

Christians telling them that they would receive relief and vindication personally from Christ Himself, **“when He is revealed from heaven in flaming fire.”**

But what of the question of **Preterism**, whereas these texts are read as to say that because imminency was taught to that generation, that that generation was in fact going to see the fulfillment of these things. To that I answer, that surely some of the things in the Olivet Discourse did have some fulfillment, but the full scope of events spoken of by Jesus did NOT in fact come to pass yet. For example, the Great Tribulation has not yet come to pass (Matt 24:21-22), the Gospel has not been preached to the whole world (Matt 24:14), and Christ has not come in the clouds with power and great glory with all of His angels and raptured the church (Matt 24:29-31). To be fair, Preterists do think these events are analogous to actual events that happened before or during the end of the age of the Old Covenant and the destruction of the Temple and Jewish system in 70 A.D., reading these texts in an *allegorical* manner. It is my firm conviction however, that these are not allegories, and I read these texts in a *historical grammatical* sense, fully expecting the literal fulfillment of these events at the future Second Coming of Christ. That makes me a **Futurist**, (under which Amill, Postmill, and Premillennialism are classified), seeing the imminent return of Christ as a yet future event. On this topic I would say that our text here in 2 Thessalonians is bright shining evidence that the coming Christ is yet future because of the simple fact that Christ did not come to the generation of Thessalonians who received this letter and delivered them from their persecutors. In fact, Christians have been undergoing persecution for some 2000 years now, and this deliverance by a glorious appearing of Christ coming from heaven has yet to occur. That however does not mean that we are to dismiss Jesus and the Apostles teaching about imminency, but ARE in fact to be eagerly awaiting His return and deliverance. We simply believe that the texts on imminency will directly apply to that generation that is alive at the Second Coming of Christ.

B. when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire – Here now Paul continues to comfort the persecuted Thessalonians by reminding them that Christ is coming in power to give deliverance to His people and to vindicate them by a terrible vengeance poured out on their enemies. This then is another text wherein Paul gives us more details of the coming (parousia Gk) of Christ, here now in the context of what He will do to the wicked unbelievers at His return. You remember that Paul had previously taught them that **“sudden destruction”** would come upon the unbelievers, and that **“they will not escape”** the fierce judgment of Christ at the **“Day of the Lord,”** when He will return to deliver His people AND destroy the unbelieving world.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 - 2 For you yourselves know full well that **the day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" **then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**

Paul specifically says that the Christians deliverance will come **“when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire.”** He speaks then of the Second Coming of Christ, which He had given them some teaching about already, but here more specifically is addressing the fact that He is coming to destroy their enemies, who are persecuting them severely. And so the emphasis is placed on Christ coming in power to destroy these enemies and the events that will unfold for their enemies. In speaking of this coming He calls it **“when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven.”** Consider several things here. First he is the **“Lord Jesus,”** emphasizing His sovereign lordship, who will put an end to these unbelievers who are troubling and persecuting His people. Second, He will be **“revealed from Heaven in flaming fire.”** Notice here the word for **“revealed”** is the Gk *apokalupsis*, meaning “revelation, unveiling, uncovering.” The idea is that He is not evident to eyes in plain sight, but there will come a day, yes even the Second Coming, when He will be **“revealed from heaven.”** This

Second Coming of Christ is a major theme in Bible and seen as the climatic event of world history, which begins the last stage of God's plan for the nations of mankind, and the culmination of His purposes upon planet earth. Third, this "revealing" is said to be **"from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire."** Now this language of the Second Coming of Christ is very similar to other passages which speak of **"His coming,"** (parousia Gk). He is said to come **"on the clouds of heaven,"** and **"with great glory"** and with **"angels and trumpets."** The scene is of a mighty conqueror coming to take His enemies by force and bring their rebel kingdom under His domain. This brings us then into the context of several other Bible Passages, but most importantly, the language is consistent with the Olivet Discourse and Jesus teaching on His Second Coming.

Matthew 24:29-31 - 29 **"But immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 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 see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.** 31 **"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.** NASB

Mark 13:24-27 - 24 **"But in those days, after that tribulation,** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 **"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.** 27 **"And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.** NASB

Matthew 13:40-43 - 40 **"Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.** 41 **"The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire;** in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 **"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.** NASB

In fact the Old Testament image of the conquering Messiah, pictures Him in this way, coming in the **"clouds of Heaven"** which culminates in His established kingdom, which is seen to be an **"everlasting dominion which will not pass away."**

Daniel 7:13-14 - 13 **"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming,** And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 **"And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion** Which will not pass away; NASB

This coming is said to be seen by the entire world of nations.

Matthew 24:30 - 30 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 see the Son of Man coming on the clouds** of the sky with power and great glory. NASB

Revelation 1:7 - 7 Behold, **He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.** Even so. Amen. NASB

In this context, Paul immediately follows this announcement of His return to say that He will be bringing **recompense** to their persecutors, those who were troubling the Thessalonians believers. This language of the Second Coming is frequently seen in the Bible as Christ is coming to bring judgment on all mankind, which is seen as divine vengeance upon a rebel and sinful world.

Isaiah 66:15-16 - 15 For behold, **the Lord will come in fire** And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For **the Lord will execute judgment by fire** And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the Lord will be many. NASB

Matthew 16:27 - 27 **"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels;** and will then recompense every man according to his deeds. NASB

Jude 14-15 - 14 And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, **"Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."** NASB

Isaiah 2:17-19 - 17 And the pride of man will be humbled, And the loftiness of men will be abased, And

the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. 18 But the idols will completely vanish. 19 And **men will go into caves of the rocks, And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the Lord,** And before the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. NASB

Revelation 6:15-17 - 15 And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, **hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;** 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, **"Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;** 17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" NASB

In fact, Jesus likens His Coming to the great flood of Noah and also the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In this imagery Christ is seen to deliver His people on the SAME day that He destroys the wicked. This how Paul described the *"coming"* (parousia GK) in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:3, where He calls it *"the day of the Lord."*

Luke 17:24-37 - 24 "For **just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.** 25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 "And **just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man:** 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, **until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.** 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but **on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.** 30 **"It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.** 31 "On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. 32 "Remember Lot's wife. 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it. 34 **"I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. 36 ["Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."]** NASB

This Second Coming of Christ is seen in all its imagery of warfare in the climatic chapters of Revelation, notably in chapter 19, where the Second Coming is pictured along with the subsequent victory of Christ over His enemies, and the establishment of His physical Millennial Kingdom on earth (Rev 20:1-10).

Revelation 19:11-21 - 11 And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And **the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.** 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it **He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.** 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; 18 in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. 20 And **the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence,** by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. 21 And **the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.** NASB

The Bible has much to say about the Second Coming of Christ, of which we have mentioned a few things. But note that for these Thessalonian Christians, it was to be fixed firmly in the hearts and minds as their blessed hope, the day of deliverance, when they would be reunited to their loved ones who had died (1 Thess 4:13-16), and *"caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be with the Lord forever."* Paul writes to encourage them that Christ would *"give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well,"* on this great day, *"when the Lord Jesus*