

The Old Testament God

by Andrew Strom

Andrew Strom's sermon explores the often-overlooked aspects of God's judgment and authority as depicted in the Old Testament, challenging modern perceptions of a more lenient God.

Duration: 1:08:19

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-7, Matthew 23:33, Matthew 23:37

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Sin And Righteousness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the parable of the wedding banquet from Matthew chapter 22. He emphasizes that God is a God of judgment, both in the Old and New Testaments. The preacher highlights how the king in the parable becomes angry and punishes those who refuse to come to the wedding banquet, even destroying their city. He also warns about the coming tribulation and the consequences of rejecting the prophets and the Son of Man. The preacher criticizes preachers who focus on a seeker-sensitive message instead of preaching about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Transcript

Okay, praise God, let's pray. Father God, we just pray for your presence in this place. I pray for your holy presence to come down upon us, Father.

Without you we can do nothing. Without you I cannot speak a word that will give life, Father. I can only speak of me and it will do nothing.

So I pray for your mighty presence here, Father God. I pray for a sense of your holiness. I pray for a true spirit of repentance.

I pray that your people be touched today, and more than that, Father God, that you would pierce even to that dividing line between soul and spirit, that your word would truly go forth this morning, Father God. In Jesus' mighty name, amen. You know, without the anointing of God, I'm just a clanging cymbal and a resounding gong.

Wow, it's good to see so many people here. Didn't miss the change of daylight savings overnight. I hope you guys don't have trouble with my accent.

I'm from New Zealand. Just don't hold it against me. I'll try hard to speak properly.

I've entitled my sermon today, The Old Testament God. The Old Testament God. A lot of us have come to this conclusion, I think, almost subconsciously in our heads, that there's an Old Testament God and there's a New Testament God, and we divide them up.

We say to ourselves that there must be some huge difference, because when I look in the Old Testament, there's so many wars, there's so many thunderings. There's a God who appeared on top of Sinai with thunder and lightning. And you know, this is the kind of thing God was saying in the Old Testament.

Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord. I'm a jealous God visiting the sins on the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

We don't want to hear about a God like that anymore, because we live in the materialistic Western world. We live in a humanistic age where we want a God that's going to meet our needs. And so we've invented a Christianity, and I believe in many cases we've invented a God who no longer represents the God of the Old Testament whatsoever, and has very little relation to the God of the New Testament, because actually they're the same thing.

But I want to talk about the God of the Old Testament today, because I want us to get a grip on the reality of God. Because it's only when you start to understand the God of judgment, the God of vengeance, the God of justice, the God of war, that we start to get a handle on the glory of God. And without that, seriously, we are often worshipping this little Jesus who's like this wimpy figure with long hair who loves everybody, and we never perceive him in all his majesty at all.

We never see his glory. I am often astonished at people who think that they can get into the presence of God without beholding his glory, and what it will do to them if they have sin in their life. They literally think that they're going to walk up to God on judgment day, they're going to walk up to Jesus, it's almost like they're going to shake his hand and say, Hi Jesus, how are you going? Do you remember me? No.

Many people in front of you in the line are going to be being cut asunder, says the Bible, and bodily thrown into hell. Right in front of your eyes, there's going to be like a line stretching out, and people are going to be judged by God. You aren't going to be walking up to Jesus and just shaking hands.

You'll be on your face before God saying, Please God, tell me that my name is written in the book of life. God, please tell me that. And many on that day will be saying, Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name? Didn't we cast out demons in your name? Please tell me my name's in the book, and Jesus will say, I never knew you.

You tell me you asked Jesus into your heart and you gave 10% of your wages every week. I didn't know you at all. I never knew you for a moment, and you never knew me.

Be gone from my sight. We don't want to believe in a God like that today. We believe in a humanistic Jesus who's going to solve all our problems, who we're going to go through the drive-thru at McDonald's or the church equivalent thereof and get ourselves fixed, make our life happy, make ourselves comfortable, and hopefully get lots of money.

This is the Western world Jesus that we've invented. I want to remind you of this Old Testament God today. We're going to go flashing through the Old Testament.

If you can turn with me to Exodus chapter 7. Now, this is the story. We're not going to go right through the whole story. It would take too long.

We're just flashing by all these things, because I want us to remember a few things today and remind ourselves. Exodus chapter 7, Moses is coming into the picture here. He's approaching Pharaoh, and he's saying, God says, let my people go.

And down there in verse 3, so we're in Exodus 7 verse 3, God says this, I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt, but Pharaoh will not hear you. So I can lay my hand on Egypt and bring forth my armies and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. What is he saying there? He's saying simply this, I'm going to have this guy for breakfast.

He's not going to listen to you. Doesn't matter what plague I bring, he will not listen to you, because I personally am going to harden his heart. I'm going to make sure he doesn't let you go, and I'm going to bring a worse judgment the weekend after.

