

Authority to Judge

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[0 : 0 0] today. There are many out there who have been thinking about the end of the world. Is COVID-19 the end of the world? Or is it the beginning of the end? Is it something that marks the end?

While most people would say no, there are some who are saying that it is. Some of them are Christians. You don't have to look too hard online to find people on Twitter or Facebook or YouTube who apparently have found the coronavirus in Bible prophecy.

One person on Twitter said, I don't know how serious the coronavirus is going to be, but there was some passage in the book of Revelation from the Bible where it talks about a significant portion of humanity being wiped out by disease and pestilence. In response to that, another person chimed in and said, yes, the beginning of sorrows, Matthew 24, Australian wildfires, coronavirus, earthquakes in odd places, increased rage and murders worldwide, massive hunger increases, hashtag Jesus is coming. The end of the world is here. According to a religion professor at the University of Alberta, there are some Christians out there claiming right now that the Bible foretold this pandemic long ago, right there in Revelation where it talks about one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse who represents pestilence or plague. He's galloping across the globe right now is what he says some Christians are saying. The end of the world is just around the corner. And whether people agree with that or not, it has got many people, especially Christians, thinking about the end of the world. When it truly does come, what will it be like? Well, Jesus long ago talked about the end of the world. He talked about what will happen in the distant future. He talked about the final judgment. And unlike many of the voices out there on social media right now, we can trust with certainty the words of Jesus. This morning, we look a little, look at just a little of what Jesus had to say about the day of judgment. If you have your Bible with you, please open it up to John chapter five. We've been working through the gospel of John, the story of Jesus as told by John. And if you missed last week, last Sunday, I gave a bit of a summary of all that's been happening up in the story of up until now in the story of Jesus. So if you, if you missed that, I encourage you to just take a quick listen online to the first five minutes of last Sunday's message. This morning, we find Jesus in Jerusalem. Jesus is having a heated discussion with the religious leaders. Jesus has just healed a man on the Sabbath day. And now the religious leaders are coming after him again. In fact, John tells us that Jesus was already on their wanted list.

Even before he did this, the religious leaders wanted Jesus dead. And now as they're having this conversation with Jesus, they want him dead even more because of the things Jesus is saying.

Jesus has been claiming to have a special relationship with God, a father-son relationship with God. The religious leaders have been listening to this and they hear him claiming to be that on the same level with God or equal to God. Last Sunday, we heard Jesus speak these words at the end of verse 20. He said, yes, and he, the father will show him the son, even greater works than these so that you will be amazed. What is Jesus saying? The healing of that man by the pool of Siloam, that guy who couldn't walk for 38 years, that's nothing. You're going to see more amazing things than that. And then Jesus tells them about two amazing things that they will see.

[4 : 35] And the first of these two things we talked about last Sunday, Jesus told them that just as the father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the son raises the dead and gives life to whom he's pleased to give it. That's something you will see. He told them that the time has come now for people to hear and believe his words and receive eternal life. Jesus told them that they will one day see something really amazing that he will do, that one day they will hear his voice calling them out of their graves to final judgment. So the first amazing thing was that Jesus, he said, you will see that the son of God has power to raise the dead back to life. This morning, we look at the second amazing thing that Jesus says they will see, and it has to do with the final judgment at the end of the world.

We're going to pick it up in verse 21 here. For just as the father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, another thing that you will see, the father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the son. Let me read those words again. The father judges no one, says Jesus, but has entrusted all judgment to the son. Now let's imagine for a moment what the reaction of the religious leaders would have been to that statement. I imagine they'd be thinking something like this, like, do you hear what this man is saying? You're saying that God will not judge the world. Why? Because he has, what, delegated that special right and responsibility to you? A mere man?

Blasphemy! Is probably what they're thinking. How dare you speak like that? Perhaps some of them even had some of the Old Testament scriptures come to mind. Passages like Psalm 75 verse 7, where it says, It is God who judges. He brings one down. He exalts another. Or passages like Isaiah 33, 22.

For the Lord is our judge, our lawgiver, our king. It is he who will save us. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God.

The Lord is one. There's only one God. And as Abraham said long ago, he is the judge of all the earth. So who do you think you are, Jesus of Nazareth, to claim to have authority to judge?

[7 : 40] That's what I imagine they might be thinking right now. But this is what Jesus said that day.

The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. He's basically saying, listen, the Father and I are so closely intertwined in our working that truthfully, he himself is not the one who does the final judging.

Rather, he has entrusted that responsibility to me. Jesus is not saying that God will neglect his responsibility to bring justice to the world.

Rather, he's saying that God has chosen to carry out his justice by entrusting the work of judging to his Son, to Jesus.

