

The Coming Judgment

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Date: 18 February 2024

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. Jesus is alive. He is. And we are a privileged people to live with a risen Savior, a God that is living, alive after He brought about salvation.
- I want to greet you in the name of that Savior, Jesus Christ. And when these young ladies brought their special number, they had a complete sermon there.
- And it matched perfectly into what I had prepared here. So I want to thank you for that. It was very, very fitting. As we continue to move forward in the book of Revelations, when it comes to the concept of judgment, is that something that we look forward to?
- Do we understand the judgments of God? For when we think of judgment, it is in a sense repayment.
- Paying for what we have reaped or sown, I should say. Or reaped what we sowed. And the Bible outlines God's judgment program as well, where every sin will be accounted for, will require payment.
- [2 : 0 5] And as we continue in Revelations, we will see that John, after chapters 2 and 3, was caught up to heaven, to the throne of God.
- And it's way back in January, where we had the message on chapter 4. So we had quite a few events in between that have stopped us from proceeding.
- But back in chapter 4, we saw John being caught up to the throne and where he was going to be shown things that must yet take place.
- And chapters 2 and 3 were things that are the church age. And now John was given what is to come.
- And this morning, we're going to learn it is God's judgment program on this earth. On this earth.
- [3 : 2 1] And it's what we call the tribulation period. The seven years of trouble here on earth where God will punish, inflict judgment, His wrath on the inhabitants of the earth.
- And so that is the context of this. So as John is caught up in chapter 4, he is before the throne.
- It's a very unique or beautiful picture of God on His throne in all His glory. Very hard to describe.
- And I think John must have found it very hard. But as he is before that throne, seeing and experiencing the worship to God, we have chapter 5.
- And he starts and he says, And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back sealed with seven seals.
- [4 : 3 2] And then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open to open the scroll and to loose its seals?
- And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look at it. And so I wept much because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll or to look at it.

So as we look at this introductory part of the chapter, we see now that the one sitting on the throne holds a scroll in His hand.

Now today we have books. Back then they had a scroll rolled up written on the inside and outside with the seven seals on it.

And of course, the first question that comes to mind is, What is this scroll? What does it represent? And the second question that comes to mind is, why does John weep?

[5 : 52] And it says, he wept much. He wept much. So as we seek to answer that, the scroll is often referred to as the title deed to the earth, and in it are the judgments that are reserved for the earth before the millennium can come.

So it's a scroll that contains the judgments of God that will be unleashed or poured out during the seven years that will follow.

And if you're in church next Sunday, Lord willing, chapter 6, he will be removing the seals and the first judgments will happen.

And we're going to begin to see it unfold. And so the rest of the book actually explains what's in the scroll. As one at a time, they are revealed and opened.

And the world experiences what God has in store for it. And so that is, they are the judgments of God reserved for this time.

[7 : 22] The judgments of God. Now, that is a time where none of us want to be present.

And as we go through the rest of this book and we see the extremity of these judgments, we're going to be convinced more and more, I don't want to be on earth during that time.

And by the grace of God, we understand that He will remove His people before His judgment program starts.

Commonly referred to as the rapture. You know, why judgment? Since in the beginning of the Scriptures, when man rebelled against God and disobeyed, judgment has been waiting.

for all of mankind. And God is a righteous God and He must deal fairly with our sin.

[8 : 48] And so, as a preliminary statement, there are two options. either I can bear the judgment for my sin or I can accept the Lord Jesus is taking my judgment for me on the cross of Calvary.

There's two options. No more and no less. every man and woman born into this world has two options when it comes to this.

No exceptions. No exceptions. God says He's going to gather the nations into judgment.

And I thought we'd turn to Joel, the prophet Joel, chapter 3, and read the first two verses. Let's read the first two verses.

Joel, chapter 3. He says, For behold, in those days and at that time when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

[10 : 33] And I will enter into judgment with them on account of my people, my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, they have also divided up my land.