And he ain't going to let you go again. I'm going to bring a worse judgment the weekend after until it's so bad I'm destroying the whole of Egypt, his armies are gone, all the firstborn children are dead, because I'm the Lord, the God of all, and I will not be mocked and I will not see my children sold into slavery. This is the God of the Old Testament.

We see his actions all the way through. In fact, you could almost describe the Old Testament figuratively and even literally as being bloodbath, war, judgment, God raising up men to speak for him, them being persecuted and put to death, God bringing tremendous judgment, all the way through. It's like this endless parade, crash, God slamming into the affairs of men.

Because they won't listen to him, and they won't respect him, and they keep persecuting his people, and so he's got to send another bloodbath to make sure they do. We do not want to listen to a God, we don't want to believe in a God like this today. He's not convenient to us.

He's not merciful and loving enough for us to handle in our humanistic age. We never hear about him. We do not want to really know him.

He's up there in heaven, and we think if he's the further away, the better, because we want to know this lovey-dovey Jesus who's going to give us what we want, and that's the truth of the Western church, people. So here we go with Moses, and we see that the plagues start coming, just as Moses says. They start pretty small.

The water's turning to blood, and the frogs are coming out of the water, and there's lice all over the cattle, and then God starts killing all the cattle. God starts sending fire and hailstones upon the land. Terrible judgments start to occur, and all the way through it says, Pharaoh hardened his heart.

God hardened the heart of Pharaoh so he could keep bringing judgment on the land. Do we believe in a God of judgment, people? Do we believe in a God of justice? Is it true when the Bible says it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God? What does that mean, a fearful thing? But I thought Jesus was, you know, we have all these pictures. We have Jesus with the lamb around his neck.

You know? We have our lovely church music, which is beautiful, but does it represent the thunderings of God? See, this is where I'm getting to. I want to today go down this pathway of the thunderings of God and

forget for a minute all that we've been taught endlessly for day after day after day about love and mercy, because it's so one-sided, and it's the stuff we love to hear. It's tickling our ears, and some of us it's sending to hell.

He's the Jesus we want to believe in. He's so convenient. He meets all our needs, just like the psychologists when they're starting up a school for bringing in those who have low self-esteem.

They'll set up counseling. They'll do it all. In fact, we're just like that in the church, setting up counseling.

Instead of saying, repent, we want to send counseling courses. No, no, no, no. God says repent.

The world says counseling courses. Stuff them. Get away from me.

I believe in a holy God who will judge the earth, but we don't want to believe in this God anymore. Okay, let's go to Exodus 10, verse 20, this one single verse here. This is what was happening all the way through.

Oh, this is when the locusts came. That's right. This was a swarm of locusts that ate every green thing in the land of Egypt, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

It got to the point, you know the story. It got to the point where Moses was going to him and saying, the last plague is going to take the life of your eldest child. Do you want to go there? God's going to take you there if you will not let his people go now.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He had seen sign after sign after sign, and that very night his oldest son, the heir to the throne, was dead. The very next day he said, but even then God made sure that he hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he sent his armies after him so those armies could be destroyed.

You see, God is a God of vengeance, but we never want to hear that word. I will repay, says the Lord, the God of the Old Testament. You know, we're talking a little bit, well we mentioned the word Sodom this morning.

Sodom and Gomorrah. I tell you, we're just going to take this little history trip down the road here. We're going to remind ourselves of a few things that we don't want to really talk about too often.

Sodom and Gomorrah, this was a pair of cities that were so sick. You know what I believe God does, even though he knows everything, he cannot bear to look at some things. I'm truly convinced of that because it says the report of the sickness and the depravity that was going on had come up into heaven.

And finally the report of it had gotten so bad in God's ears, he decided to go down and have a look and see if it was as bad as he was hearing. So he sent the two angels down and they came to Abraham and they said, God's about to destroy these two cities. Abraham says, look, if you can find just a number of righteous guys in there, can we just save the cities, please? You know, how about 50 or even 25 righteous men? Sadly, those angels went into town and found only one family.

They said to this guy Lot, they said, get out of town. God's going to destroy this place. These cities are doomed.

Get going quick. Next thing you know, it says literally, this is where we get our term fire and brimstone from. The word brimstone means literally sulfur.

It's like a volcanic lava or a volcanic fireball descending. That's what happened to those cities. God overthrew them in one day.

It's an interesting fact to me. I presume that he just used two angels to destroy two cities. But you imagine what the harm that could have been done.

You know, Jesus was saying on his way to the cross, he said, all I've got to do is say the word and 12 legions of angels will be. See, we're just not dealing with this Namby Pamby God. We just ain't.

In all his glory in heaven, if he ever sets foot on the earth and sees the kind of things as he's heard a report of from Sodom, we're in pretty bad trouble. I wonder if the report of one million dead babies per year in America has reached him. I wonder if the report of gay marriage being put into legislation in Canada has reached him yet.

