

Excerpt from *The Vengeance of the Lord Jesus, Part 2* by John MacArthur

- (2 Thessalonians 1:5–10 ESV) This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

The world is waiting for the return of Jesus Christ whether they know it or not, or whether they believe it or not. His return is the climax of history. And I suppose making a statement like that would conjure up the obvious question: Why should anyone believe that Jesus Christ is coming back? Why should anyone believe that a man who was crucified 2,000 years ago will return to judge and rule the world.

What compels me to believe that? And I answer, the Word of God demands it, the Word of God states unequivocally over and over that Jesus will return. The words of Jesus Himself promised it repeatedly. The

Holy Spirit, inspiring biblical writers, affirms it. The very nature of the church demands it for the church is the bride waiting for the bridegroom. God's plan for judgment on the world demands it. There will be a time of reckoning. There will be judgment and Jesus Christ says God is to be the judge. God's promise to Israel demands it for God promised Israel a Messiah who would bring them an earthly kingdom. The reign of Satan demands it. Satan cannot go on unendingly as the usurper who rules the world. He must be conquered. He must be banished and Jesus Christ alone can do that.

Furthermore, the humiliation of Christ in His first coming demands that He comes again. The last glimpse the world has of Jesus is a bleeding, dying criminal on a cross. That is not the last vision, however, that they will have, for He will come in full glory. His humiliation demands that He come back in exaltation. And finally, the hope of Christians demands it. It is our hope. We look forward to that day when Jesus comes who is now preparing a place for us and will someday come and take us to that place.

In other words, at the very heart of all redemptive history and divine revelation and Christian experience is the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. In this passage Paul affirms this Christian hope and he does it in order to encourage the Thessalonians because they were under such severe persecution. And he was saying to them and to all believers who have suffered, this won't go on unendingly, Jesus will come back.

Excerpt from *Four Characteristics of the Final Wrath of God* by John Piper

- ... we could venture a definition of the wrath of God like this: *The wrath of God is God's settled anger toward sin expressed in the repayment of suitable vengeance on the guilty sinner.*

 1. The final wrath of God is eternal — having no end.
 2. The final wrath of God will be terrible — indescribable pain.
 3. The wrath of God will be deserved — totally just and right.
 4. At the end of the age, when the full and final wrath of God is poured out, it will have been escapable.

The reason I use the word anger to define part of the nature of God's wrath is that the two words (orge and thumos) are used over a hundred times in the Bible side by side. Some of them are parallel so that you can hardly distinguish them. For example, Psalm 6:1, "O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath." Psalm 90:7, "We are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed." Hosea 13:11, "I gave you a king in my anger, and I took him away in my wrath." Romans 2:8, "For those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury [anger]."

When you try to distinguish these words the closest you get is something like this from A.T. Robertson: God's anger (thumos) is his vehement fury or boiling rage. His wrath (orge) is his settled indignation or his settled anger. In other words, in God's anger the emphasis falls on the emotional,

boiling intensity of it. And in God's wrath the emphasis falls on the controlled, settled, considered direction and focus of its application. But we dare not draw a hard line between them. God's anger is never out of the control of his wisdom and righteousness, and his wrath is never cool or indifferent, but is always a wisely directed fury. The wrath of God is never less than a perfect, judicial decree, but is always more than a perfect, judicial decree because it is always full of right and fitting fury.

And then we see from the word "repay" and "vengeance" that God's wrath is his response to sin. God does not take vengeance on the innocent. When he repays with vengeance, we know there has been sin — there is something to repay. And since he is meticulously just, that repayment will be a suitable vengeance, a proper vengeance. It will not be more or less than his perfect justice demands.

- So here is the definition again: *The wrath of God is God's settled anger toward sin expressed in the repayment of suitable vengeance on the guilty sinner.*

[<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/gods-wrath-vengeance-is-mine-i-will-repay-says-the-lord>]

Vengeance: Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

- An injured party's desire for retribution or repayment from those who harmed him or to demonstrate his innocence against false accusations. Vengeance demonstrates God's righteousness in compensating the wrong with right.