaxation of mind and spirit; as Dr. Fausset puts it, *“loosening the tension, relaxing the strings of endurance now so tightly drawn.”* *“REST with us,”* says Paul. And that word *“REST”*, says Strong’s book, carries with it suggestions of ease of mind, relaxation of spirit, liberty and relief from tension.

The word translated *“REST”* here is used only two other times in Scripture, and both are used in **Second Corinthians**, after Paul had been in serious trouble in Asia, and describes for the church in Corinth how he survived the ordeals there; to wit:

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” (2 Cor. 1:5,6)

Beloved, Paul is here touching the main spring of the mystery of our most holy faith; to wit: The VENGEANCE of God is one of the primary attributes of God, if not THE main attribute of God; and not VENGEANCE in the abstract, but VENGEANCE, or RECOMPENSE, or PAY-BACK, for what evil, reprobate humans did in persecuting God’s messengers and representatives on earth. God’s VENGEANCE – as so defined – is front and center in time and throughout all eternity. These concepts are well described at **Romans 12:19**: *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves”* – (to avenge yourselves is to usurp that which is God’s exclusive prerogative; to avenge yourselves is to trample blindly and ignorantly and crudely into a holy domain where you have no right to be) – *“but rather give place unto wrath:”* – (i.e., step aside, get out of the way, give God who is the Great Avenger, plenty of room to operate); *“for it is written, VENGEANCE IS MINE”*; – (i.e., vengeance is mine, only mine, always mine, exclusively mine and eternally mine; I am jealous of my right to avenge; it is a matter of RIGHTEOUSNESS with me); *“I WILL REPAY, saith the Lord”*. (**Romans 12:19**) – (i.e., I guarantee it, depend upon it; another attribute of mine called HOLINESS or RIGHTEOUSNESS is also involved here; to wit: *“Seeing it is a RIGHTEOUS thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.”* 2 Thes. 1:6).

But WHERE IS IT WRITTEN, which Paul is quoting the Lord as saying, *“VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY?”* Answer: **Deuteronomy, Chapter 32**; to wit: Having just said, *“And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking (persecuting) of his sons and daughters,”* (Dt. 32:19), the Lord God said, *“TO ME BELONGETH VENGEANCE, and RECOMPENCE; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste...I WILL RENDER VENGEANCE to mine enemies,”* – (i.e., those who persecute my people on earth) – *“and will*

reward them that hate me;” – (i.e., those who demonstrate their hatred for me by persecuting my people on earth) “...*Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries,*” – (i.e., those who manifest that they are God’s adversaries by becoming His people’s adversaries) – “*and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.*” Deut. 32:35,41,43.

In **Second Corinthians, Chapter 1**, Paul details his troubles in Asia, and suggests that such will be the experience – more or less – of all God’s Elect on earth – ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH, – the wrath of God IN VENGEANCE will be poured out in time and throughout eternity upon the non-Elect; to wit:

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.”
(2 Cor. 1:8-10)

NOW SEE HOW the remarkable passage of Scripture in the **First Chapter of Second Thessalonians** connects the VENGEANCE OF GOD inseparably to the PERSECUTORS OF GOD’S ELECT for time and throughout eternity; to wit:

“And to you who are troubled,” (i.e., by the persecutors of God’s Elect, so viciously as to require supernatural comforting for the righteous in this world, and “*everlasting punishment*” for the persecutors in the next) – I say, “*And to you who are troubled, REST*” – (i.e., find supernatural comfort in reflecting, as we do, says Paul, upon that certain time “*when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire TAKING VENGEANCE on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (i.e., vengeance is taken on them that know not God and obey not the gospel, which is a redundancy; and the meaning is seen in the passage that says, “*he that KNOWETH GOD heareth us*”[1 Jn. 4:6]; ergo, they that refuse to hear US are those who KNOW NOT GOD – and they that refuse to hear US are those that obey not the gospel); to wit: “*We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*” 1 Jn. 4:6) – “*Who shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION,*” – (i.e., for these natural brute beasts, there is never any final destruction [indeed, in ordinary parlance, to destroy a thing is an act of finality]; so that the phrase “*everlasting destruction*” must be a new and ghastly concept to the human punitive experience). See 2 Thes. 1:7-9.