And it's prophetic of this time period that John is just beginning to witness in the vision that God reveals to him what is going to take place at that time.

And here Joel, the prophet, says, God will gather the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat in Israel and he will enter into judgment with them.

And we know that is going to be the battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation period, the final battle when Christ returns. And so it's kind of symbolic of God's purpose to this world to reveal judgment on sin.

So here the nations refer to the Gentiles in Joel's prophecy and they will be gathered in Israel.

[11 : 50] If we turn to Zechariah chapter 13 and verses 7-9.

Zechariah 13 verse 7. Zechariah 13. He says, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my companion.

Says the Lord of hosts, strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. And then I will turn my hand against the little ones and it shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two-thirds of it shall be cut off and die but one-third shall be left in it.

I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name and I will answer them and I will say this is my people and each one will say the Lord is my God.

So here we see that in the tribulation period that Israel is not exempt from God's judgment. And he actually spells out and he says I will cut off two-thirds.

[13 : 23] two-thirds of the Jewish nation, the Jewish people will die in these seven years.

And one-third will come through refined as by fire and they, that one-third are going to turn to the Lord and believe.

And they will enter the millennium kingdom. So God's judgment is not only on the Gentiles but on Israel as well for their unbelief.

And so we see the justice of God, the necessity of God. we think of injustice and in our world, our world is surrounded by injustices and it is not pleasurable to experience injustice, being treated wrongly, unfairly.

and yet every one of us here has been treated that way probably numerous times. And it's a result that we live in a fallen world where sin reigns.

[14 : 52] And sadly, I too am the cause of someone else being treated unjustly. As we too fail.

And so that is real life. Yet it makes us look forward to this day where justice will prevail. You know, I came across an illustration, a short story that illustrates this, and it also has a spiritual lesson for us.

It's a couple paragraphs. I thought I would read it. And it's written by Tim Zingale. And he says, In the west, during the torrential spring rains, the rivers frequently rise and flood the lowlands.

There was a little girl who lived in the valley of one of these mighty rivers, and one weekend, she was going with her parents to visit friends. As she was packing, she placed her dearest possession in her suitcase, a little rag doll.

She had made it with her own hands and cared for it with a mother's love. But her mother told her she could not bring it with her because it was too dirty, threadbare, and falling apart.

[16 : 26] Reluctantly, she left it at home. Over the weekend, a sudden storm hit the valley, and the river reached over its banks and flooded all their homes.

The little girl stood on the hillside looking down into the flooded valley, and all she could think of was her little rag doll. And when she could return home, she rushed into her room, and her worst fear was realized.

The flood had washed away her rag doll. One day, while she was in town, she happened to pass a salvage store where objects found in the muddy streets were sold to raise money.

for the flood victims. To her surprise and overwhelming joy, there was her little rag doll with a price tag on it, 25 cents.

She had not money of her own. She went back home and helped her mother clean up. She earned a few pennies. She also helped the neighbors and earned a few more, and finally, she had her 25 cents.

[17 : 47] she rushed to the store, placed her little sacrifice on the counter, and claimed her doll. As she walked from the store, clutching her treasure in her arms, she was heard to say, I made you, I lost you, I bought you back, and now you are really mine.

that so well demonstrates what our Lord did.

He created us, and we wandered away, and He brought us back forevermore.

as we think of today, as we live with injustice, Romans 12 tells us, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

in Sunday school in James chapter 5 this morning, we studied that we were instructed to be patient in the Lord, to wait for Him patiently, as He will restore justice.

[19 : 25] He will restore it in His time. As God's children, we are forbidden to take justice in our own hands, to repay evil with evil.

For God says, vengeance is mine, I will do it. And it's always, or not always easy for us to remember this.

And that is why we're instructed to back off when we're wronged and to turn to the Lord with it, to wait patiently, to understand that God will repay in His time, in His program.