I wonder what's going to happen then. America, above every other nation, is a Christian nation, founded on Christian principles, to this day has by far the highest church attendance in the world, by far. And yet God will judge his own people and has proven that he will do it.

He will do it if they become lukewarm and forget who he is. Let's go to the Elijah's. I like the Elijah's.

I call them, you know, there's Elijah one, there's Elisha, who's the second one. And then in the New Testament, there's John the Baptist. We're not going to look at him today, but let's go to the Elijah's.

I like these guys. Okay, 1st Kings 17. So it's after Samuel, you find King.

Actually, just at the end of chapter 16 there. 1st Kings 16. King Ahab came to the throne in Israel.

King Ahab. Says this guy, this is chapter 16, verse 30. Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.

And he was the one that married Jezebel and brought all these idols into Israel. And they started worshipping idols. And the next thing you know, this guy Elijah arrives.

And he says this to the king. He goes straight up to him and says this. The Lord God before whom I stand says there will not be rain or dew in this nation until I speak the word.

Elijah the Tishbite was what they called him. And so a vast drought hit the land. For three and a half years, there was no rain because the prophet had spoken it.

He was a man who stood before God. There's a very important thing in this standing. This place of standing before God.

Because you see, he ain't a man who stands in front of this wimpy Jesus. He's a man who stands in the presence of a holy God who we see on Mount Sinai thundering so much. And the glory of God on Moses' face, the people couldn't even stand to look at Moses, let alone God.

That's the God Elijah stood before. He says I stand before the one true God, the holy God. I speak the word.

There will not be any rain in this nation for three years. Praise God it was so. And they had all these false prophets in the land at that time.

They were praying to the God Balaam. 400 of these false prophets. Elijah said after three years of letting them thirst for a while, make them sure the land was completely empty of water for a few years.

And then he said yeah, I think they've roasted long enough. I'm going to go and challenge those guys to a duel. In the face of all the people of the land, he said, you build an altar, I'll build an altar.

The God who answers by fire, let him be God. So you know these guys, they got their altar, which an altar is just a big stack of wood with rocks and usually some animal has been stuck on top of it. This is an altar of sacrifice to their God.

And these guys are dancing around. It's in 1 Kings chapter 18. In verse 27 it says, Elijah mocked.

See these guys are dancing around, cutting themselves and saying, um, Baal, Baal, please bring fire down on this sacrifice. And they're cutting themselves and dancing. He says they went on all day.

And he started to mock them and said, maybe your God's off sleeping somewhere. And then it says when it came his turn to put the, put the altar up, he stuck his altar up and he got his servants. He said to them, pour water all over it.

In fact, it says in some translations, he got four barrels of water, pour them all over to make it hard for God to light a fire. And then he got them to do it again. And the third time he got them to pour water all over it, make sure it's hard for God to light a fire.

And all around was this huge pool of water around his altar. And he prayed to God and said, God, if I'm your servant, let the people see who is the true God. And suddenly fire came down from heaven, burnt up the entire thing, burnt up the stones that it was made of and burnt up all the water that was surrounding it.

People said, the Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God. And it says straight away, Elijah took those prophets of Baal down to the brook and slaughtered them all there. Bang, they're all gone.

Only Jezebel remained. Why do we not want to hear about this God? Why is it that the church didn't make the Passion movie? Why do we make our Jesus always so nice? Why do our scenes in our movies not show Jesus being cut to ribbons like he was? In fact, I've heard of an interview where Mel Gibson acknowledged the fact that he could have and should have shown, because what used to happen when they whipped like that was actually their vital organs would be showing. When they were whipped that badly, that was a standard thing that the Romans did.

Your bodily organs would be showing through your skin because most of it's gone. Mel Gibson said, I just couldn't stand to show it. It was bad enough what I showed.

It was way beyond what we'd ever seen before. But let me ask this question, why is everything we do so nice? Why is our God, this Jesus, painted to be this incredibly effeminate kind of namby-pamby person? Where is the judgment of God? Where is the judgment of God? I'm really tired of that kind of Christianity. I'm sick to death of it.

I think it has something to do even with the fact that in many Western nations today, women are starting to outnumber men in the church. A lot of men have stopped going to a lot of churches. This is especially true in countries like my country, New Zealand, and Canada, England, a lot of these Western nations.

I wonder why that is. I think it's partly because of this, we no longer represent a masculine Jesus to the world. It's almost like we've feminized Jesus.

You could even say if I was going to be so rude and obnoxious, which of course I'm not, that we've turned Jesus into a big girl. In so many ways we have. But of course I'm nowhere near obnoxious enough to ever say that.

I don't want hordes of feminists raining down upon me. The next adventures of Elijah. Let's go to 2 Kings, not very far away.

