

Lessons on Judgment, Part 1

I. Intro

- A. Parable of the King and his 3 sons
- B. Judgment is not a topic we discuss much. But Jesus discussed judgment, heaven and hell often and in vivid terms.
- C. Hebrews 6 gives us six “elementary teachings” of the Christian faith, two of them are the resurrection and judgment.
- D. We discussed the resurrection last week. Today, we will look at judgment.
 - 1. What does the Bible say?
 - 2. What did Jesus teach?
 - 3. *How does God's grace, compassion and love “fit” with his judgment?*
 - 4. 2 goals of this lesson:
 - a) Biblical understanding of judgment
 - b) Able to teach effectively on judgment
- E. Recap last week on the resurrection
 - 1. We die, don't go to heaven and appear before God in judgment. Instead we go to Hades
 - a) The faithful and obedient to Paradise (thief on the cross) or Abraham's bosom (parable of the rich man and Lazarus)
 - b) The unfaithful and disobedient to Hades where there will be great suffering.
 - 2. When Jesus returns, the dead will be raised (all those in Hades and in Paradise) and the living and the dead will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged.

F. Revelation 20:11-21:8

1. 2 options: lake of fire or heaven to be with Christ and God forever.
2. Is this “figurative” or literal?
 - a) The world mocks a literal reading.
 - b) Early Christians took the concept of eternal punishment and hell very seriously and literally:

(1) *Tertullian (c. 197)*: We receive our awards under the judgment of al all-seeing God, and we Christians anticipate eternal punishment from Him for sin. Therefore, we alone make a real effort to attain a blameless life. We do this under the influence of... the magnitude of the threatened torment. For it is not merely long-enduring, rather it is everlasting.

(2) *From the Martyrdom of Polycarp (c. 135)*: They despised all the torments of this world, redeeming themselves from eternal punishments by the suffering of a single hour... for they kept before their view escape from that fire which is eternal and will never be quenched.

(3) From Second Clement (c. 150): He will enjoy the immortal fruit of the resurrection... A blessed time waits for him. He will be joyful for an eternity without grief, living again above with the fathers.

(4) If we threaten Gehenna (hell), which is a reservoir of secret fire under the earth for purposes of punishment, we likewise have derision heaped upon us. – *Tertullian (c. 197)*

- G. Vs. 13: judged according to their works.

II. Old Testament and Judgment

A. Many examples of judgment in Old Testament, why many people don't like it and prefer the New Testament, which many say focuses on God's love and grace.

B. Last week: Intro to OT, Chuck gave many examples of God's grace and love in the OT. God doesn't change, same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

C. This week: lots of examples of God's judgment in the New Testament. God doesn't change.

D. But start with **Genesis 6:5-8, 11-14, 18-7:1, 10-24**

1. God is grieved, in pain over the state of the human race
 - a) "... every intent of the thoughts within [man's] heart was only evil continually. So God was grieved that He had made man on the earth...." (6:5-6)
2. God punishes the wicked, saves the righteous
3. Only a few people saved (Noah's family)
4. Door was shut by God, no one else could enter
5. Complete destruction
6. **Heb. 11:7** tells us more
 - a) Noah was "divinely warned" by God...
 - b) ...and was "moved with godly fear"
 - c) Noah was righteous and obeyed: he built an ark – the proof of his saving faith
 - d) His righteousness and ark building (and not participating in the accepted and normalized wickedness) condemned those around him.

E. Many OT examples of God destroying those who outright oppose Him (God's enemies)

1. Sodom and Gomorrah
2. The Exodus and Egypt (Ex. 12:29-30)
3. Jericho

F. But also, many OT examples of judgment on God's People

1. One example: **1 Cor. 10:1-12**

- a) Paul, the author of Romans and who understood and wrote so much about God's grace also wrote this
- b) Israel fell in the desert; most were destroyed; only a few were made it to the Promised Land, God's judgment for their disobedience.
- c) This serves as an example for us (v. 6, 11)
 - (1) This is speaking to God's people today, the Church!
 - (2) Not once baptized (in the doors) then we get a free ticket. Must be faithful to God's commands till the end
 - (3) This is a reoccurring theme in Jesus' parables and teaching.

III. Jesus, the Judge

A. **Matthew 3:7-12** John's introduction to Jesus

1. Winnowing fan (judgment)
2. Unquenchable fire (fear, warning)
3. Not: "He came to die for you and is really loving and kind."
4. I struggle with "fire and brimstone" preachers on the street and people who proclaim on Facebook that others are going to hell

- a) What was Jesus' message about judgment, heaven, and hell?
- b) How did he deliver this message?
- c) How should I deliver this message?

B. Matthew 24:3, 11-14, 29-31, 36-44

- 1. Jesus says he will return and judge the nations
- 2. He will return with great power, no one will miss it
- 3. This will be the end
- 4. All tribes (nations) will be there.
- 5. People will be caught off guard, eating, drinking, going to Trader Joe's, working in their yards, eating lunch, etc. (Like in Noah's day)
- 6. The angels will gather God's elect from around the world.
- 7. The message: be ready!
- 8. This is what Jesus taught.
 - a) He was either crazy, deceived, or telling the truth. Must take our stand on one of these.
 - b) If telling the truth, significant consequences.

IV. The Expectations and Heart of our Judge

A. Matt. 24:45-51

- 1. Two options:
 - a) Faithful servant rewarded
 - b) Evil servant punished
 - c) I expect you to take care of your fellow servants. That is what I am like. I am God. I expect you to do the same. If not, I will call you to account and you will be punished.

d) Parenting example: I expect you to be kind to your sister.
If you hit your sister, you will be punished.