And that is what John is witnessing the beginning of this program. God will be to be in the world. And then John, when he sees that scroll, and no one is found to open it, to take the scroll out of the Father's hand, and to open it to reveal its contents, it says, John wept much.

Now, why would John weep? if we understand that this scroll, this judgment program for God, has to happen in order for the kingdom to come.

[21 : 02] the thousand-year reign where Jesus will rule follows the time of judgment.

And I believe that for John, who would have understood this, what this scroll contained, to no one being found to open it, and to realize, is God's program coming to a halt?

Are we never going to see justice? For where was John caught up from when he saw this vision?

He was exiled on the island of Patmos. He was persecuted as he had faced much in his life. And so John, too, waits for God's vengeance.

God as he gives in to God with that. And so John wept much to wrestle with, is God's program going to stop?

[22 : 17] And of course, we know the whole story. In verse 5, God says, but one of the elders said to me, do not weep. Behold, the line of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seals.

And so we are introduced to the one that is worthy to open this judgment program.

And he is first introduced as the line of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. And a further description that follows.

And so we want to look at that. Verse 6, And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

So on one side we have portrayed as a lion and on the other side a lamb. Now, that's almost polar opposites.

[23 : 40] And a lion is big and ferocious and powerful and majestic and a lamb is gentle and unable to defend itself, meek.

So we have these two pictures of Christ portrayed here. the lion representing Christ's majesty at his second coming.

And so the lion part is referring to his coming again in judgment. A lion, it speaks of his sovereignty, of his ability to rule, to judge, and perhaps also speaks of God's government or ability to take over the millennial kingdom.

And so, sorry? The strength with that. Yeah. The lion has strength, Mr. Tychrope says, yes. Very much so.

And so he will overpower, conquer, his enemies in this time. And so that's the lion part of him represented here.

[25 : 02] So, I'm not sure what did John actually see, that he describes it in this manner. What did he hear?

And the other side, the lamb refers to his first coming. God remember John first identified him as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world in John chapter 1.

And so the lamb refers to his meekness at his first coming. As a lamb, he is the savior.

As a lamb, he was judged and put to the cross. as a lion, he will come to to judge.

But as a lamb, he submitted himself to judgment. And he took my judgment. He took all of our judgment.

[26 : 15] the lamb refers to the grace of God in providing salvation for us.

And the lion, the strength of God in judgment and in rule. And so the two illustrations, seeing both sides of Christ and the purposes of him in his first and second coming are very clearly displayed in what John sees.

It mentions here that the lamb that he sees as though it had been slain, referring to, of course, the cross, having shed his blood for us, and as well, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into the earth.

And so the horns represent the right to rule, authority as kings, both in Daniel and in Revelations when it talks about the ten horns, it talks about ten kings.

Excuse me. And could I get one of the ushers to get me some water, please?

[27 : 53] My voice isn't quite back yet. Thank you, Gil. And so here we have the lamb with seven horns versus the ten of the antichrist.

And seven here, I would believe, is the number of perfection as God's perfect ability to rule.

It's the number of perfection. And his complete and perfect power when he comes back the second time would be represented by the horns.

And of course, the seven spirits, we've talked about this, I think, twice already in Revelations, referring to the different characteristics of the sevenfold Spirit of God as the Holy Spirit.

And Isaiah 11, verse 2, spelled that out for us. And so it's again identified with Christ here. So then Jesus is worthy of taking that scroll and of starting to take the seals off one at a time to enter into judgment before his return.

[29 : 31] So Jesus will already be meeting out judgment during the seven years and then the final judgment when he returns and fights the battle of Armageddon.

But we see Jesus already in the picture during the seven years as he does that. John chapter 5, let's turn there. Let's pick up a verse there.

The Gospel of John. And I'll start in verse 20.

John 5, verse 20. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all things that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these that you may marvel.

For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.

[30 : 49] That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

So again, the picture is on Jesus Christ as the center of this time, of him who deserves to be worshipped for bringing about salvation.

