

Lions, Wolves & Sheep, Oh My!

Part 3: The Great Gospel Reset 2: Judgment is Coming

(preached 5/8/22)

Please turn to *John 3:16*.

LAST WEEK we began the section in this series I'm calling "The Great Gospel Reset" and asked the following questions:

- Is it possible that sharing a gospel that's either diluted or contains different ingredients is producing false converts?
- Signs of a FC are 1) lack of pursuing holy living, 2) remaining self-focused and self-centered, 3) treating God like a person Servant, 4) cannot endure persecution or adversity w/o questioning God's character or even their entire faith.
- Let's not be ashamed or afraid of the tougher parts of the Gospel message or be worried about whether it will drive unbelievers farther away from Christ or the Church.
- They're already separated from Him and, if they don't repent, their separation from Him will be eternal.
- A person will only be Saved when they know they need Saving.
- A person who already believes they're good feels no need to repent and grab a lifeline thrown to them.
- A person will only know they need Saving when they realize they're not good, are dead in their sins and trespasses, and cannot do anything to get themselves out of it.
- When this revelation is had, they need to know there is Someone holy, powerful, and loving enough to Save them and His Name is Christ Jesus!
- They must know He WANTS to Save them and this His motivation is His love for them.
- That His love will transform them from the inside out: the old self completely dies, is crucified with Christ, and we are born again made into HIS image.
- The entire Gospel message inspires a Godly sorrow for their own sin and unbelief, leading to repentance and Salvation.

TODAY I want to cover what I couldn't fit into last week's message which had already run over an hour! We're continuing to explore the true message of the Gospel to better equip us to share with unbelievers. Today we're going to address God's forgiveness and His wrath, along with a future Judgment.

CONFIRMATION: The Lord told me to exposit these verses 2 weeks ago, but I couldn't fit it into last week's sermon that was already over an hour long. Yesterday morning I wrote this sermon and, as you'll see, they're first on the list. After I was done with this section of today's message it was mid-afternoon and nap time! Becky and I have a ritual when we take naps together: we put on a soft You Tube video and fall asleep to it. She chose a sermon from one of our favorite preachers and, just as we were settling down, he began to quote and exposit the exact same verses...the confirmation of God is good!

John 3:16-21 (ESV)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Verse 16 is one of the most famous in history and rightfully so! I repeat: the motivation of God our Father in sending His own Son to us in human form was love. The Greek word for love used by John was *agapeo*, which is an action verb and denotes God’s action of GIVING us Jesus.

“GAVE” has a remarkable translation and goes further than the act of giving a gift like at a birthday or Christmas. ***It speaks to a deep commitment like a marriage vow, but done so in a passionate and vigorous manner.*** Imagine a man so in love with a woman that he goes all out on his marriage proposal. Not only is the ring made of fine gold and a flawless diamond, but he dresses to the hilt, gets down on one knee, and offers himself completely. In other words, He’s already “there” with his thoughts, feelings, intentions, and commitment. He’s fully invested in her already just as if they were already married, desiring to care for, provide, protect, and cover her with His love.

BRIDEGROOM. This is the context of John 3:16: Father God is offering His Son Jesus as a Bridegroom to anyone Who will believe in Him and Jesus, being part of the Godhead, is completely willing...He’s not just going along with this. He’s all in with His heart, mind, and Spirit!

LOOKS AT HUMANITY AND SEES: When He looks at humanity He sees 2 things: 1) He sees us treading water in a vast ocean with no land in sight, and the waters of said oceans are our sins and trespasses. 2) He not only wants to throw us a lifeline, but to reel us into His Kingdom ship—which He calls the New Jerusalem—so we can live with Him there forever!

COMMITTED TO US BEFORE. ***Before He was ever born to Mary, Jesus was already completely committed to us***, just as if we were already married! He’s got the ring, He’s dressed in fine white shining raiment resplendent with His glory, He already has a place prepared for us that where He is, there we may be also.

FORGIVENESS ONLY 1ST PART. Getting us out of that ocean is only the first part of the wonder-filled destiny He has in store for us! He'll give us immortality and seat us on thrones, putting our enemies under our feet! He will literally make us joint heirs of His entire Kingdom!

