

Judgment of God – Part III

First Poster. You remember we began at the beginning where God told us to begin; in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. That sets up God immediately as distinctly different from anything else in all of existence by at least these two criteria. He is the only uncreated thing in all of existence; and He is the only self determined thing in all of existence. That means that every single thing in existence gets its value determined and established by God. Receiving that revelation of God immediately quickens within us the revelation of the Holiness of God. He is simply other than. He is other than anything else that ever has existed or ever will exist. He cannot be encapsulated by the human mind; He can't be fully explained by human communication and understanding; He is not a little bit different; He is not different by subtleties; this God is simply other than anything else including ourselves. The only proper response of the human heart awakened to the Holiness of God is what's called the fear of the Lord; the awe and reverence of God because a God who is that unique, that different, that other than and not regarded in awe and reverence simply means that we cannot regard anything in awe and reverence because there is nothing else which even approaches this Holy God of Genesis 1:1. So if we don't regard this God as Holy operating in the fear of the Lord, it simply means that we are in awe and reverence of ourselves because we have declared we will never be in awe and reverence of anything because there is nothing which comes close to the God of Genesis 1:1.

Until you're quickened to the revelation of the Holiness of God, you'll continue to define sin by your own frames of reference. But according to God, you can use these frames of reference to understand sin. Sin being anything that departs from God, from what He is and how He views everything else. Since He is truth, truth is what God is and how that God views everything else; any departure from that is a lie. Faith—without faith it is impossible to please God. Every man who has ever lived has walked by faith in something and we are called in the fear of the Lord to walk by faith in the Holy God of Genesis 1:1. Any word or deed that is not rooted in faith in that God Who is Holy and revealed to us beginning in Genesis 1:1 is based on unbelief in that God. So it's always either/or; either this or that. We are either in obedience to how this God views reality or we in rebellion against how this God views reality. Either His thoughts are higher than our thoughts or we rebel and declare that no, my thoughts are higher than Your thoughts as we walk in rebellion against what He has declared as how He views reality.

And ultimately, the root of sin, is who is the judge? Either God is the judge of all things, including me and all of my words and deeds or I have declared myself as the judge of God. Remember Job revealed that to us as he kept saying if I can gain an audience with this God, I will argue my case before Him. And God replied by simply saying, where were you when I created the Heavens and the Earth? Because either the creator of the Heavens and the Earth is the judge of all things or you, a man, a created being are judging Me; one of those two things. Once we are quickened to the revelation of sin, then we can understand the simple math of God. His Holiness with our sin in comparison, the equal sign being a judgment yields the reality of Hell. And why is that? Because Habakkuk 1:13 simply explains – God cannot approve evil. He cannot look on wickedness with favor and evil and wickedness can be thought of as anything that departs from God—what He is and how He views reality. Anything that departs from His will, His purposes, His plan and His character is sin and has to be dealt with because God cannot approve any departure from Himself. The math is then changed, for us as Christians, by the second equation. The Holiness of God with the sin of man in comparison plus the Cross of Christ yields the reality of Heaven. Because Jesus Christ took our sin upon Him; He became sin so that His righteousness is then imputed to us.

Last time, we looked at judgment; some individual characteristics of the judgment of God. It will be individual; it will be based on you and not someone else. It will be all inclusive right down to every detail of your life. It will be according to the light that you have and God has ensured that every man has a lot of light. Romans 1:18-20, remember, just look at what has been made and every man is without excuse. We can't look at a chair without concluding intelligent design and skilled craftsmanship. So how are we to look at the complexity of the created order and then presume by chance, by coincidence? It will be confirmed by the conscience of the human heart. It will include the secrets of the heart. It will be by Jesus; it will be truth based on how God views reality, not how man views reality; so there will be no moral relativism presented there. It will be just because God is either just or merciful, but never unjust and it will be patient. Because He came to save the world 2000 years ago and has yet to fully judge the world.

We looked at wrath; we're dealing with number 5, eternal wrath when I speak of the judgment of God as we're doing today. But also we're reminded that wrath can include the sowing and reaping wrath. What you sow, you will reap. Abandonment wrath—when God gives you over to the fullness of the release of the evil in your heart. Cataclysmic wrath such as the flood and the destruction of Sodom. End-times wrath such as the tribulation; but eternal wrath is our subject that we're talking about.