Chapter 1. We probably won't read this. I'll just get you to turn to it and you can have it in front of your eyeballs there while we talk about it. The reason that we're looking at these things is I'm trying to present to you today a side of God that we've completely forgotten about.

And do you know what? I believe it's the dominant side of God. I'll say that again. We've forgotten the dominant side of God.

We only talk about grace and mercy to our detriment today. Everybody's so casual in their approach to God. I was talking before about how I can't believe people talking about getting into the presence of God.

The criteria for that are that you have a pure heart and clean hands. And so many people just sing worship songs with no pure heart, no clean hands, and they get a lovely buzz out of it. They think they're getting into the presence of God.

I've got news for you, buddy. You're going to get there and God's going to say, away with you, if that's your attitude. You worship God with clean hands or a pure heart or you're not worshipping at all.

You're just getting a lovely feeling from the music. You're borrowing from other people's anointing. You're borrowing from other people's worship.

You're enjoying a buzz. Get out of it. It's going to kill you.

Elijah and the captains of 50. What happened was this. It's right in the first chapter there, 2 Kings.

See, Elijah was sitting up on this hill and the king said to one of his captains of 50, go up there and bring Elijah to me. I want to see him. Tell him I command he comes.

Captain of 50 walked straight up the hill with his 50 captains of 50 men, obviously, said to Elijah, the king commands your presence, sir. Elijah said, if I be a man of God, fire will come from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men. They were gone.

King said, I'll send a second group of 50 men up to the top of the hill and they'll take Elijah and bring him to me. He sent a second 50 men. They climbed up to the top of the hill.

They said, Elijah, please come before the king. He commands your presence. Elijah said, if I be a man of God, fire will come from heaven and consume you and your 50 men.

Bang, they were gone. Finally, the king said, I'm just going to keep sending them. He sent his next captain of 50 up, but this man crawled all the way up the hill and he probably in tears said to Elijah, please, sir, will you please come before the king because he would love to speak to you.

Elijah said, yes, I will go with you because Elijah carried something of the dignity of God and God will not allow his dignity to be mocked and he will destroy people before he sees that happen. This is the difference between the Elijah prophets and the ordinary prophets. See, Jeremiah spoke like an Elijah prophet, but he was chucked into the pit and allowed to just sit there swimming around in the muck.

You couldn't escape from this thing. It was concave sides and couldn't get out of it. He just moaned away to God saying, God, why did you get me to speak those words to the king when you knew this would happen to me? Elijah was not like that.

Elijah carried upon him an order of the presence of God that God would not allow it to be touched. You see, you've got Jeremiah here and you've got Elijah here. Because Elijah carried so much of the presence of God, he would not allow anybody to touch him.

You touch the man and you're dead. You come and approach him the wrong way. You're a goner because the glory of God is at stake.

We don't want to see ministries like that today. We want to see prophetic ministries who blow into town, stay in a five-star hotel, and go down a prayer line telling everybody that they've got a wonderful future and God's going to raise them into a great big ministry and God's probably going to give them lots of money. That's what we want to see in the prophetic.

We don't want any Elijahs at all. That's the truth. If Elijahs come in the door breathing fire and seeing people die, get out of here.

We don't want that kind of glory of God. I believe that's the revival that's coming. It's a revival of repentance.

We'll know revival's hit when this happens, when the crying of the people drowns out the preacher. Let me give you my definition of revival. When everybody's on their face before a holy God crying so loud that the preacher's got to stop.

Then revival's come. The rest of it's garbage. I don't believe in all the flaky fads that we can't believe in any of.

I don't see people on their face. I don't see people repenting from the depths of their being. Therefore, how do we call it revival? Some of you are looking like stunned mullets today.

That's a Kiwi expression for people who are slightly shocked. Please don't be shocked. I'm only telling you about the God you already say that you know.

You say you've asked Jesus into your heart. You say God's close. God's in here.

You say, I serve Jesus. I'm telling you about the Jesus you serve. We just don't talk about this stuff because we want to know the Namby Pamby one and forget the God of judgment.

It's going to kill us. It's going to catch up with us at the end of days. It's going to kick our butts for us so bad.

We still don't want to know. Elisha. I won't even go there.

I'm not going to get you to turn to it. I'll just tell you about this shocking incident that will shock and horrify you. You ready? Elisha was the guy who got Elijah's mantle.

So he was the next Elijah. The mantle of God, the anointing of God fell upon Elisha and he was walking up the hill and these kids, about 40 of them, Elisha was bald, right? Or going bald. Singing, go up baldy, go up baldy to Elisha.

Elisha just simply turns around and says, if I be a man of God, the bears are going to come and tear you into pieces. Not even a call of repentance. Not even a saying this, repent children or you're dead.

Isn't this shocking? And of course it happened because God will not be mocked. It doesn't matter if it's by children. It doesn't matter what's happening.

It doesn't matter if it's his own people. He won't be mocked. And so we get these horrific stories.

