

## Judgment of God – Part IV

We looked at holiness to understand sin to come to judgment, to see the two outflows of judgment, the reality of heaven which we'll begin exploring next week; with two eternal destinies, differentiated by "what did you do with My Son?" The cross of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So we looked at the horror of Hell. Now make no mistake, you can't read Scripture without having the clarity of understanding that all human beings will be separated into two camps. Matthew 7:13-14 – There is a narrow way that leads to life and a broad way that leads to destruction. Matthew 13:24 – There are two kinds of plants: the wheat and the tares; the tares will be cast into fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 13:47 – Two kinds of fish: bad fish will be cast into the fire. Matthew 25:1 – There are two kinds of virgins: wise and foolish. The foolish will be shut out having no access to the bridegroom and told, "I do not know you." Matthew 25:30 – There are two kinds of servants: a profitable and an unprofitable. The profitable enters the joy of his Master; the unprofitable is cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 25:31 – The sheep will be divided from the goats and the goats will go into eternal fire.

So you can't read Scripture without the unmistakable understanding that human beings will be divided into two camps. One will come in and one will be cast out. That's the central core of the One Whom we call Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching. It's the passion of His own teaching. That's why He came. John 14:6 says I am the way, the truth, and the life; and no one comes to the Father except by Me. So another way of phrasing that is the One Who is truth, came to declare the truth about the one way to the life of God Himself. For those cast out, it will be punishment; terrible, torturous, eternal. Matthew 18:8 – Cast into eternal fire. Matthew 25:41 – Cast into the eternal fire. Matthew 25:46 – Cast into eternal punishment. Matthew 12:32 – Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him either in this age nor in the age to come. John 5:28-29 – All will come forth from the tomb; some to a resurrection of life; some to a resurrection of judgment. Revelation 20:15 – And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. And anytime we read a verse from Revelation, it's worth reminding ourselves of the first verse in the Book, Revelation 1:1. Because it's the Revelation given to John; but it's the Revelation from the Father to the Son, through the Angel to the Apostle. And that's a short chain of command and it's not a chain of command that we should ever forget when we read the Book of Revelation.

Next poster. So why preach or teach about Hell? There are several reasons. To warn sinners. If you being evil know how to give good gifts, how much more will your Father give good gifts. So if you knew that a bridge was washed out on the road ahead of you, would you come back and warn people who are about to go over the cliff, or would you not? To fan the flames of our own evangelism. Many of you probably heard the story; I'm not even sure that it's a true story, but it's a story that makes an emphatic point about the criminal about to be hanged in England. And the priest was there to give him his last rites. And after listening to his description of eternal Hell, the prisoner said to the priest, you don't really believe what you're saying. And the priest said of course I do, why do you think I don't? And the criminal said because if I believed for one moment the horror of the Hell that you're describing, I would have spent my life crawling all the way across England on bare knees over slivers of glass to potentially save one sinner. Has that been your approach to life? And if it hasn't, then how can you claim to be here telling me that that is a core belief of your life?

To teach all the counsel of God; Acts 20:27 – In the King James version – For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. So Hell is not the whole counsel of God, but if we're not teaching Hell, then we definitely are not teaching the whole counsel of God. In fact, harkening back to

the root of all sin; the judging of God by ourselves, we judge God when we judge what part of the whole counsel of God to omit. He thought enough of it to write it, but we think that we can be so sure as to omit it. Acts 20:26 – King James version – Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. So Paul is saying here that he is innocent of the blood of all men when he faces judgment. Now how can he say that with such total confidence? Because of the verse I just read; because he had declared the whole counsel of God. He had not tickled their ears by omitting any unpleasant parts.