And so the Father will cause the Son to be worshipped. And Philippians 2 speaks of every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. And so what follows in the rest of the chapter naturally is a worship scene.

And the ladies sung that well, describing that. In verse 8, Now when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy, so we have the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders here worshiping Jesus Christ and the Father.

[32 : 24] You are worthy to take the scroll, to open its seals, for you were slain. He's giving the reasons. In the song, they're singing praise to Him and identifying, for you were slain.

you have redeemed us to God by your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Isn't that beautiful? people, not just out of the Mennonite people or any other people group, but out of every tribe, tongue, people group and nation.

There are redeemed souls in right standing with the Lord. and so the four elders or the creatures, the living creatures and the 24 elders, they sing this song.

And you have made us kings or a kingdom of priests to our God and we shall reign on the earth. Again, looking ahead to what God has transformed us into and we will reign on the earth.

[33 : 55] Speaking again of when Jesus will come as a lion. Are you ready to reign? When the Lord comes and prepares us and we come back down with him, we will be ready.

We will be reigning with him. Every born-again believer has put their trust in Jesus Christ. And then verse 11, And I looked and I heard the voice of many angels.

Now the word many here is many. And it's defined for us. Many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders.

And the number of them was ten thousand ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. And these are God's created beings in the angelic world that did not fall with Satan.

These are the, well, we often say the good angels. And they are there. John sees, how big a number is this?

[35 : 23] It must be billions. It's huge. And John sees all these angels and they too are worshiping.

Verse 12 says, These angels sang with a loud voice, they're singing, worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

As they identify who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for us, then we ascribe to him power and riches and wisdom, strength and honor, glory and blessing.

It's a beautiful worship scene and then followed by another one. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them I heard saying, blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever.

Now we have all of God's creation worshipping. All of creation. All aspects. And so our Lord is worthy of worship.

[36 : 53] And as we get exposed to these Bible teachings, as we grow in this, that our daily walk needs to be filled with more and more worship.

Lifting up the Lord in honor in our lives. For he alone is worthy.

I wanted to end with a warning. I started with there's only two ways. We bear our own judgment or Christ.

And if we turn to Hebrews chapter 10, it's very sombering, sombering, sobering, that the author of Hebrews brings out so clearly.

In chapter 10 verse 26 and a few verses on. It just drives it home.

[38 : 08] And he has presented Christ as the high priest who has died for our sins, has entered into the holy of holies once and for all. And now he says, if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

What is he saying? If I have been exposed to Jesus Christ and that he has died for me and I pushed that away, God is saying, there is nothing more I can do for you.

There is nothing more I can do for you. But a certain fearful expectation of judgment.

I'll reread verse 26 and 27. For if we sin willfully after we receive the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

And that is God's judgment program. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

[39 : 44] And that's the age of law. How much worse punishment do you suppose will be thought worthy he who has trampled the Son of God under foot and counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and insulted the spirit of grace.

For we know him who said vengeance is mine I will repay says the Lord and again the Lord will judge his people.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Jesus is our only way out.

To put our faith in Jesus Christ that he took my place my judgment and without without Jesus in our life we will face the Lord and it's a fearful thing.

For the believer it is a joyful thing as we're going home. As we understand this let us make very sure that Jesus is my Savior that the peace of God can rule our hearts.

[41 : 33] Let's close. Father you alone are worthy.

as you provided salvation through your Son Lord that we could be redeemed bought back restored restored into fellowship.

And Lord as we saw this morning to be in blessing with you instead of in judgment.

And Father my heart my prayer is that if there is anyone present here this morning that is not sure Lord that you would speak that you would speak loudly and so loud Father that we cannot put the voice away but Lord that you would drive us to you to our knees God we thank you for the scriptures that give us your program so we can understand it and as we leave this morning with these thoughts Father may we rejoice that you have redeemed us out of that judgment thank you

Lord Jesus we pray this in your name amen amen