All the way through the Old Testament we find a God who will send Joshua into whole nations and say, leave nothing alive. They worship idols and everything is tainted by it. Don't even take their gold.

It's being used to make idols. Leave everything alone. Slaughter everything in your path and take no treasure.

So Joshua would do it. That was the way they took the promised land. It wasn't by compromise.

It wasn't by going to the Palestinians and writing a peace agreement. I tell you. Let's start getting a bit more personal.

Let's get to Daniel chapter 7. Go there with me. Some of us read our Bibles so infrequently in the Old Testament we don't even know where all these old books are. Daniel chapter 7 verse 8. Daniel is after Ezekiel, which is quite a big book.

You should be able to find that. Daniel chapter 7. And you notice we're heading towards the New Testament. I'm very deliberately going that direction because what we're going to get to today is the fact that we have one God.

There ain't no two Gods. He hasn't changed a bit. Nothing's changed about him whatsoever.

Vengeance is still his. Daniel chapter 7 verse 9. Daniel says, I beheld until the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of Days did sit. His garment was white as snow.

The hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was a fiery flame, his wheels like burning fire. A fiery stream eschewed and came forth before him.

Thousands and thousands ministered to him and ten thousand times ten thousand people stood before him. The judgment was set and the books were opened. I love that phrase, the judgment was set and the books were opened.

I'm just reading out of the King James Bible there, which is a very poetic way of writing, but I think quite applicable. Judgment was set and the books were opened. Now here we have this Old Testament God and it's very obvious to me that he's going to be the one before whom we're judged.

In fact at the end of the book of Revelation it says this, I saw a great white throne and the person sitting upon it, the earth and the heavens had fled away from his face and there was found no place for them. In other words the earth and the heavens were so frightened they fled away from his face, what do you think we're going to feel like doing? And yet we don't think about it. We don't think about the most important day of our lives, did you know that? If you're going to get married you prepare for it, you have rehearsals, you get together with everybody involved and you go through everything.

If you're going to go for a driving test, you prepare for it. Now we don't preach about judgment day, the most important test of our lives. There will be such silence in heaven while those names are read out.

The Lamb's Book of Life, if you're not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life it says clearly you're thrown into the lake of fire. But we never, never talk about it. When did we stop? Why is judgment day low on the agenda? When did that happen? I often liken it to being in a courtroom with a judge and you go there and you think you're on just a misdemeanor kind of charge, you've just gone up because you're parking in the wrong place and you're backed out the wrong way and a cop saw you.

So you're going to court and you're going, oh well, it's going to be a \$70 fine or something like that. You walk into the courtroom and you look at the judge and you go, oh my goodness, silent rage. I mean how, who put him in that kind of, I'm up before him and I'm next and some, what is, I mean what is the maximum penalty for this? You know, you start thinking, you know, is it a year in prison or something? You know what I'm saying? This is the situation we're finding ourselves in, the most important day of our lives.

All of our life is wasted unless we come before that throne and hear these simple words, well done, good and faithful servant. Unless we hear that, we're gone, we're done for. There won't even be any appeal.

There'll be no lawyers. Americans love lawyers because usually if you pay them enough you can get yourself off. Doesn't matter what you've done, even if you kill somebody apparently you can get yourself off if you get the best lawyer.

Sorry, no lawyers. None at all. And so everybody will listen in silence as the names are read out of the Lamb's Book of Life and those who say no, but Lord, but Lord, it even says they'll literally say that several places in the Bible.

But Lord, but Lord, didn't I go to church every, I paid, I cast out demons out of people God. Away from me. I never knew you.

You didn't know me. I never knew you. You never entered into my courts.

I never saw you. Who on earth are you? You won't even bother saying that. He'll just go, get out.

It says the angels will seize them, tie them hand and foot, cast them into everlasting darkness where there's wailing and gnashing of teeth. This is the Jesus we don't want to hear about. This is the day we don't talk about because we're stupid.

Because everybody else preparing for a test thinks about it, talks about it, prepares and studies for it and says, if I'm not like this, what's going to happen to me? We need to study for that test, people. I'm not just talking about head study. I'm talking about heart study.

Are we going to make it? Let's get into the New Testament. I'm tired of trying to just look at the old when we need to prove that this God that we're talking about is the same God. Let's go to Matthew chapter 22.

Is the God of judgment still alive in the New Testament? Is it just the same scenario? Has he changed at all? Matthew chapter 22. I'm going into the NIV translation because it's a bit clearer. Matthew 22 verse 1. Jesus spoke to them again in parables saying, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

He sent his servants to those who'd been invited to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, tell those who've been invited I've prepared the dinner. Come to the wedding banquet.

Verse 5. But they paid no attention and went off, one to his field, another to his business. The rest of them seethed his servants, mistreated them and killed them. Verse 7. The king was enraged.

