

The Seven Levels of Judgment - Improper Response Part 1

by Dan Biser

The sermon emphasizes the importance of proper response to God's judgments, highlighting the consequences of improper response and the need for proper study of God's word, fellowship with God, and repentance and holiness.

Duration: 30:04

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 55:8-9, Jeremiah 8:7, Hosea 4:6, John 17:3, 1 Peter 1:16, Revelation 22:18-19

Topics: "Divine Judgment", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of the seven levels of judgment as outlined in the Bible, emphasizing the importance of understanding God's response to sin and the need for a proper response from His people. It highlights the progression from individual sin to national consequences, culminating in a cataclysmic catastrophe if a proper response is not made. The focus is on identifying improper responses to God's call for repentance and the urgency for a correct response to avert further judgment.

Transcript

Well, here we are for a follow on the seven judgments, seven levels of judgments that we have been looking at. We've gone through from the very beginning, level number one to number seven. And somebody would say, well then, what else is there to teach on? What else is there to bring to our attention on these things? Well, it's one of those things that when you preach and declare to God's people the truth, that many of the old saints have declared it.

And any good preacher or teacher knows this. Any good parent knows this. What good does it do to tell a story to your child, from a parent to a child, if the parent doesn't want a response, a proper response from their child? You and I have the word of God that gives us an instruction of what the father wants in his children.

Our problem is, is that as we have seen in the reading of Leviticus, that was our background passage, Leviticus 26, that we read every time an opening for the seven levels of judgment, because that he declares them that. If you will not listen to me, if you will not obey me, then I will bring seven times more judgment on you. And so we identify those seven levels of judgment.

And so, in quick review, quick fashion, we'll look at those seven right now in order. And we start off with level number one. It is the initial act of sin.

There is no need to talk about judgments unless there is a sin that is offending and provoking God. Now once that sin is done, you immediately move into level number two, which God, who is holy, does not tolerate sin. He does not wink at sin, as we saw in Romans 1. He does not leave sin uncontested or unaddressed.

Sin has to be answered by God. That's God's nature, his judgment, his justice, his holiness, his righteousness. All of his attributes go into this.

So level number one is the sin that is committed by an individual, by a family, by a church, by a nation. God meets that sin in his response. And as we've seen, the response of God sometimes is very horrendous.

It's life, it's death. But sometimes it's external. And so we come to level number three, that one of God's responses to judgment when sin is left undealt with, unrepented, unconfessed, unknowing about it, that God sends a judgment on the land.

And we looked at the calamities of weather, of nature, of seasons, of areas, regions, entire nations, the entire world we see is under a judgment against the land because of the sin of the people. And then we come to level number four, when God sends judgment against the government. And that is any ruling party of authority over that respective party inside of a family, inside of a church, inside of the nation, God judges the leadership and those in authority because the sin has not been dealt with.

And so again, we see from one to four is that we have gone from an individual sin or a family sin or a national sin or a church sin and it is affecting the aspects of life from the land to the government. And then we go into the judgment number five. Level number five is God's judgment on his own people.

Let judgment begin in the house of God. And so God brings judgment. Ananias and Sapphira.

God brings judgment where the church is stripped of its authority and its relevance in a culture and a society because hypocrisy and irreverence and irreligious attitudes go into play. And God, we bring an occasion against his name. So that's level number five.

Level number six is when it becomes now that that which is external now starts to become internal. And there are issues of life and death. There is a judgment that is affecting.

We see loss of life in children. We see that there are pestilence and disease that comes out of nowhere. God sends wildlife, animals, insects.

He sends them in droves as you go back to the book of Exodus. He sent the frogs, the flies, the locusts. He sent those things to afflict and to attack.

And so there was a perpetual onslaught. And then it got more personal. It got more internal, and it got more dire.

And its strength is that loss of life in scores of individuals or dozens that we saw because of this judgment. Now that level six is what we would say is the last warning shot over the bow that when you begin to see judgment on the land, judgment on government, judgment on the church, judgment on individual living

styles, stances, our day-to-day activities and things like that, when those things are happening, there is somebody in the church that's got to be able to sit up and to say, hey, we're under judgment. But we still have an attitude today that we're not under judgment.

