

**6 – For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,** – The opening phrase in the NASB, “For after all,” translates a single word in the Greek, *εἴπερ* (*eiper*) which carries the basic meaning of “since it is surely true,” meaning that there can be no doubt regarding the infinite value of Yeshua’s saving work to bring all who are His to be eternally saved and with Him forever. Thus, the opening phrase of our verse is a clear indication of the sure and eternal salvation for all He would save, having the price of their redemption paid through the infinite value of Yeshua’s death, resurrection, and intercession for all those given to Him by the Father.

Yeshua Himself emphasized this when He proclaimed to those who questioned His true identity that He was the promised Redeemer.

But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (Jn 6:35–40)

Here, once again, we see the clear and emphatic teaching of the Scriptures regarding God’s sovereign and triumphant work on behalf of all those He has given to Yeshua, that is, having given them to the Son as the very object of His salvific work. For Yeshua’s atoning work on the cross, declared to be eternally certain by His resurrection, would be applied to the elect, that is, to all those whom the Father had given to Him and who would therefore be brought to saving faith and granted eternal life. None would be lost, for the work of the Spirit in the lives of all true believers will inevitably sanctify and preserve them for eternity with God, doing so in perfect alignment with that which the Son has secured via His death, resurrection, and intercession.

... *it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you* – Here, in our text, Paul affirms not only that God keeps those who are His, bought by the infinite value of Yeshua’s death and resurrection, but that it is also entirely righteous that He would guard those who are His by bringing upon their tormentors an affliction of a divine measure. Such affliction by the hand of God is utterly righteous, for it is a “just repayment” (*δίκαιον παρὰ θεῶ ἀνταποδοῦναι*), literally “*it is righteous for God to payback those who afflict you.*”

This emphasizes a most important reality in the biblical doctrine of salvation, namely, that the death and resurrection of Yeshua was an actual payment for sin and not a possible payment in need of something else to be added to it. For the Scriptures describe fallen mankind as “dead in their sins,” and the metaphor of “death” indicates an utter inability to accomplish anything pleasing to God.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. (Eph 2:1–2)

Another of the disciples said to Him, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” But Yeshua said to him, “Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead.” (Matt 8:21–22)

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col 2:13–14)

This language clearly uses the metaphor of “death” to show that the unbeliever, in his own strength, has no ability to please God nor to obtain His favor and forgiveness. It is obvious, then, that in using the metaphor of “spiritual death,” the Scriptures clearly teach this reality: apart from the enabling work of the Spirit to bring to life the sinful soul, fallen mankind is entirely unable to produce “saving faith” by which one is granted repentance and faith in Yeshua, resulting in true and eternal salvation. The “life” and “death” language used in the Scriptures when eternal salvation is the topic, as well as the metaphor “to be born again,” clearly teaches that “salvation by works” is an utter impossibility. As Paul notes:

For by *the* grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Eph 2:8–10)

Here we see clearly that saving faith is a gift of God, not something that the unbeliever “manufactures” by his or her own ability and desire. Here, once again, we are confronted with the high value of saving

faith, the gift of God to all He has chosen to be His eternally. What is more, we are confronted with the glory and power of the gospel—the message of salvation empowered by the Ruach to bring to saving faith all those given to Yeshua (Jn 6:37–40). Furthermore, this emphasizes the grant privilege we have been given by God Himself, to be His witnesses and heralds of His grace and love by which He paid the infinite price to redeem to Himself all whom He would grant eternal life.

Thus, our text emphasizes, once again, that the lives of all whom God has chosen for Himself, having been granted saving faith by which they lay hold of the eternal gift of salvation, are precious to Him, for Yeshua gave His life to redeem them and to grant them life with Him for all eternity.

**7 – and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Yeshua will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,**

*...to give relief to you who are afflicted* – In referring to those believers in Thessalonica who were “afflicted, Paul is obviously pointing them to the believer’s ultimate “rest” in the eternal dwelling with God when “sin and sorrow” have ceased. His point is that the promises of God regarding the believer’s final victory of eternally dwelling with Him in the world-to-come give all who are His strength to persevere in this fallen world, knowing that ultimately our Savior has overcome the waywardness of this world and has redeemed all who are His for eternity with Him in the world to come. Note the words of John in Revelation:

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” (Rev 14:13)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (Rev 21:3–4)

This promise of our Savior ought to be an unmovable foundation upon which the faith of every believer must be founded.

As Yeshua promised:

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (Jn 16:33)

The reality is that God has promised to keep all who are His for Himself and to lose none of those who, in their union with Yeshua, have been redeemed by the infinite value of His death, resurrection, and intercession on their behalf. As Yeshua makes clear:

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (Jn 6:37–40)

... *and to us as well* – Not only would the faith of those who had recently received Yeshua as their Savior be verified, but the same verification would be forthcoming for all who had exercised saving faith, including Paul and the Apostles themselves. Clearly the mark of genuine saving faith is that of perseverance through whatever difficulties may present themselves in this fallen world. This was the explicit teaching of Yeshua Himself.