So today we move from holiness, sin, continue judgment and begin to talk about Hell. Now we often think that we have experienced Hell on Earth and you heard that said so commonly in our language. I went through Hell. But we need to assure ourselves that we have not experienced Hell. Here on planet Earth, God still forbears. That is to say He holds back. He holds back the full outpouring of His wrath; but there, after final judgment, God will pour out His wrath in unrestrained fury. He is Holy, He is other than; so the wrath that He pours out will be an other than kind of wrath that cannot be fully understood by the human mind. Here we have diversion; one of our favorite techniques of coping with any unpleasantness is to divert our attention from the unpleasant to something more pleasant. Food, work, play, friends, fellow Christians; but there for the unsaved no diversion. Hell and nothing but Hell continually and eternally. Here we have an opportunity to lighten our burden and even to escape that final judgment. But there, no escape. Wrath, nothing but wrath, nothing but the fullness of wrath, continually and forever. So what is God's attitude towards those in Hell? The characteristics that He has revealed to ourselves about Him...His love, His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness, His forbearance, His pity; every aspect that we think of as the pleasant part of God will be gone forever, never for one moment to return. All that's left is truth and justice. The truth about how God views the reality of anyone who rejects His Son who is the one way to salvation.

Susan is going to read for us, Proverbs 1:20-31. This describes what wisdom says. "Wisdom shouts in the street, she lifts her voice in the square; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city, she utters her sayings: How long, O naïve ones, will you love simplicity? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge? Turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention; and you neglected all my counsel, and did not want my reproof; I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, when your dread comes like a storm, and your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come on you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be satiated with their own devices."

Next poster. So again we see in the Scripture words used such as truth, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. So let's remind ourselves what truth is. Truth is what God is and how God views everything else. So in short form, it's how God views reality. Knowledge then is a tidbit of truth; a tidbit of how God views reality. Understanding can be thought of as in-depth tidbits of truth about a primary tidbit of truth. That is to say a second dimension to the wisdom and knowledge of God. Wisdom itself can be thought of as a godly integration and application of understanding and knowledge. In other words, taking a primary tidbit of truth, taking in-depth tidbits of truth about the primary tidbit of truth, adding it together and applying it as God Himself would do, based on how God views the reality in which you are processing and applying His wisdom.

So the people in that Scripture are described as rejecting His truth, rejecting His knowledge, rejecting His understanding, rejecting His wisdom; and thus, walking in self determination. Rejecting the fear of the Lord, it says. Because at every moment of your thought life, you're doing one of two things. You're either operating in the fear of the Lord with truth being how He views reality; or you're operating in self determination judging how God views reality. It's one of those two things with no in between. You see, we like to believe that life is God and horrible sin and everything in between is kind of neutral; but in reality the way God views it, it's either/or. At every moment in your thought life, you're either operating for Him or against Him. There is no middle ground. It's more like a football field with a line of scrimmage down the middle, remember? Every parcel of that football field belongs to one team or the other. Either/or. The line of scrimmage is more an infinitesimally thin imaginary line dividing the two. And whatever portion of the field is not defended actively by its team will immediately be taken over by the other team. So there is no huge middle ground about which God is neutral. At every moment of your thought life, you're either operating in the fear of the Lord regarding Him as Holy based on how He views reality; or you're operating in something else. And anything else is contrary to what He is and how He views it, you see. So that is self determination; so when we're not operating in His thoughts being higher than our thoughts; we're operating in our thoughts being higher than His thoughts. There is no neutral ground.

We read in that Scripture that God will laugh and mock at their calamity. So it is true that God takes no pleasure in the death of the evil ones. That's Scriptural; but that's not His eternal state. His eternal state is pleasure at seeing justice done. He will laugh and mock at their calamity. So, what is Hell? How would you describe something which is other than, which is the fullness of wrath, revealed? Hell is a physical and spiritual furnace of fire where its inhabitants are continually and eternally tortured in every aspect of themselves. For the dichotomists use only two parts such as body and soul with soul and spirit more or less used interchangeably; then it would be soul and body tortured eternally and continually receiving the fullness of the wrath of God. For the trichotomists, those who use the terminology of Paul, body, soul, spirit; then it will include spirit, soul, and body. They will suffer unbearable physical pain, but not only physical pain, they'll have memory. They're tortured by the memory of every opportunity lost, or every overture of God to them about His Son rejected. They'll be in memory of everyone in their family and acquaintances that they know is still left behind and rejecting it, fulfilling the vain lust of the flesh; the conscience will be activated so that they'll be continually and eternally convicted of every moment in which they rejected the offer of Christ. Every sin of omission, every sin of commission, brought to attention; there is no escape and there is no escapism—that is to say no diversion. Pain is increased wherever one looks. As one looks back at choices made in their futility; at opportunities lost, pain is increased. As one looks at the futility of his present condition, his pain is increased simply by the viewing. As one looks at what the future holds, pain is increased by the contemplation of what will be. As one looks at the future of those on Earth who will follow and at that

moment have still rejected Christ, the pain is increased at what they are rejecting. As one looks at those in Heaven, by comparison, how can the pain not be increased?