So again, we fail to understand that with missing the six levels of judgment, we're blindsided by level number seven. And level number seven is a cataclysmic catastrophe where there is a huge loss of life and destruction that comes in to an area, a region, or a nation, and it just destroys everything. It is a historic moment.

What that means is that after that, everything will be referred back into reference as do you remember when that happened. You see it in the Old Testament when the children of Israel were carried off into captivity near 700 B.C. by the Assyrians. You see it in 600 B.C. when the Babylonians carried away Judah in Jerusalem and they destroyed the city of Jerusalem in the temple.

You see it at the cross. You see it in times of events of the Black Plague in Europe in the 1500s and those things that you see in history that mark that there was great loss of life, there was great destruction, it was a catastrophe, it was a calamity. And it is that people reference that point 9-11 or our nation, Hurricane Katrina that threw us into that level number seven.

But again, if the response of God's people does not meet the sin, does not meet the judgment, then it is that the cup of wrath of God is now full and is being held forth. And so we looked at all seven of those levels. We're at a place now as to say well now what's this all about for this evening? What's this need to be addressed in this? And again I come back to it.

It is the response of the church that needs to be proper according to what God has instituted. Now there is a scripture that the Spirit of God speaks, he whispers to his people and he says this is the way, now walk in it. Now if we disobey that way, we walk contrary to God, or we stray off the beaten path that God has set for us, then we provoke it, we sin against it.

The judgment comes. There is no correction. If there is no correction, then we continue to ratchet up the judgments and we see this level now where there is a huge loss of life on the horizon coming our way, our national life way that we've been living in comfort and freedom and enjoyment.

Those things are all going to come to a crashing halt because there's not been a proper response by the church. You cannot expect the lost heathen to understand this. You cannot expect the lost heathen sinner that is in darkness and ignorance to understand this.

So I want to come to you tonight and this is going to be a two-fold lesson that brings us to a time of invitation and understanding of this. Again, I'm not preaching this for the world. The prophets were sent to the people and the people laughed and the people mocked and the people let it come in this ear and go out that ear and they refused to listen.

But when God's people hear God's word at God's time and they refuse to respond properly, then it's called an improper response. I want to do a two-fold objective here with this invitation. I've been studying in the scripture when God turned away in those judgments, when God stopped the judgment on his people, on a nation, is when they had a proper response.

But if the people didn't respond, then God finished it all. Now we're in that place where God is getting ready to finish us all. Because we have provoked him and shamed him and we are so evil in his sight.

Now, when I was studying their proper responses, I came across a lot of verses, especially I have dealt in these judgments with Isaiah, Jeremiah, some of the more major prophets. But in this failure to respond, I saw more in the minor prophets. Right on up from Daniel to Hosea, right on to the end of the Old Testament in Malachi, and those 13 minor prophets that are there.

And I began to listen to Mark in the verses where God says, because my people would not, they would not properly respond. And so I began to term it, my terminology, an improper response. Now there are contrasts in scriptures that reveal a whole lot of things to us if we can get our minds around this.

For example, you have a central source, and in that central source, out of that same central source, it goes in the opposite direction. And I'll give you a clear example of this. God says, God creates, God is creator of all things.

So in the central source, it is God as creator. What does God create? Well, He creates two opposites for us. He creates light, but He also creates darkness, allows darkness.

I am light, but I also dwell in the thick darkness, is the scripture. So God is central, but we have opposite ends that comes out of that creation. Another one of that, God's creation.

God creates, He says, I create good and evil. Well, we don't know anything that is more opposite in the spectrum than good and evil. Righteousness and unrighteousness.

The same God that creates makes a heaven, which is without sin. But then He also makes a hell that is full of sin. So it is in this contrast between opposites that you begin to see the fullness of the picture.

You can't have just highs. You have to have a high and a low to understand the difference between the two. We live in contrast.

You eat a dish, a plate, a meal, and you say, that was the best meal I ever had. Well, what are you saying that was the best meal that you ever had? You are comparing it to some of the worst meals that you ever had. Contrast.

I feel better today than I have for a long time. What are you talking about? You are making a contrast from your health, your status, compared to days gone by that you were sick and ill and not as good. So in contrast of a proper response, I began to see where God condemned, chastised, rebuked, and announced the children of Israel's improper responses.