Verse 17: Jesus clearly saw the sin and wickedness within humanity and still does. When He came here the first time, as Messiah ben Joseph, He didn't show up to call fire down from heaven and burn everyone up in His wrath. When a couple of His disciples tried suggesting this upon a village who rejected Jesus, He replied:

Luke 9:54-56 (NKJV)

⁵⁴ And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

⁵⁶ For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them*." And they went to another village.

2 MESSIAH TYPES. Later in John's Gospel, Jesus makes it clear that Father God has committed ALL judgment to Him (*John 5:22-30*) and makes it clear there will be 2 separate time periods & missions for the Messiah. Jesus first coming is the Isaiah 53 suffering Messiah Who will go to the Cross and give Himself to humankind as I explained a few moments ago. He's throwing a lifeline to anyone willing to grab it and be Saved.

2nd COMING. When He returns later on as Messiah ben David, the Revelation 19 conquering King, there are no more lifelines...and I'll get to that in a few moments.

SAVE AT 1ST COMING. Suffice for now: *first coming of Christ was to Save people's souls by inspiring the Godly sorrow that leads to repentance and then Salvation.* He showed Himself to be the long-awaited Messiah and Savior, the Lamb of God Who takes away the world's sin by giving up His own life on the Cross.

John 3:18-20 REVEAL THAT EVEN THOUGH JESUS CAME AND FULLY INVESTED HIMSELF INTO US, SOME WILL STILL REJECT HIM.

He proves that there will be a time when His lifeline is no longer available but, instead, there will be a time of divine judgment where a terrible sentence is passed down.

KING NOT JUDGE. Context here isn't a judge in a courtroom, but a King sitting on a throne executing His decision upon all who are standing before Him.

MY TESTIMONY. Last week I shared my testimony of how the Lord showed me all of my sins and the consequences of them upon others...all the hurt I'd caused. I was terrified because I thought I was at my final judgment but, in fact, I wasn't.

AGE OF CROSS. Right now we're in the age of the Cross where every unbeliever still has the chance to repent and receive Christ as their Savior. Believers still have the opportunity to deny our flesh, pick up our own crosses, and follow Jesus to Calvary Hill where we die to the self.

AGE OF THRONE. Coming soon, however, will be the age of the Throne where risen Jesus, Messiah ben David, will *pass judgment upon anyone Who rejected His proposal and they will all stand condemned to eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire.* When Jesus returns to earth as Messiah ben David, He will make war upon all the unbelieving nations of the world Who rebelled against Him and He will destroy them. He will not remain the suffering bleeding Lamb forever.

I WAS PROPERLY WARNED (TESTIMONY). We need to understand the what's going to happen so that we can properly share Kingdom Salvation with unbelievers. I testified last week that when I was kneeling before Christ, I remembered the Christians who warned about my sins and the coming judgment of Jesus.

HATED ON EARTH, LOVED LATER. Listen to me carefully: on earth I hated those people and resented them for challenging the prideful, self-righteous image I had of myself as a good person. Yet kneeling before Jesus I loved them for warning me about this very moment. They'd tried to tell me the truth and tried to get me to repent. Jesus said His disciples would "lose" their lives here on earth to gain eternal life with Him later.

ALTERNATE SCENARIO. Now imagine a far different and more horrifying scenario. Imagine if Christians had told me how awesome I was and that God affirmed me just as I was, even though I was an unbeliever still in my sins. Picture them telling me God didn't want me to think about my sins, but only wanted me to be happy and realize all my goals, hopes, and dreams. Imagine if greater emphasis had been placed upon me being freed from my fears, anxiety, and depression vs. no longer being a slave to my trespasses.

If that "gospel" had been preached and now I'm kneeling before Christ, I would have felt like I'd been lied to by the Church and now it was too late.

ETERNAL LIVES DEPEND. We cannot make this mistake because eternal lives literally depend on it. For any who reject Jesus as their Savior and remain in the darkness, as He said in John's Gospel, the wrath of God remains on them. In the very same chapter, John 3, look at the last verse:

John 3:36 (ESV)

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

WHY IS GOD ANGRY? Why does His wrath exist? How can it be abated? We are made in God's image and understand this better than we might think.