He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

Now Jesus was speaking those words just before he was arrested to be killed. He told them that parable about what happens to those who mistreat. Servants of God are coming to bring them the gospel.

Then we jump over to the end of Matthew 23. All this time he's sitting. This is his visit to Jerusalem just before he's about to get killed.

And he is rebuking the scribes and Pharisees like you wouldn't believe. He's calling them a nest of snakes. He says, you hypocrites.

He's obviously not trying to weasel out of getting killed by making friends with these guys. That's for sure. Matthew 23 verse 33.

You snakes, you brood of vipers, how will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify. Others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth. Verse 37. Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you.

How often I've longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you're not willing. Your house is left to you desolate.

Your house is left to you desolate. Now you know what he's saying there is this. God in his mercy is sending you not just his servants but his son.

Him you mistreat and crucify and you crucify all those servants and so this is what happens to you. In the parable he says the king is angry. He's going to kill those murderers.

He's going to burn their city. Then a few minutes later we see him saying I've longed to gather you in. I've so longed for you and yet you would not listen to any of my servants I've sent you.

In fact you hate and kill them. And he goes into that part where he talks about the end days. He says see this temple? It was a huge massive stone edifice.

He said no stone will be left upon another. Such darkness is coming you'll call it the greatest tribulation you've ever had. The sun will be darkened.

The moon will be turned to blood. Don't you know what's coming upon you because you reject the prophets and reject the son of man. Don't you know what's coming.

Now we're going to see here that God is a God of judgment in the New Testament and the Old. Put your hand up if you've ever heard the story of how Jerusalem was destroyed less than 40 years after that. Good.

It's a very important thing. It's in fact the end of an era. Absolutely a change in the way God operates in the earth.

Less than 40 years after Jesus spoke those words you see they started persecuting his apostles that he sent. They killed him first and thought they'd done away with him. Then they persecuted all his apostles and tried to kill them.

God waited and extended mercy to them for a period of time. But less than 40 years after that after Jesus spoke those words this is what happened in Jerusalem. Jerusalem rebelled against the Romans and was surrounded by a siege.

An entire Roman armies converged on Jerusalem and besieged it. This is in 67 AD. And they withdrew for a short time and the Christians immediately because they knew Jesus' prophecy.

Jesus' prophecy said this, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies don't even stop to pack your things. Pray that it's not on a Sabbath day. Pray that you have no small children.

Get out of there as fast as you can because where the carcass is the vultures will be gathered. He said when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies. Now those armies withdrew for a short time.

They stopped the siege and they withdrew for a couple of years actually. Those guys gathered up everything. All of the Christians left Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was literally given over to the judgment of God. So great was the judgment famine came, pestilence and plague came upon them. The armies came back.

In 70 AD they totally surrounded Jerusalem with the intent of raising it to the ground. This is the Romans. So bad was the judgment that God had given them over to that within Jerusalem, this is how stupid you become when you're given over to judgment.

There was a civil war going on and they were destroying each other's food. Now this is inside a city under siege where no food's coming in. That's how stupid you become when God gives you over to judgment.

So they had a civil war going on and they were destroying all the food in the city. The Romans came in under the judgment of God. They burnt Jerusalem to the ground.

They raised the temple to the ground. First they took in their poles that were like a religious symbol to them. They took it right into the holiest place, stood them there and bowed before them, desecrating the holiest place of God.

And then they tore the whole temple down. No stone was left upon another. 1.1 million people were slaughtered inside that city.

In fact, Josephus the historian who was there to watch it happen said the blood was running so thickly through the streets it was putting out the fires. So great was the slaughter. Ninety-seven thousand, the ones remaining, were all taken slaves in chains back to Rome.

That was the end of Jerusalem. For centuries and centuries it hardly existed as a place. Now I'm telling you that story for one reason.

The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. He does not brook fools gladly. He will not put up with mockery.

He will not put up with people who have one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom of God. This God whom we will all be appearing before because it says it's appointed unto every man once to die and after that the judgment. So we'll all be appearing before him.

Woe betide us if we don't hear those words from his mouth. Well done, good and faithful servant. If we hear anything else from a man, we're goners.

You know there's that saying I'd rather be a caretaker in heaven than be cast into hell. I'd rather be a caretaker that day I tell you. I'd rather inch in just over the line somehow because I cannot believe.

It says God's going to be angry. He saves all his wrath for the end. Wrath means fierce anger.

We never, never think of an angry God. We don't think of a God of justice. We don't think of God of anger or vengeance.

We never think of anything like that. Church is so pleasant. We all come in smiling at one another and doing that little Christian God bless you thing.

We're all so good at it. So many people are playing games with God. There are people in this room who have never been into the courts of God in their life.

Do you know what happens if God doesn't know you? I want to look at one last scripture. Matthew chapter 7. So we're already in Matthew. So let's go to Matthew 7. Matthew 7 verse 21.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me you evil doers.