Recall the rich man and Lazarus. This is a story told by Jesus and remember, Jesus said I am truth. I am God and I'm here to tell you and model for you how God views reality. So let's listen to a part of how God views reality as spoken by the one we call Savior. In Luke 16:19-31: "Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame. But Abraham said, child, remember that during your life you received your good thing, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us. And he said, then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment. But Abraham said, they have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them. But he said, No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent! But he said to him, if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead."

Some theologians may argue whether that's the eternal state or an in between state in Hades awaiting the permanent state. But I would ask you; do you think that the torment of an eternal state would be less than what is portrayed here? I think not. So I don't want to enter into a theologic debate, I want you to take this as a minimum level of misery which will be in Hell. In regard to just sensation, think of the agony of the flames, the memory of recalling his brothers, knowing they're lost and not being able to do anything about it and the torture that would go with that. In regard to his conscience—that he is aware of and reminded of how he treated Lazarus; aware that he put himself there, since he insisted on having his reward on Earth. In regard to seeing Heaven, seeing Lazarus comforted and in an exalted position, even with Abraham himself, tortured by the regret at what he has lost. In regard to no crossing over—no mercy can ever come from Heaven. He's tortured knowing that no help and no diminution in the pain can ever come. In regard to his body—his pain is already unbearable and yet at that moment his resurrected body has not even joined his spirit and soul yet in the torture chamber in which he exists. So he can only anticipate further agony to whatever degree it will be manifest after his bodily resurrection and the body joins him there. But remember the one caveat. The rich man is not in Hell because he was rich; he is in Hell because he trusted in his riches. He trusted in his own righteousness as he rejected God, rejected the salvation of God, rejected the one way to God and insisted on self determination. I will determine what the way ought to be; I will determine if there is a God; I will determine if there is a God, what that God must be and how He must view me; of course, He must be satisfied with my righteousness. Why? Because I declare it so. Self determination—so, he did it his way; and he shall then eat fully of the fruit of his own way. Because as we were told in the Proverb Scripture that Susan read, in Proverbs 1:31; he shall eat fully of the fruit of his own way. So there are only two ways. There is the way of God, which is Jesus Christ the Son, and there is the way of man—declared and determined by man himself.

Next poster. Let's remind ourselves that there are two kinds of death so that when we see the word death in the Bible, we are clear in our own minds about what we are talking about. There is the body which is either alive or dead; and we know according to James 2:26, the body without the spirit is dead; so the Biblical definition of physical death is when the spirit departs the body. The body is alive when the spirit is yet in the body. But in regard to spirit, the spirit is also spoken in terms of dead. A live spirit means that spirit is then connected to God. A dead spirit means that spirit is separate from God. The spiritual death does not mean what we commonly think of as ceasing to exist. Ephesians 2:4-5 – says God, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ. Well, nothing ceased to exist, although death and life are spoken. Also the word destroy—that's a term used in the Bible which has a little different meaning from the way we commonly think of it. We think of destroy as meaning to obliterate, to annihilate, to cease to exist. Matthew 10:28 – do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell. Well, clearly soul and body are not obliterated, annihilated, destroyed in Hell; they continue exist; they continue to have memory; they continue to feel pain, none of which are consistent with ceasing to exist. The word destroy simply means they never fulfill the function for which they were intended and for which they were created namely—the fullness of communion unto oneness with God. Luke 5:37 in the King James version – And no man puts new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottles and be spilled and the bottles shall perish. Well, the bottles don't perish in the sense of ceasing to exist; they cease to fulfill the purpose for which they were created which was to successfully hold liquid.