And lastly, we're fond of saying that we're called to be Christlike. We're called to be transformed from glory to glory into the very image of God Himself as revealed through His Son. More informed men than I, of course, have actually counted and state that in the Word of God there are roughly three times as many references to God's judgment, punishment, wrath and Hell as there are references to God's love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, and Heaven. That's true if you subdivide it. If you look only at the Old Testament, the ratio is true. If you look at the New Testament apart from the red letters, the ratio is true. And if you look at only the red letters in the New Testament, the ratio is true. So to be like Christ, we have to teach it. How can you claim to be progressing toward Christlikeness if you omit by your own self determination two-thirds of the subject material that He taught? In fact, the One that we call Savior is the One Who will be doing the judging and will be the One sending people to Hell and as the Book of Revelation tells us, they will be in the lake of fire in the presence of the Lamb. So I don't think we ought to position ourselves to annul His judgment by declaring ourselves to be better judges than our Savior of what should be taught. So, therefore, I teach it; not nonchalantly, but with fear and trembling. You see I cannot exaggerate the Holiness of God. How can you exaggerate the other thanness of God? Likewise I cannot exaggerate the hellishness of Hell; because Hell itself is an outflow of the Holy, other than God. His love is an other than love; His power is an other than power; and His judgment including Hell is an other than Hell. So if you think that I might have a tendency to verbally exaggerate the horror of Hell, then just be aware that our Holy other than God is the One Who created this other than Hell. So I'm quite sure it's other than enough that I cannot exaggerate its horror.

The beauty of Hell: We've looked at its reality; we've looked at its horror. Now let's look at the beautiful side of Hell. It's beautiful because it's one of the clearest revelations of God Himself. When we view Hell properly, we will not shrink back from discussing it. It's the kind of thing that even many Christians refuse to talk about because it's not consider a polite conversation in polite company. So this won't necessarily be new information, but it may be old information presented in a slightly different light in order to quicken within you part of your freedom in Christ to discuss everything that Christ talked about.

Next poster. Now let's remind ourselves using Isaiah 33:22 as at least one verse – For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our law giver; the Lord is our king; He will save us. And of course His salvation flows out of His passionate love. So the Lord Himself is the One Who gives the law, Who judges if you've kept the law; Who is our king, in fact, sovereignly so, and Who loves us to point of providing the way to salvation. God Himself, remember, In the beginning God. So let's remind ourselves of these three critical essences and then look at Hell in the light of these three essences. Or better yet probably, look at these three essences in the light of Hell. God is a sovereign king and if you were asked to list the greatest Biblical evidence for the sovereignty of God, most of us would on that list probably lead off with creation itself. Because in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth and certainly He is sovereign over that which He created. In regard to the passionate lover, most would list the cross. We know love by this that He laid down His life for us. But the fierce but righteous judge essence of God, most would prefer not to have a list and not to try to provide evidence for it.

Next poster. So taking those three essences and just repackaging it slightly, the beauty of Hell testifies of God's sovereignty, His righteousness, and His love in an unmistakable way that cannot be garnered from Scripture short of a fullness of revelation of Hell itself. Certainly the created order is one of the clearest revelations of the sovereignty of God. But another major revelation of His kingship and His sovereignty is Hell itself. Philippians 2:10 – That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow; of those who are in Heaven, and on Earth and under the Earth. Of course, the entire physical universe is under the sovereignty of God. There is not one maverick molecule that can be claimed to be outside His sovereignty. Likewise, everything that has breath is under the sovereignty of God; everything that has will is under the sovereignty of God; and everything that has will, will have that will submitted to the sovereignty of God. So if you were threatened with torture, what kind of struggle would you put up? If you were about to be cast into eternal torture, what kind of struggle would you put up? If you were about to be thrown into the eternal other than torture of Hell, what kind of struggle would you put up? We view Satan as powerful and to a degree he is under the allowance of the sovereignty of God. When Satan is about to be cast into the lake of fire for eternity, what kind of struggle would he put up? Yet none of these, not even Satan himself, can resist the sovereign authority of God when sentencing comes. Jesus Christ is the creator, the Savior, the judge and the enforcer of the sentence of the judge. Philippians 3:21 – By the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. No one would walk into Hell voluntarily; yet everyone sentenced to Hell will go there and everyone who goes there will stay there. Why? Because God is sovereign. This is His universe.