I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me you evil doers. I want to say this to you people.

If your heart's not in a place before God where you can enter into the throne room of God and find mercy, you're in terrible, terrible trouble. There are people in this room I believe who call themselves Christians

who never have done that even once. They don't know what the holy presence of God is like.

It's not a feeling. It's being utterly transparent before God where he can see right through you and you know it, and there's nothing there to condemn you. If you're not in that state, you don't even make it in the door.

It says clean hands and a pure heart. I want to put this before you. If you get in front of God who's going to be very, very angry, without the blood of Jesus, without those clean white robes that Jesus gives, what kind of condition are you going to be in? What is going to be happening to you that day when all these preachers, you know it's describing preachers here.

There's nothing, you know, I mean we see these guys on TV, don't we? I think judgment day we're going to see a whole lot of preachers dead. We're going to see them killed by God. We're going to see angels cut them apart with swords and throw them into the lake of fire and they're going to be saying, but sir, we were one of your great, didn't you see me on TBN? Seriously, no joke.

Didn't you see me heal that girl on TBN, God? My friend, you haven't, you've been collecting money off the widows and the orphans for the last 10 years. I'm going to kill you and throw you into the lake of fire. You're a disgrace to my name.

And then you'll bring up the next preacher. Meanwhile, you're down the line a little bit watching all this happening and going, I know that guy. What's God going to do to me? You can see why people are going to be flat on their faces, can't you? You can see why the apostle John, when he saw Jesus in that state, he was his best friend on earth.

He said, I fell at his feet as though I was dead. You can see why, eh? You know what? Many of us are playing games. We never enter into the courtrooms of God at all.

We get together on a Sunday morning and it's a happy little time and we go home. People, if you're not seeking God by yourself, don't think that being in a lukewarm church is going to save you. I'm not talking about this particular church.

I'm talking about the Western church. Don't think that being part of the church will save you. The church is in a lukewarm state today and we're all more lukewarm than we can ever tell.

Because the first thing Jesus talked to about the lukewarm people, he said, they're blind. They need eyesalve just to be able to see themselves. They can't even tell how sick they are.

How comfortable, materialistic, just mediocre in every way. Mediocrity. We reek of mediocrity in the church today.

Mel Gibson did something outstanding that we should be doing every day. We never, never do it. God had to take a Catholic guy who knows what a state of mind before God is.

I don't even know. But I tell you, he did something outstanding and presented the real Jesus to people for just a while. Something we never do.

They look at TBN and they're sick to their stomach. They see the money coming in. They're sick.

I'm sick. How can God be misrepresented that way? What will God do to those men when he gets his hands on them? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Some people fear the devil.

I tell you what, man. If you read the Bible correctly, you fear God more than that. We no longer lay a foundation of the fear of the Lord in the lives of Christians and wonder why their life is a piece of garbage.

They're wondering the same thing. They go, I gave my heart to Jesus and nothing's going on. I'm not close to God.

I'm not dealing with my sin. Listen, man. We don't even preach the fear of the Lord.

We don't even preach repentance to them. No wonder their life's crap. Preachers of this nation, preachers around the world need to get their act together and start laying a good foundation in people.

We don't even preach the gospel anymore. We preach come to Jesus and be happy. He will make your life exciting.

What kind of pathetic garbage is that? Last time I saw that was on an advert for toothpaste. What kind of garbage preaching is that? Seeker sensitive services, away with it, man. Preaching sin, righteousness, and judgment is what the apostles did.

It's what all the prophets did and all the apostles did. We think we know better because we've been to Bible college. I'm going to pray in a few moments.

What I'm going to pray is literally this, that God will touch the hearts of every person in this room and show them if there is maybe a white robe there, but it's been spotted. Maybe there is some sin that you've started to walk in. I mean, you might not have even ever even got a white robe to begin with.

Many people assume that because they went to the front one day at a church meeting they're okay. Seriously, so many people assume that. It's false.

Wouldn't it be terrible to find that out on the last day? Wouldn't it be terrible to know only then, oh, I failed the test. The test was coming up my whole life. I've spent my whole life preparing for this.

I went to church every week. I thought I was okay, but I get in front of Jesus and He says, Sir, I never knew you at all. You were never even saved once.

But God, there will be others who are coming before God and He says, you were saved one time. I knew you real well. I used to love fellowshiping with you.

I used to love those times of communion, but you let it slide away and you got involved in pornography or gossip or lying. Just the hidden things that only I could see, God's saying, they're not the obvious things. A lot of people can put on a good front, but God can see the hidden things, man.

He knows when you've cheated on your taxes and He knows. He just knows the stuff. He knows what you're doing behind other people's back.

He knows the skeletons you've got hidden in your closet and you won't confess them and won't put them right. And you're going to fail the test and the result will be so hideous and be such a tragedy because you had it there. You had His salvation offered and given to you and that is a worse tragedy to me.

