

# 2 Thessalonians 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

## Analysis

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**In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**—Christ appears **in flaming fire** (en pyri phlogos, ἐν πυρὶ φλογός), echoing God's Sinai theophany (Ex. 19:18). **Taking vengeance** (didontos ekdikēsin, διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν, literally 'giving justice/vindication') shows Christ as righteous judge, not merely loving Savior.

Two groups face judgment: **them that know not God** (pagan idolaters) and those who **obey not the gospel** (those who heard but rejected). Obeying (hypakouousin, ὑπακούουσιν) the gospel means submitting to its claims, not mere intellectual assent. Paul identifies the persecutors—they've spurned divine revelation. Fire represents both God's holiness and His consuming wrath against sin.

## Historical Context

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In Jewish apocalyptic literature, the Messiah would come with fire to judge Israel's enemies. Paul universalizes this—all who reject God, whether pagan or religious, face the same fiery judgment. The gospel demands obedience (response of faith), not optional consideration.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does 'obeying the gospel' differ from merely believing facts about Jesus?
2. What does Christ's return in flaming fire teach about God's holy nature?
3. Are there people in your life who 'know not God' despite religious activity?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐν	πυρὶ	φλογός	διδόντος	ἐκδίκησιν	τοῖς	μὴ
In	fire	flaming	taking	vengeance	G3588	not
G1722	G4442	G5395	G1325	G1557		G3361
εἰδόσιν	θεὸν	καὶ	τοῖς	μὴ	ὑπακούουσιν	τῷ
on them that know	God	and	G3588	not	that obey	G3588
G1492	G2316	G2532		G3361	G5219	
εὐαγγελίῳ	τοῦ	κυρίου	ἡμῶν	Ἰησοῦ	Χριστοῦ·	
the gospel	G3588	Lord	of our	Jesus	Christ	
G2098		G2962	G2257	G2424	G5547	

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Peter 4:17** (References God): For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

**2 Peter 3:7** (References God): But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

**Hebrews 10:27** (Kingdom): But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

**Psalms 79:6** (Kingdom): Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

**Hebrews 10:30** (References Lord): For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

**Hebrews 2:3** (References Lord): How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

**Romans 6:16** (Parallel theme): Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

**Matthew 25:41** (Parallel theme): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

**Galatians 4:8** (References God): Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

**Revelation 20:10** (Parallel theme): And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.