Do you hear what Jesus is claiming here? He is claiming to be the one that we will all stand before someday.

[8 : 53] He's claiming to be the one that we will examine the details of our lives, the things that we did, the things that we said, our attitudes and motives that we carried.

He's claiming to be the one who will examine all these aspects of our lives and then render judgment on God's behalf, determining what our final outcome will be.

Imagine you were there that day as Jesus said these words. If these words are true, there is only one fitting response, and that's to tremble in the presence of Jesus.

We might imagine a question rising in the thoughts of those who heard Jesus speak that day. Assuming that what you're saying is true, Jesus, why would God entrust or delegate his responsibility to judge to someone else, to you, a mere man?

Is it not his responsibility alone to judge? Isn't that one of the reasons that we praise him and give him glory and honor him?

[10 : 15] Why would he give this privilege and authority to someone else, no less to a human being? Isaiah 42, verse 8, I am the Lord.

That is my name. I will not give my glory to another. Jesus gives an answer to this very question. The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.

Why? That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. The reason my Father has entrusted all judgment to me is so that all people may honor me, just as they honor him.

So that all people may honor, may give praise and glory to me, just as they give praise and glory and honor to God.

If there's any doubt about whether Jesus is claiming to be equal with God or on the same level with God, that doubt should be long gone by now.

[11 : 31] If God does not share his glory with another, and yet he does share his glory with this Jesus on purpose, this Jesus man must be special.

He must be more than just a man. He must, in some mysterious way, be one with God himself.

And this is the truth that Jesus is steering us towards. We talked about this on a previous Sunday, May 24th. If you want to go back and watch that video on YouTube, you can.

And Jesus said, or will say later on, to one of his own disciples, don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me?

It is the Father living in me who is doing his work. At another point, which we haven't got to yet in the story, he will make this statement to the religious leaders and say, I and the Father are one.

[12 : 47] Two distinct persons, and yet one and the same God. Jesus is both truly human and truly divine.

John told us this at the very beginning. He said that Jesus is more than just a human being. He is the Word who was God and was with God at the very beginning before anything was made.

The Father loves the Son. And so that the Son might be respected and honored and glorified as he deserves to be, God has entrusted this very special work, the work of judging to his Son, Jesus.

And what kind of judgment are we talking about here? Notice Jesus' words. Has entrusted all judgment to the Son.

All judgment. The ultimate and final judgment, as we see in the verses which follow. So, God has entrusted all judgment to the Son, and he has done it so that the Son might be honored.

[14 : 07] But he's done it for another reason. There's another reason given in verse 27. Jesus says this, And he, the Father, has given him, the Son, authority to judge.

Why? Because he is the Son of Man. Now, what does that mean? In order to grasp this, we need to understand that the Son of Man is not just a poetic way to refer to Jesus being human, the Son of a human being.

It does refer to Jesus' humanity, but more than that, it's a title which points back to what God said long ago, which we read earlier in the service through the prophet Daniel.

God gave the prophet Daniel a vision, and this is how Daniel described it, as we read earlier. In my vision at night, I looked, and there before me was one like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven.

This Son of Man approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

[15 : 21] All nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

So, why has the Father entrusted all judgment to his Son Jesus? Because Jesus is this Son of Man, which was prophesied long ago.

He is the one that God planned long ago to give authority and sovereign power to. Jesus is the one. In God's plan, God's kingdom is going to be established on this earth through Jesus, the Son.

So, yes, the Lord, God, the Ancient of Days, is the judge of all the earth. And Jesus will say that in John chapter 8.

But God has chosen to do the work of judging, and especially the final judgment, through his Son, Jesus. And in a very real sense, this shouldn't really come as a surprise to the religious leaders.

[16 : 41] If they really knew their scriptures, they would know that God had planned to give authority and power and even authority to judge to someone special who would act on his behalf.

Think back to the words spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, which we read at Christmastime. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

think of the words Isaiah spoke a little bit later. A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse. From his roots, a branch will bear fruit and the spirit of the Lord will rest on him.

This one who will come, he will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears, but with righteousness he will judge the needy.

[17 : 59] With justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. Isaiah 42, verse 1, Here is my servant whom I uphold, says the Lord, my chosen one in whom I delight.

I will put my spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. Is God the judge? Yes.

But he has told us long before all this that he will bring justice to the world, to the nations, through his chosen servant, through a descendant of Jesse who will have the spirit of the Lord upon him, through a human child who will be born to us, a son who will be given to us.

And all of these words spoken through Isaiah were penned in Hebrew 700 years prior to this conversation Jesus is having right now. Jesus is saying, I am that one whom God has said he will give authority to.

I am that chosen servant. I am the son of man. And you will see it and you will be amazed when the time comes.