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction” must be something akin to a fire that shall be unquenchable to torment men (Mat. 3:12), and akin to a hellish scorpion strike that inflicts such torment that “*men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.*” (Rev. 9:6). And this fearsome, horrific punishment is said to be administered directly “*from the (immediate) presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*” 2 Thes. 1:9.

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, – (i.e., his glorious power) – endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” (Rom. 9:22)

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” (Rom. 9:17)

Remember, the doctrinal teaching of this passage in **Second Thessalonians** about the infliction of **“everlasting destruction”** and our Lord Jesus coming with His mighty angels in flaming fire for the express purpose of administering said punishment in vengeance and throughout all eternity – I say, remember that this dreadful teaching about this horrific subject is specifically for our comfort under intense persecution, – **“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.”** 2 Thes. 1:6.

BELOVED, I AM CONVINCED that we should study this majestic subject intensively, and that it should be a major part of our world view in light of the Bible. FOR MOST OF MY SIXTY years of preaching, I have been somewhat unclear in my thinking about the meaning of Rev. 2:26,27; to wit:

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” (Rev. 2:26,27)

Who are these nations, over whom we shall rule with a rod of iron? And under what circumstances? Is it not the same as in **Psalm 9:17**? To wit: **“The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.”** In other words these nations of peoples are the great mass of unregenerate mankind, burning in Hell.

As to the circumstances under which we are ruling them with inflexible justice, Jonathan Edwards pointed me in the right direction in his exposition of **Rev. 14:10**; to wit:

“The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:10)

The administration of appropriate punishment to these billions of lost souls – day and night – for ever and ever – individualized, from case to case, as they **“gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”** Rev. 16:10b,11. And these nations of doomed peoples join the beast in blaspheming God’s Name, and His Tabernacle in Heaven, and them that dwell in Heaven. **Rev. 13:6**. It is in these circumstances that we rule the nations with a rod of iron; more fully described at **Psalm 149:6-9**; to wit:

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written; this honor have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.”

(Psa. 149:6-9)

BELOVED! WE ARE NOT IN CHARGE NOW. BUT WE WILL SOON BE IN CHARGE OF EVERYTHING. We will spend all eternity in Heaven, and a large part of our activities will involve assisting the Lord God in the taking of His wrathful, punitive Vengeance upon the masses of mankind in Hell. And that Vengeance vindicates God’s Power, and His Righteousness, and His Holiness, and His Faithfulness, and His Justice, and others of His glorious attributes. And God’s Vengeance regards, in minutest detail, all the acts and words of persecution against His people when they were alive on earth. Thus you see, that the most important thing going on in the affairs of mankind in the here and now – so far as God and eternal ages to come are concerned – is the vile, unconscionable, vicious, mindless, worldwide persecution of Westboro Baptist Church. What a spectacular world view in Bible light. Beside which, nothing else is very relevant.

This theme was struck first – where the Father is speaking to the Son – in **Psa. 2:9**; to wit: ***“Thou shalt break them*** (think, break, as in breaking wild horses) ***with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”*** **Psa. 2:9**. Then, **Rev. 2:27**. Same theme, which we have considered. Then, look at **Rev. 12:5**; to wit:

“And she brought forth a man child, – (God’s Elect in the aggregate) – who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” (**Rev. 12:5**)

Finally, consider **Rev. 19:15**; to wit: ***“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, – (the same sword of VENGEANCE of Deut. 32:41, ‘If I whet my glittering sword...I will render VENGEANCE to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.’) – that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”*** **Rev. 19:15**.

Neither Christ nor His Church are done with these nations of peoples until endless eternity is ended – until the worm that never dies is dead – until the unquenchable fire is quenched. Christ and His Church and their activities throughout all eternity are together, and much of those activities are taken up with exacting VENGEANCE to the max upon them that persecuted His Church on earth. Understanding this amazing fact gives a whole other dimension to such passages as **Eph. 3:21**; to wit:

“Unto him be glory IN THE CHURCH by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (**Eph. 3:21**)

Remember the title of this sermon: ***“For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel...(for) a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.”*** **1 Cor. 9:16,17(b)**. Amen.