So Hell and its occupants give one of the clearest revelations of the sovereignty of God. As a side note, I remind you that sovereignty and power and authority are not all necessarily synonyms. If New York City's authority structure approved in the budget having one policeman to enforce the law for seven million people, that policeman would have 100% of the authority; but none of the power. If in New York City, one mafia chieftain had 1,000 sub-chieftains, he would have all the power and none of the authority. We see that now with our borders, giving an up to date analogy. If you put one border guard on our Mexican border, he has all the authority, but no power; because a few million Mexicans a year will overrun that one border guard. They will have all of the power and none of the authority. But Jesus Christ has all of the power and all of the authority under the sovereignty of God. John 5:27 – And He the Father gave Him the Son authority to execute judgment; because He the Son is the Son of man. And John 3:35 – the Father loves the Son and gives all things into His hands – and that all things includes sovereignty in all His expressions including power, authority, and judging.

Well, how about the fierce, but righteous judging? I dare say I don't think you can understand fully the righteousness of God unless you understand more fully the horror of Hell and what it says about our God. Habakkuk 1:13 – Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil and Thou cannot look on wickedness with favor. I remind you, it's not just that our God chooses not to look on wickedness with favor, He cannot. Why not? Because He's perfectly righteous and if our God looked on one act of evil, one act of wickedness with favor, with approval, then that God could not be counted upon to be viewed as righteous. So what's the clearest revelation of that? I dare say Hell itself. Romans 3:23 – (we know these verses well) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 6:23 – For the wages of sin is death; and remember death means not only physical death but also death in the sense of absence of communion with God for all eternity. So eternal separation from God, while receiving the fullness of the wrath of God for how much departure from God. One act, one sin, the wrath of God expressed as the lake of fire for all eternity for one departure from God. **Contemplate the horror of Hell, unimaginable torture beyond what can be comprehended for all eternity and contemplate one sin**

**earning that punishment.** That sounds horrible when viewed from the natural eyes of man. But it's one of the most beautiful revelations in all of Scripture.

To review; God is love; love is a passion for oneness. God does love you. He has a passion to be one with you; but God loves not only you. God loves Himself. He loves what He is and He is righteous. So God has an absolute total passion to remain absolutely one with absolute righteousness which is what He is. That's why we're told to love our neighbor as ourselves. Remember, God doesn't tell us to do anything that He isn't. So He wouldn't tell us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves except He loves Himself. He has a passion to remain one with what He is.

Now look at it this way. What is true at one extreme must also be true at the opposite extreme with the opposite polarity. Whatever God loves at one extreme, He has to hate at the other extreme with the same passion. You cannot love truth without hating lies; because if you have a passion to be one with truth, it simultaneously means that you have a passion to be totally separate from all untruth. So you can't love truth without hating lies. So God can't love righteousness without hating unrighteousness. So the revelation of how much God hates unrighteousness is given by Hell itself. Unfathomable torture for all eternity separated from God...why? For one sin. For even one departure from the perfect righteousness of God Himself. Now I ask you, how could God give us a clearer revelation of how much He hates unrighteousness. But now look at the beauty of that. If He hates unrighteousness with that passion that means simultaneously He loves righteousness with the same passion at the other extreme. Those two views taken together are the revelation of how faithful and true God is. Because if God didn't hate all unrighteousness to that degree of Hell itself and love righteousness with the opposite polarity, then how could that God ever be counted upon to be absolutely and totally and eternally faithful and true? Because a God Who didn't have those qualities might someday deviate slightly from what would be considered faithful and true to what He is. Revelation 19:11 – And I saw Heaven open and behold a white horse and He Who sat upon it is called faithful and true.

So how do we know that to be true that He is faithful and true? Simply look at Hell and contemplate a God Who hates any departure from what He is to that degree that one slight departure would merit that kind of judgment because He hates it that much is the greatest proof in the Bible of how absolutely righteous God is; how absolutely faithful He is; how absolutely true He is. Would you want a God Who was lukewarm or apathetic toward any departure from His own character? That would cease to be the God that we see described in the Bible. Proverbs 8:13 – (to bring it home to our level) The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. So we will know when we hold God in the fullness of awe and reverence, what is called Biblically the fear of the Lord by when we hate evil. That means when we have a passion to be totally separate from anything contrary to our God. That could be stated as His will which includes His purposes by His plans and always in 100% allegiance to his character. That's how we will know when we fear God; because we can't claim to hold a perfectly righteous God in awe and reverence if we're lukewarm and apathetic toward that which is ungod in our lives.