So I'm going to pray in a few moments and what we're going to pray is this. God, please show us those things in our lives that we have to deal with today. Show us those things that we have to deal with today to be right before you so we know.

So let's pray. Father God, I pray for every person in this room. I pray for all of us, Father.

Search our hearts, God. Shine that searchlight that you have into our deepest heart and being, Father God. Show us if there is some spirit spot of sin that we have allowed to come between you and us.

Show us, Father. Remind us if we are not communing with you the way we used to a couple of years ago. Father, if we have let television become an idol in our lives, show us, God, that we can repent and turn away.

Father God, if it's sport, if it's anything. It could be a girlfriend or boyfriend. Not that that's wrong, Father God, but you know what idolatry does.

We start placing things before you. Father, search us and try us. Show us any lying, any gossip, any backbiting, any lusts.

All of those things, Father God, that you cannot stand, that you will not allow into your presence, that you cast away from you. Let those things not be found in us. I pray you would search every heart to its depths, Father God, everybody in this room.

May your glory come down upon us. Show us so that we have a fear of the Lord, always undergirding everything, that we do not go on in this casual way where we think we are going to be okay with you and we are not. Show us, God.

Shine your light into us now. I really pray that you would show us that light. Just while we're still praying, just allow God to remind you of things and allow him to speak to you about certain issues.

Some areas are grey. It's not like they're spots. It's like you've allowed compromise.

It's almost like instead of being an actual black spot on that white robe, it's almost like it's a cloud. And you look at it and you question it and you say, I don't know about that. You know God's saying to get rid of the clouds too.

I believe that. That was one of the secret keys to the Welsh revival. Evan Roberts went everywhere saying, if there's a cloud between you and God, get rid of it today.

I urge you to do the same. Father, just as we're continuing in prayer, just pray for great outpouring of your Holy Spirit here today. Let your Holy Spirit be speaking to us, that we might go from this place with white robes, Father, before you, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

I'm just going to ask those who would like to stand. I really want to specifically pray for people who want to confess something before God. It's not that you have to confess it out loud.

It's simply God knows what's going on between you and Him. So I suggest, please stand right now. If there's something that God's been speaking to you about while I've been talking, while we've been praying, stand up.

God bless you, those people. We're not going to have any music. We don't need music because you've got to deal with God without music.

And there ain't going to be music on Judgment Day, I don't think. No music whatsoever. I really feel there's more people.

I don't want to have to last this altar call thing for like 10 minutes, trying to drag you up here. So you just stand. If God is speaking to you, if there's some sin in your life or a cloud in your life, there's still more.

Father God, you say that you'll convict of sin, righteousness and judgment. Father, we just ask that your Holy Spirit be unleashed in this room to convict of sin, righteousness and judgment at this moment, Father God. That those who need to stand would stand before you and confess to you and come clean before you, Father.

Just allow a few more minutes. It's not too late. I just feel there's a couple of people sitting down, just literally a couple of people.

God is speaking to you about something you need to put right today. You need to stand up because I'm going to pray in a second. Okay.

Father God, I just pray your mighty blessing on every single person standing, Father. God, I pray you just flood them with your glory. Flood them with your Holy Spirit, Father.

And we just ask the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ and especially the washing of the blood of Jesus to go right through them now. Father, we know that we're made pure and holy only by this blood covering of Jesus washing away our sins. Father, I pray there'd be deep repentance resulting from godly sorrow that turns away from sin, that hates sin, that cannot stand it anymore, that turns the opposite way.

Let that be true of every person standing here, Father God. Let there be no wavering. As our brother said before this meeting today, let them come in and lock the door behind them so there's no path back out to that sin anymore.

They've locked the door and they're standing on the rock with you. Let it be so, Father. I pray it would be so.

I pray a mighty blessing. I pray an impartation, an outpouring of your Holy Spirit to stand for everybody standing here, Father God, that they'd be able to stand before you, a holy God, knowing that being transparent before you, there's no evil thing inside them on their conscience before you, Father. That their conscience is clean and they can come into your throne room and commune with you and spend such precious times with you because they've been made clean by the blood of Jesus.

Let it be so of every person standing in this room. Even some people who wavered and did not stand up, Father, I pray that you'll pursue those ones by your Spirit, remind them so that they'd repent so no one would escape this search, Father. Hallelujah, God.

I pray a mighty blessing on all of these people. Now, just while we're still in prayer, I'm not going to force every single person standing to come up. What I'd like to do is invite you, if you're standing and you'd like to come forward for prayer, please do so.

I've found that some people really do need to come forward and it's almost like they need prayer to help them deal with whatever the issue is. I'm going to leave that to you. We've got people here who will pray with you.

I'd just like to invite you to the front now if you'd like to come forward for prayer.

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