There will be degrees of sin; and thus, degrees of punishment in Hell. Well, how much sin is required for one to go to Hell in the absence of faith in Jesus Christ? Only one sin. Romans 3:23 – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. You either have the perfection of the Holy God, or you have judgment in Hell—one of the two. So it only takes the one departure from God; Who He is and What He is and how He views reality. It will be accumulative. Matthew 12:36 – And I say to you that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. So the punishment can be thought of as increasing with each and every departure from God and His character, and His will, and His purposes and plan. It will be weighted in a way that with our natural minds that we can't begin to assess. Luke 12:48 – And from everyone who has been given much, shall much be required. So the same sin may be more grievous in the eyes of God and merit more punishment in one person than in another. If one has minimum light, commits sin A, then maybe he gets amount of punishment A. But if one has tremendous light and commits sin A, then perhaps he gets punishment X which may be many fold larger. But be assured of this. Everyone in Hell is perfectly miserable. Beyond tolerance, beyond acclimation to the circumstances, to the limits of their comprehension, some may have a larger cup of pain and some may have a smaller cup of pain; but each one is tortured beyond what he can imagine. To that is added the torture of envy. Can you imagine being a larger cup of pain and looking at a smaller cup of pain without envying the smaller cup? That's why Jonathan Edwards, the famous theologian, said any sinner; any sinner in Hell would give anything that he had in his possession in order to have one less sin attributed to his account. Can you imagine the envy that would arise in your heart when you observe someone receiving, in your perception, less punishment?

There are views against the reality of Hell. There are annihilationists. This is the view that human beings will simply cease to exist at the moment of death. That is the fervent hope of all atheists. The following attitude is the attitude expressed by the atheist. When I am, death is not; when death is, I am not. So what's the problem? Well, the problem is that truth is not how the atheist views reality. Truth is how God views reality. That's the problem. Of course that viewpoint of the annihilationist deviates from every aspect of how God views reality. The fact that punishment will be eternal talks against

annihilation. The fact that there even is punishment speaks against annihilation. The fact that the pain can be felt precludes annihilation. The fact that the punishment can be understood, that memory exists precludes annihilation. So to insist that annihilation is the endpoint makes a joke out of all Scripture; makes a joke out of God Himself and dismisses God as the basis of what truth is. And Galatians 6:7 simply tells us – God will not be mocked.

Universalism—that's the belief that all will be saved. Well that also defies Scripture. Primarily, the references throughout Scripture that speak of separation into two distinct camps. Also, by the references that speak of Jesus—having a visible reign and trampling under foot those who don't give Him honor. And references speak of the great fixed gulf between Heaven and Hell with no crossover between the two. So Universalism is not an issue that we can afford to be wrong about as Christians. Because Universalism makes a mockery of God's righteousness, makes a mockery of His fierce protection of that righteousness, makes a mockery of salvation being needed and makes a mockery of it occurring only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. If you've dismissed those things, you have dismissed the Bible and dismissed the revelation of God to man.

Jeremiah 17:9 – the heart is deceitful beyond all things. The human heart is presumptive beyond all things. So what does the human heart do, particularly when it hears Christians speak with the Universalist mentality? That fallen heart of man, which is presumptive beyond all things, will presume...well, why come to Christ? And if one comes, why change any of my behaviors? Well, because according to how God views reality, we're here to bring Him glory and when you don't come to His one way to salvation, we bring Him no glory. And when we dismiss being transformed by the renewing of our minds into the very likeness of His Son, the likeness of God Himself, we do not bring Him glory. Matthew 18:7 says – Woe to that man through whom a stumbling block comes. Romans 14:21 – It is good not to do anything by which your brother stumbles. So a Christian who believes in Universalism should ask himself the question, is this an issue about which I can afford to be wrong? Remember the gold standard of all spiritual pursuit? Whatever brings me and others closer, faster to God is the gold standard of all spiritual pursuit. So does holding and teaching Universalism bring all people closer, faster to God; or is it a stumbling block presented by the one who holds it? That is a very serious question. So while the person with that Universal attitude in one sense may be thinking they are glorifying God, in another sense they are dismissing God because what they are doing is the following: If you think of a molecule of glucose, C₆ H₁₂ O₆, if you take out the carbon, you have something left, but you don't have glucose. If you take the hydrogen out, you have something left, but you don't have glucose. If you take the oxygen out, you have something left, but you don't have glucose. So if you take God, in His three essences that we have explained, of the sovereign majestic creator king, the passionate lover, and the fierce but righteous judge and you carve out the fierce but righteous judge, well, you've got something left, but you don't have God. So having said that, my time is up and I thank you for yours.