How about the passionate lover? I'm not going to belabor the discussion at this point; because we'll bathe in it a little later on, of course, when we get to the cross. But to give ourselves a foretaste of it, one example, I've told you before; how do you know how much another person loves you? Well one way of knowing is to ask: How much is that person prepared to undeservedly suffer for my well being? So if Susan and I were captured by terrorists and they began to torture her and I stepped forward and I said, no, torture me instead; then what is the one way that Susan will see the fullness of revelation of my love for her? It's only by gazing fully at the extent of the torture that I am willing to endure on her behalf as her substitute. She can look away at the horror of it; but she will lose the fullness of revelation

of my love for her. The only way to know the fullness of revelation of my love for her is to watch me suffer fully. You see the analogy: what's the clearest revelation of how much God loves you? Look at what He endured for you; and what did he endure for you? Hell, itself because that was the wages of our sin and Scripture is clear about that—the wages of the sin and He paid the wages. That's why we can spend eternity with Him. He basically said I'd rather go through this Hell for you than to spend eternity in Heaven without you. I love you that much! You see the testimony of the love of God for us is not just the cross because the cross is only understood in light of Hell itself; because until then, we'll have a miniature version of what Christ suffered for us on the cross. And we have a miniature version because we have a miniature revelation of the horror of Hell. And we have a miniature revelation of that because we don't like to look at it because it doesn't seem consistent with our God Who is love. But in fact, if you want to know the sovereignty of God, look at two things: Creation and Hell. If you want to know the righteousness of God, look at Hell itself to see how much God hates one departure from His will, His character, His purposes, and His plans. And if you want to know the love of God, you can't know it except by having a willingness to look at Hell; because He didn't just pay a price for your sin; He didn't pay a little price for your little sin; He paid the horror of Hell itself for each and every one of your sins and then let your mind try to put itself around that. But that is the greatest revelation of the love of God.

So is Hell beautiful? I think it is. I ask you, how could there not be a Hell given the character of our God? So my fellow saints, I encourage you, don't ever shrink from studying Hell, from gazing at Hell, from meditating on Hell; from teaching Hell; and from warning of Hell. Because to do so is to tickle the ears of those who are listening. And remember Paul's testimony: I Corinthians 9:22 – I have become all things to all men that I may by all means save some. Remember the gold standard of all spiritual pursuit: It's whatever brings me and others closer, faster to God. Now on some occasions that will mean teaching of the love of God; but on other occasions that will mean teaching of the Hell of God. Because I say so? No. Because that's how Jesus did it. And He is the truth; He is God; because remember truth is what God is and how God views everything else. And Jesus is the truth because He is God and He came to model for us and to tell us how God views everything else. So if Jesus spoke of Hell, shouldn't we? So if we insist on teaching the love of God without the Hell of God, then we will continue to judge God. We will do that because we will self determine that we can judge better than God can how to evangelize; because God taught of Hell while we refuse to. Thus, we judge ourselves to be wiser than God about what should be taught to the lost. That is self determination. So the most unloving thing that you can do is to refuse to teach Hell; because that is a major part of truth and the truth is what sets people free. Because without teaching Hell, what you're really teaching unspoken is that God is nonchalant and apathetic about sin. Oh, but that couldn't be more wrong. That couldn't be a greater deception.

So how can we take the position that teaching or speaking of Hell is offensive; but all the while allowing people to go there in their deception is not offensive? Not to teach Hell is to judge God's truth as offensive; to judge His methodology of evangelism as offensive, which is the same thing as judging God as offensive. So can you see the beautiful side of Hell? Can you see that it's not the only subject in the Bible; but if you're going to teach the whole counsel of God, you have to teach it? Can you receive the revelation that you cannot claim to understand the love of God, except you be willing to look at what He endured voluntarily for you on your behalf? What is that? The horror of Hell. I don't want to debate theologically about whether Jesus Christ actually went to Hell, but do you think that our God Who is truth and Who cannot lie would tell you what the wages of sin is and describe it for you in the lake of fire and then have our Christ, our Savior pay a lesser price? That would be a deception and God cannot lie, can He? So when viewed through the eyes of a Holy other than God, that's how He would view

Hell. That's how He views reality. So it is a reality, it is a horror; but it is also beautiful when viewed based on how God views reality. May we never suppress that truth in unrighteousness. So my time is up and I thank you for yours.