All anger comes from injustice, real or perceived.

SINS AGAINST US. When someone sins against us or against someone we love, our God-given conscience immediately flies into action and points out that the scales are out of balance and we get angry. Someone cuts us off in traffic, gossips about us behind our back, forgets our birthday, calls us a name or impugns our character, neglects us in some way, you name it.

Every sin against us is debt and this debt builds up with time. When the debt gets too high and there's been no "payment" then relationships end, divorce occurs, or we get fired or leave the job. Perhaps we vent from our mouths and say terrible things or even take a swing! Believe it or not, all these actions are attempts to rebalance the scales of justice.

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS. Unlike us, God is completely holy and righteous, doesn't sin, and doesn't deal with fleshly desires. All sins against Him and those He loves are completely real and not perceived. Even though His wrath builds, He doesn't lose His temper or control at all. I've heard unbelievers talk about God throwing temper tantrums and, if that were true, there would be no universe left! If He lost control for even one moment, all creation would be wiped out!

100% JUST. God's anger is completely righteous and when He decides to execute His wrath is 100% just. Reading the Book of Revelation can be scary because we see the Lord pouring out His wrath upon the unbelieving world and please note that, after He does so, both John and voices from Heaven say the same:

Revelation 16:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.

⁵ And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"

⁷ And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!"

Sin is debt that must be paid for. If it's not, then God is neither righteous nor just. He never turns a blind eye to wrongdoing, great or small. There's a local news anchor who was recently exposed trying to solicit an underage boy and lots of people are angry...why? Their God-programmed conscience saw an injustice being done and, other than him being fired, no legal action has been taken that we know of. If he gets away with it will that be just? Of course not.

LAW FULFILLED. God is holy, holy, holy and cannot allow even the smallest injustice to go unpaid for. Even Jesus said "every jot and tittle" of the Law would be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). I told you last week that just my sins were like a vast ocean! Now imagine the collective sins of humanity, all of which have been recorded in Heaven since Adam and Eve!

Humanity cannot pay this debt and, if it remains unpaid, the wrath of God will descend. One single person cannot pay their own debt for even that is like an ocean.

We need a Savior and there is only one Name, under Heaven, given among men whereby we must be Saved: Christ Jesus!

LAST DAYS. I believe that we are in the last of the last days before He returns to this earth as Messiah ben David and thus time is short. Unbelievers need to get right with God and it needs to happen now.

WHAT ABOUT WRATH? Jesus went to the Cross and shed His blood, completely satisfying Father's anger.

Isaiah 53:3-12 (NKJV)

³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked-- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the LORD

shall prosper in His hand.

¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

All this happened to Jesus because He took the wrath of His Father upon Himself, completely!

“If Jesus took it all, then why are you saying God’s wrath still exists, Scott?”

THROWN LIFELINE. In His passionate proposal to us He’s saying that He’s paid our debt. He’s thrown us a lifeline whilst we’re treading water and saying “you’re going to drown in your own sin! You can’t keep treading water forever! I’ll save you...grab the lifeline I just threw you and I’ll pull you in!”

IF WE KNOW WE’RE DROWNING IN AN OCEAN OF OUR OWN MAKING, AND CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES, WE’LL GRAB THE LINE!

If we pridefully reject His offer, thinking we’re not that bad off or that we can swim ourselves to safety, **then we choose to pay for our own sins.**

PAID BY HIM OR US. The wrath of Father God is either going to be paid by the Blood of Jesus or our own, if we reject Him. If we choose to shed our own blood, symbolically speaking, then the wrath of God remains on us.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 (ESV)

⁵ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—

⁶ since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

⁷ and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

¹⁰ when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

I conclude today by saying ***God does NOT want this for anyone!*** A parent of rebellious child doesn't want that child to suffer, feel pain, or go to jail—they want that child to repent of any wicked way and live righteously.

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

SECOND COMING. The promise Peter is referring to is the Second Coming of Jesus.

GOOD NEWS is that anyone who grabs the lifeline transfers the wrath to Jesus, Who already paid for everything! Who took it willingly!

Romans 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.