You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. (Matt 10:22)

Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Matt 24:12–13)

... *when the Lord Yeshua will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire* – Once again, in this text Paul emphasizes the full deity of Yeshua when he refers to Him as “the Lord Yeshua” (τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, *tou kuriou yēsu*), utilizing the definite article “the” (τοῦ) making it clear that his use of τοῦ κυρίου, “the Lord” does not merely denote a common position within a given people-group, but clearly describes Yeshua as divine, one Who is co-equal with the Father and the Spirit.

Paul’s words here are very reminiscent of a similar passage in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, i.e., 1Thess 4:16–18, in which he as-

sure the believing community in Thessalonica that those who had died ("*fallen asleep*") would not be overlooked or left alone when Yeshua returned. Rather, at His coming those believers in Yeshua who had died would be resurrected first to eternal life with God. Then those who are alive at His coming, would be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, "and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1Thess 4:17).

We find similar language and metaphor in the Tanach as well, describing the work of God in purging Zion.

When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. (Is 4:4–5)

Truly the promised coming of our Savior Yeshua forms a solid foundation upon which the faith of believers ought to be more and more strengthened and thereby enabled to persevere even when being persecuted for one's faith in Yeshua. This was the point of Yeshua's words to His disciples:

These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (Jn 16:33)

Here, once again, we recognize that perseverance in one's faith is the mark of genuine faith in Yeshua, by which our lives are dedicated to be living witnesses of His mercy, grace, and saving power. For the true believer will ultimately be identified as being given not only the desire but also the ability to remain faithful to the Lord, even in times of persecution. Note these biblical texts which affirm the steadfast perseverance of all who have been truly saved by God's powerful grace.

This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. (Jn 6:39)

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. (Jn 6:47)

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish;

and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (Jn 10:27–29)

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord. (Rom 8:38–39)

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13–14)

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. (1Jn 2:19)

... *will be revealed from heaven* – Here the English “revealed” translates the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις (*apokalupsis*). This Greek word carries the meaning of: “making fully known, revelation, disclosure,”<sup>1</sup> and is the obvious source for our English word “apocalypse.” Surely when Yeshua returns there will be no questions remaining as to His infinite power, glory, and rule over mankind. Moreover, as John notes in his first epistle, Yeshua's appearance as the reigning and glorious Creator, Savior, and Lord, will be affirmed by all. There will no longer be any who will be able to deny His majesty and sovereign power.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (1Jn 3:2)

Note as well the words of Yeshua Himself as He taught the disciples on the Mount of Olives as they questioned Him regarding the “sign of His coming.”

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will

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1 “ἀποκάλυψις,” BDAG, p. 112.

see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. (Matt 24:30-31)

*...with His mighty angels in flaming fire* – When Yeshua returns, He will not only gather those who are His to Himself, ultimately bringing them with Him to the glory of eternity, but He will also execute judgment upon all who have rejected Him.

Yeshua taught this truth with the parable of the field in which the owner of the field sowed good seed but an enemy came and sowed tares in the field as well.

...when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’ (Matt 13:26–30)

This teaching emphasizes the reality of what Yeshua taught when He stated:

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? (Matt 7:15–16)

The final clause of our text, i.e., “in flaming fire,” presents an interesting question: should this phrase be attached to v. 7 or is it part of the following text in v. 8? If part of v. 7, the phrase depicts the awesome grandeur of Yeshua’s appearance when He comes to gather His own unto Himself, for all eternity.

But this phrase may also be connected to the following verse, depicting the divine judgment upon rebellious humanity, indicating that God will punish them with “blazing fire.” Surely Isaiah 66 uses “fire” as a symbol of divine judgment. In fact, this final phrase appears to link the vs. 7 & 8 together, showing the eternal salvation of all believers in



Yeshua and the eternal demise of all who reject Him.

For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger in fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by His sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many. (Is 66:15–16)

Furthermore, angels are often associated with fire in the bible and fire is a common element in the “theophanies” of the Tanach. Note the following:

The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. (Ex 3:2)

LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. (Ex 19:18)

Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. (Ps 18:8)

Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. (Ezek 1:27)

Thus, combined with the text of Is 66:15–16, these texts surely picture the ultimate revelation of Yeshua as the Lord of the universe, Who is served by angelic beings to accomplish His sovereign will and plan for mankind. Those who are His are guarded and kept from the damaging fire, while all who have rejected Him are overcome by the fire for all eternity, for the fire of His holiness is never extinguished.