B. **Matthew 5:1-11** - Beatitudes

1. Expectations for those who will make it into the kingdom of heaven and who shall be called sons of God. Not an ideal.

a) **Matt. 5:19-20** – our righteousness is to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven.

b) **Matthew 23:28, 33** - but not just appearing righteous

2. Jesus' expectations for us are the same that He lived out, perfectly.

3. What a blessing, that this is the One who will judge us (full of mercy, humility, who mourns, loves righteousness, etc.)!

Lessons on Judgment, Part 2

V. Intro

- A. Tsunami
- B. Review of last lesson

VI. The Fear of God

- A. Isaiah 11:1-4
 - 1. Jesus (Jesse is the father of David, from whom Jesus came)
 - 2. Jesus filled with God's Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, godliness, counsel, might.
 - 3. Jesus shall judge not by reputation nor convict with common talk
 - 4. Will judge the cause of the humble and slay the ungodly
 - 5. v. 3: "The Spirit of the fear of God shall fill Him." Jesus feared God
 - 6. But, intimate, faithful, obedient, loving relationship with God:
 - a) **Matthew 3:13-17** "This is my beloved Son. With Him I am well pleased."
 - b) **Matthew 26:36-46** (in the Garden)
 - c) **John 17:20-23** (Unity with the Father)
 - d) **Luke 23:32-34, 39-47** (intimacy with the Father, condemnation and salvation)
 - 7. Fear and love are not opposites.
 - a) Jesus feared God. But Jesus so close to God: deep relationship, friendship, trust.
 - b) Faithful, loving, obedience includes fear, just like Noah.

B. Another example: **Matthew 10:28-33**

1. We are to fear God.
2. God deeply loves and cares for us.
3. Many have experienced fear as a result of violence, assault, intimidation, etc. This is not what we are talking about.
4. Fear: a respect and honoring and humility before the Creator of the Universe. Who happens to be characterized with humility, selflessness and love.
5. A great mystery and wonder: worthy of our meditation and consideration.

VII. The Standards of Judgment (the Commands)

A. Peacemaking (anger) - **Matthew 5:21-26**

B. Purity (lust) - **Matthew 5:27-30**

1. Very graphic
2. Better to go to go through life maimed. Example: cutting off your hand.

C. Our words - **Matthew 12:35-36**

D. Forgiveness (unforgiving) - **Matthew 18:21-35**

E. Hard work and diligence (laziness) – **Matthew 25:14-30**

F. Caring for those in need (not caring/ignoring) – **Matthew 25:31-46**

1. God's heart: care for the least, feed, heal, clothe, visit (Jesus' life)
2. We will be condemned into everlasting punishment or enter into eternal life based on WHAT WE DO. (vs. 40, 45)
3. Are we saved by faith? Yes.

- a) Our faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God.
- b) We have been ransomed from Satan. Only Jesus' blood can do that.
- c) But, our saving faith is accompanied by works and obedience.
 - (1) Hebrews 11 – Noah is just one example of one who had real saving faith, which produced and showed itself by works (righteousness and building the ark).
 - (2) If we are not living in obedience to God's commands, we do not have saving faith.
 - (3) Will we fall? Yes. Can re confess our sins and be forgiven? Yes. Amen.

G. Matthew 18:1-9

- 1. How do we make it to heaven? Become like a child
 - a) greatest in Kingdom of Heaven and
 - b) ... required to make it to heaven.
- 2. But, cause someone who has humbled themselves like a child to sin.
 - a) better to drown than go to hell.
 - (1) Example of two Boston workers who drowned in ditch.
 - (2) Everlasting hell fire is a worse death.
- 3. Vs. 10-14 Jesus'/God's heart
 - a) "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost...."
 - b) "... it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish...."

VIII. Who Will Be Judged?

- A. Non-Christians (Rev. 20) and...
- B. Christians
 - 1. **Matthew 25:1-13** - 10 Virgins
 - a) 5 prepared, 5 who were not
 - b) All waiting for the bridegroom
 - c) “Lord, Lord”, yet He did not know them
 - d) **vs. 10** - door is shut (reminds me of Noah and arc)
 - 2. **Matthew 13:47-50** - Net
 - a) “Kingdom of God is like”
 - b) Many fish were caught in the net (many Christians)
 - c) At end of age: angels will come forth and separate the wicked among the just
 - d) Cast into hell
 - 3. Not safe (or saved) because you go to Church and read your Bible
 - a) Judged on your righteousness, our faith (which is accompanied by obedience and works)
 - b) Danger of complacency

IX. Conclusion

A. Jesus spoke much about judgment, eternal reward (heaven), and eternal punishment (hell). Why?

1. Warning of what is going to happen. He wants us to be ready. He cares for us.
2. Keeps us from sin – why would I sin and jeopardize danger of hell or forfeit my reward and eternity with God?
3. Helps us keep perspective – what is most important
4. Keeps us from despair (trials and injustice)
5. Joy – the hope of eternity with God, eternal blessings (\$25K at end of month)
6. “Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.” 2 Cor. 5:11

B. How did Jesus teach about hell?

1. I appreciate those who have the courage to talk about eternal reward and punishment.
2. Jesus often spoke directly (Sermon on the Mount)
3. Jesus also spoke in stories/parables (mysteries for people with seeking hearts to mine meaning from)
4. One of the six elementary teachings of the Christian faith (Heb. 6)
5. This needs to be a priority, a foundational issue that we discuss and that we are teaching others.

C. The miracle of Kamaishi