

Judgment and Hope

27 December, 2009

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – Isaiah 65:1-25; 66:1-24

Unit Theme: “Major Prophets”

Central Truth: God’s mercy gives hope in judgment.

Focus: Recognize God’s mercy in judgment and trust in His restoring love.

Key Verse: Isaiah 30:18

Introduction:

According to our opening scripture the Lord is a God of judgment. The judgment of God is a topic that few preachers speak about today and it is often relegated to nothing more than a trivial matter. Make no mistake, the judgment of God is not trivial, but on the contrary, is a matter of eternal life or eternal death. Without the knowledge of God’s judgment there is little or no fear of wrong doing. Remove the knowledge of God’s judgment and sin is what becomes trivial. God’s judgment is not arbitrary (random or uninformed), it comes from His perfect nature. He is omniscient (all knowing), He knows the intent of our heart behind every action we do or word we speak, even when we are not fully aware of our intent, He is. Therefore, He, and only He, is able to make a righteous judgment, all of the time. We need to understand that He is a just and righteous God and His nature demands justice; He will judge the unrighteous. For the redeemed (righteous), there is no need to fear, but for the sinner (unrighteous) who have rejected the mercy and grace of God there is reason to fear. The sinner will face the judgment of God where there is none who will bring comfort, no one to appeal to, and there will be no deliverer. So in essence, there is no hope for the unrepentant sinner that finds himself under the righteous judgment of God. The redeemed however, have a different outlook, we have hope, a hope that the scripture says “does not disappoint” (**Romans 5:5**). Remove the judgment of God and there would be no need for hope. What our generation needs more than ever, is hope, but without knowledge of God’s judgment there will be no hope. So let us begin our study by looking at the judgment of God.

I. God Judges the Rebellious – Isaiah 65:1-12

The Apostle Paul quotes from this passage in Romans 10:20-21. It is clear that the Lord is speaking of the Gentile nation, He would come to us. Of course we have the rest of the story, God came to His own and His own rejected Him, but the Gentiles welcomed His coming. The Lord tells us in Hebrews 3 that we should take heed to ourselves (be warned) that the judgment that fell on His own people does not also fall on us. The Lord will repay them for their rebellion; His judgment will be complete and just. Throughout history God has had a remnant of righteous ones who refused to conform to the lifestyle of their culture, but served the Lord instead. Even

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though we live in an evil generation, we can be sure that God will protect us and bring us into His kingdom in righteousness and power.

➤ **Think about it:**

Are you aware of the judgment of God, if so, how does your knowledge of His judgment affect your life?

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“At the day of Doom men shall be judged according to their fruits. It will not be said then, ‘Did you believe?’ but, ‘were you doers, or talkers only?’” – John Bunyan

II. God Will Renew all Things – Isaiah 65:17-25

A large part of the Christians’ hope is in the anticipation that God will do away with sin, restore the proper order of this world, and establish His eternal Kingdom on a new earth. It will be a world that is completely diverse to the one we now know. During the millennial reign we will see a glimpse of what the new heaven and new earth are to be. Isaiah’s prophecy is really three fold; he reveals a restoration from Babylonian captivity, he speaks of the millennial reign, and he foretells of the final place of rest for the righteous, a new heaven and new earth. This is what all who place their hope in Christ now long for. We know that not only will there be a new dwelling place, but that this mortal body will be swallowed up by life, immortality not immorality will be the norm when God renews all things.

- For further study see 2 Corinthians 5:1-11

➤ **Think about it:**

Have you ever pondered what heaven will be like?

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“The damage done to us on this earth will never find its way into that safe city. We can relax, we can rest, and though some of us can hardly imagine it, we can prepare to feel safe and secure for all eternity.” – Billy Hybels

III. God Offers Hope – Isaiah 66:12-23

Throughout the word of God, the message of hope is plain. It is a message that reaches us where we live and will be with us throughout eternity. It may be at times that we suffer along with the unrighteous; this does not mean that God has left us, or that He has forgot His promise of hope. He has not and will not abandon those who place their faith and hope in Him for salvation. While we live here in the flesh, we must not forget that because of sin the world around us is under the judgment of God. Therefore it is to our best interest to cling to Him for our salvation and to hope for His mighty hand of deliverance. Those who do, will not be disappointed, but will be given a new hope that will never disappoint. ¹*May God grant, for Christ’s sake, that our portion may be with those who fear and love his name, who cleave to his truths, and persevere in every good work, looking to receive from the Lord Jesus Christ the gracious invitation, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

➤ **Think about it:**

Where have you placed your hope?

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“Worship is a voluntary act of gratitude by the saved to the Savior, by the healed to the Healer, by the delivered to the Deliverer” – Max Lucado

Conclusion:

Judgment and hope is a single theme that runs constant through the scriptures. The Lord created us as eternal beings, but sin brought His judgment and ultimately death. However, God did not leave us without hope, the fact that we are sinners leaves us with a dreadful future judgment. If this were the full story there would be nothing to live for, but God did not leave us in our sin. He sent His Son to redeem us and give us a hope and a future. His plans for us according to

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Jeremiah (29:11), are just that; to give us a hope and a future not to condemn us by His judgment. We must not mistake His mercy and grace with injustice. If we fail to see our need for His redemption and likewise fail to enter into a covenant relationship with Him through His Son, then there is nothing left for us except His righteous judgment. The choice is ours, we stand today under His word just as the Israelites did in Deuteronomy 30:19, *“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;”* If we want His blessings, we must choose life, if we don’t all that remains is His judgment. It will be swift and it will be final.

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

¹Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible, Second Edition, Isaiah 66:15-24

This study and others can be found at www.fullmessage.org

Next Week’s Lesson –God’s Appointed Prophet

I. Divine Appointment – Jeremiah 1:4-10

II. Divine Word – Jeremiah 1:11-16

III. Divine Empowerment – Jeremiah 1:17-19

Daily Devotions:

Mon – God Provides the Word – Exodus 4:10-16

Tue – Promise of Empowerment – Exodus 14:13-16

Wed – Anointed King – 1 Samuel 16:4-13

Thur – Spirit-Led Words – Matthew 10:16-20

Fri – Empowered to Witness – Mark 16:15-20

Sat – A Chosen Vessel – Acts 9:3-6, 10-16