[19 : 21] God is the judge. Yes. But he will bring about justice on the earth through Jesus, his son. that's what Jesus said.

And that's what the apostles realized and understood and taught as well. Acts 10 42. He, Jesus, this is Peter talking, commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

Paul in his famous sermon in Athens said, for he, God, has set a day when he will judge the world with justice.

How? By the man he has appointed. He's given proof of this to everyone by raising this man from the dead. Romans 2 verse 16, Paul says, this, what I'm talking about will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ as my gospel declares.

From all of these places in God's word we hear very clearly, very strongly that there is a day of judgment coming at the end of the world, so to speak, as we might say.

[20 : 48] A day when all people will stand before the throne of Jesus. A day when all people will see the face of this same man who walked the dusty streets of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago.

Take a second here and just imagine what that moment will be like for you to stand before him. he will examine the details of your life, the things that you did, all the things that you said, the attitudes and motives you carried, and yes, even the secrets and the hidden things that no one knows about but you.

He will examine every aspect of our lives and render judgment on God's behalf, on behalf of the Father by the authority that's been given to him.

Let's be honest, this is not a heartwarming truth about Jesus. It would be if we were all innocent, good, and perfect people, but we aren't.

this truth puts a holy fear of Jesus into our hearts, a reverence, an awe, a respect, as it should because all of us have sinned against God in many ways.

[22 : 23] We all fall so far short of his glory and goodness. We've all done many of the things that God has said in his word are wrong, are sinful, are evil, but there is good news.

There is hope. Listen to what Jesus said in verse 24. Very truly, I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life.

Does that sound like good news? Yes, it does. What does Jesus mean when he says that whoever believes and hears his word will not be judged?

In the original language that this was penned in, that word for judge can mean two different things. In fact, in English, it can mean two different things as well. Judgment can be the work that the judge does, the work of evaluating the facts and deciding between giving a decision or a verdict, innocent or guilty, right or wrong.

But judgment can also refer very specifically to the sentence or to the punishment that we would receive when we're guilty before the judge. So which one does Jesus mean?

[24 : 01] Does he mean that we will, those of us who hear his words and believe, will get to skip out on the day of judgment? That we won't have to stand before his throne and answer for what we have done if we believe his words?

Or does he mean that on the day of judgment it's only those who didn't believe who will be evaluated and that the rest will be passed over? I think what Paul says in his letter to the Corinthian church helps clarify it for us.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 10, Paul says this, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And let's remember that Paul is writing this to Christians, to believers, to the church at Corinth.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

And so I think if we bring this together with what Jesus said, it's clear. When Jesus says that those who hear his word and believe will not be judged, he means not that they won't appear before him at the judgment, but that they won't be condemned.

[25 : 20] Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, will not be condemned, will not be punished, but is crossed over from death to life.

This is really good news. It's frightening to think that one day we will all stand before Jesus and our lives will be like an open book to him.

Everything we've done and said and thought, all of our secrets exposed, but Jesus says that even though this day is coming when we will stand before him, whoever hears and believes his words now will receive eternal life and on that day when I call you out of your grave, says Jesus, if you heard and believed my words, you will not be condemned.

Instead, you will rise to eternal life, to live forever. Do you hear Jesus' words?

Do you believe that the Father sent him to speak them to you? It can be all too easy today to get caught up in the emotion and the hype that's come about because of the spread of this virus around the world.

[26 : 49] Is this the beginning of the end of the world? Is this the start of the one world government? Is this, is Elon Musk's Neuralink, the precursor technology to the mark of the beast?

The truth is we don't know. It's certainly not clear or obvious from these kinds of things that we read about in the news that this is the very end.

At least it doesn't seem that way from what I read in the scriptures. leaders. And so if our thoughts do go to the very end times, to the end of the world, I hope and I pray that they will go to what is clear and to what we can be certain about, to what is truly one of the most important realities of the end of times.

What Jesus said that day to the religious leaders, believe that a day is coming when he will judge the world and bring justice to the nations.

Final punishment and condemnation, justice is coming, but there is a way to be spared what we all deserve.

[28 : 01] If we listen to and believe the words of Jesus, the one God has sent into the world to be the rescue, to be the savior, this is the truth more than anything that our world needs to hear, especially in times like this.

And so may we believe it, may we cling to it, and may we speak it with gentleness and respect and love to those who are willing to listen.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for these words. I pray and ask that you would give each of us ears to hear what you are saying through your son here.

Increase in all of our hearts faith and trust in what you have said through Jesus. We thank you for this gracious gift and offer of life, eternal life, that we don't need to do anything for except believe and receive it as a gift.

You're amazing, Lord. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[29 : 25] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.