

FINISH FAITHFUL – EPISODE 30 – 2 THESS 1 – ANGELS IN FLAMING FIRE

Slide 1 - Title

You have tuned in to an episode called Angels in Flaming Fire. Heavy stuff. Some people think of angels as cute little cherubs, or messengers with a stunning appearance, or invisible guardians watching over us. What's with this flaming fire business?!

This gets to the heart of what we cover in FF, namely the timing of the rapture and the wrath of God in the end-times timeline and how we are both enabled and expected to finish faithful. So let's get started...

Slide 2 – 2 Th 1:6-8 is our main scripture for the episode. As we often ask in FF, When does this happen?

Some amazing things are happening here. Mankind has never seen something like this, since maybe S&G in Gen, which is then mentioned a number of times in the Bible as the example of God's judgment against the wicked. The justice of God comes forth to repay tribulation to the tribulators (is that even a word?) of the saints and to give rest or relief to you (US). And it is not in some indirect sense, but by the revelation of the Lord Jesus himself with mighty angels taking vengeance with flaming fire.

Let's compare this to other scriptures to better understand what this is and when it happens?

First, let's read the previous verses to make sure we understand the context.

It appears that 2 Th was written less than a year after 1 Th and were among the first NT writings. In much of the Bible-believing church today, the rapture is covered somewhat, the flaming fire vengeance even less, and if you are too concerned with the details of end-times prophecy, you might be somewhat of a kook or unstable who might upset the therapeutic preaching that is mostly enjoyed. Compare that with the Thessalonians.

1 Th 4 covered the gathering together also called the rapture of the church. 1 Th 5 told us that they "perfectly understood" that the Day of the LORD judgments followed immediately on those who do not believe, but that "YOU", the believers are not destined to Wrath, but to obtain salvation. In previous episodes of FF we have explained our belief that this "obtain salvation" is to be rescued by the rapture before the Wrath (with a capital W) period, which is the 7th Seal judgements.

Slide 3 -4 describe the Thessalonian church.

Slides 5-8 reading the context of the chapter

Both 1 & 2 Th mention their suffering and persecution a number of times. Paul had been whisked out of town to escape a mob after only having been with them 3 weeks. There were influential Jews against them. The mob was "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort". There was

probably discrimination and some attacks. Yet the Thess believers didn't knuckle under because their life was made hard. Their faith and love grew exceedingly.'

Slide 7 (same as 2) – When is the revealing of the Lord Jesus apocalupsis? How about if we look for our answer in the book by that name... REVELATION

Slide 10 – Possibilities for when “angels in flaming fire” happens.

Slides 11-13 – The scene here is Armageddon. We have reached the end of opening of the 7 seals, the 7 trumpet judgements and the 7 bowl judgments. If these are not very familiar to you, you can go back to the FF course and watch the 2 episodes on the 7 seals. This is certainly a revealing with a heavenly host wiping out the wicked armies of the antichrist. This is not sudden in the sense that the heavenly judgments have been poured out for some time and this is the culmination of it. It also does not talk about angels in flaming fire taking judgment.

- grant relief to you. Who is YOU. You is the Thessalonian believers, and by extension, us who are also born-again believers.
- Relief from what? Granted relief from great persecution and affliction.
- Lord Jesus revealed apocalupsis in heaven
- With mighty angels
- In flaming fire taking vengeance
- Those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel

Slides 14-17 show that the opening of the 7th seal and the first few trumpet judgements are “angels in flaming fire taking vengeance...”

Slides 18-29 go back and forth between Jesus's Olivet Discourse in Matt 24 comparing it to the seals and other information in Rev 6-7. Shows the following sequence of events

1. Seals 1-4. Wars and effects. Deeds of evil men. Rev. 6:1-8
2. Abomination of Desolation. Midpoint of final 7 years. Mt 24:15
3. The Great Tribulation = 5th Seal. Persecution and martyrdom. Rev. 6:8-11, Mt 24:16-26.
4. Celestial signs of the 6th Seal. God begins to answer from heaven. Rev 6:12-17, Mt 24:29.
5. Lord Jesus gathers his elect. Mt. 24:30, 31.
6. 144,000 from Israel sealed. Rev. 7:3-8. Ask pre-trib why so long after rapture?
7. Innumerable multitude of redeemed from all nations before the throne. Rev 7:9-17
8. 7th Seal opened. Silence in heaven for half an hour. Rev 8:1
9. Angels bring forth the first 6 trumpet judgments. Rev 8:1-9:20,
10. 7th trumpet judgment apparently included 7 bowl judgments. Rev 11:15-19, 15:1-8, 16:1-21.
11. Lord Jesus appears on white horse with armies of heaven to destroy the worldly armies that have come against him. Rev 19:11-21.

This is low hanging fruit. These are major events that it is fairly easy to put in order by reading and comparing scriptures.

It is disturbing to picture ourselves living through these days. Most of us today enjoy all the blessings and benefits of our abundant life in Christ and suffer only minor discrimination or persecution, although we see society getting darker around us.

For those Christians who live in the time of this fulfillment, whether it is us or our children or grandchildren it will be harder. By understanding end-times prophecy, we will see when the 7 Seals are being opened by the Lord Jesus Christ and we will know that it is 7 years or less until he reigns on earth. There will be no reason to want to live for anything other than the king and his kingdom. Why would we deny him to live a little longer under the antichrist's evil power when we know that resurrection, glory and liberty are coming so soon?!

This isn't just a Bible passage to have more knowledge and information about. This is really heavy, significant stuff. It gives us even more motivation to carry out the great commission and make disciples who will be rescued at Christ's return, rather than bearing the vengeance in flaming fire. There are many passages during the Exodus, in Psalms and in the NT when God's people are pleading to be avenged. God says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay". Vengeance is not ours, but that doesn't mean there won't be any.

This chapter has praised the Thessalonians for Uber-growth in faith and love. That tells us that we can and should keep growing.

It tells them and us that their hupomeno endurance and faith are showing them to be worthy of the kingdom. How should we then live? Growing in faith and love, enduring in hope, because the sufferings of this time are not worthy... and that is why we want to finish faithful.