And then when I began to look at the church, when I began to look at my own life, I began to see some of the same improper responses. So I came to this conclusion for this entitlement for this message tonight. It is the improper response that will not stop the judgments that are unfolding in our present day.

Now, as I said, the background passage that carried us through this was Leviticus. It was that scripture several times mentioned there. I will seven times more bring judgment to you.

Multiply your judgments. And then we went back several times and we looked at multiple verses, Old and New Testament, of how God demonstrated those seven levels of judgment. And then in contrast, we saw chapter in Deuteronomy of the blessings and the curses.

Again, God has central source. God has power to bless. God has power to curse.

Opposite extremes. Blessings come to proper response. Curses come to improper response.

And so I want to go through scriptures tonight. I want us to contemplate where we're at. Why revival has not come.

We want to look at why the judgments have not stopped. We want to look at why we're in the condition that we're in. And the answer to all this, without holding us to the suspense to the end, is that the church has not properly responded to God.

There was a friend of mine, John Franklin, who did prayer ministries and now pastors in Kentucky. And at one of the conferences that he was at, he presented a question to those that was gathered there. And he said that he was quoting Greg Frizzell, another prayer leader, that said, There has never been in the church's history a prayer movement like what has been going on for the last several decades in the United States, North American church, that has not produced a revival.

Now that's not taking away that revival is produced by man. Revival comes by God, we know that, or ought to know that. But God sends revival when he moves the people's prayer.

So John Franklin asked the question, If we have had such a prayer movement as has been unparalleled in any time of history of the church for the last 2,000 years, why have we not seen revival? And I contemplated that, chewed on that for a long time. And in the midst of that, I would dare say to you that it is that we have been in a prayer movement. There are people praying, there are groups praying all the time, but it is that we're not praying properly.

And it is that we're not prevailing in prayer. So we are at an improper position in our life and our walk with God right now. Now I want to give to you exactly God's word that says, Thus saith the Lord, that God says this is an improper response to man.

And when we identify those things, that we would be able to correct those things, confess those things, repent of those things, and have a proper response. And when a proper response is made, then we'll see a good response from God. The curses will stop and the blessings will begin.

The judgments will end and the fruitfulness will begin. God's anger will be turned away and God's grace and mercy will be sustained. Proper response.

So looking at the improper responses, I want you to open your Bible up to the book of Hosea. And I want to give to you, first of all, two verses that will lay for us the foundation of this, of why the seven levels of judgment are happening right now. And we're on the verge of number seven in our day and time.

If not tomorrow, tonight, in the near future, we are within months away from this happening. If there's not a proper response. But it is that God tells us why the church is not responding.

He lets us know the condition of our own ailment, our own sickness. And so in Jeremiah chapter 8, it's our first verse that I want to look at. In Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 7, he tells us the answer to the question.

Why is the church not properly responding? Why is the church improperly responding to these judgments that are happening? Verse 7 of chapter 8 of Jeremiah. Yea, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed time. The animal kingdom knows the time of birth and the time of death.

And the turtle and the crane and the swallow, they all observe the time of their coming. But, oh what a word study that is. But.

Everything changes in context of that verse. But, my people. Not the world, not the heathen, not the sinner, not the servants of Satan.

My people. But my people. Know not the judgment of the Lord.

Ignorance. Apathy. Disenchanting.

Disconnecting. To the things of God. To the word of God.

To the spirit of God. But my people. Do not know.

The judgment of the Lord. Now there are several other verses in these minor prophets from Hosea to Malachi. That we're going to be examining and looking at.

That repeat that same message. But my children do not know me. They do not know my word.

They do not know my ways. And because of that misunderstanding or that lack of knowledge. We remain in blindness and deafness and dumbness.

And we are not able. Having eyes to see, we can't see. Having ears to hear, we can't hear.

Having a heart to perceive, we can't understand. So the issue is that we improperly respond to God on our understanding. Our understanding.

Is not God's understanding. As high as the heavens are above the earth. So are God's ways higher than our ways.

And his thoughts than our thoughts. And it is that we are not to bring God down to our level. Is to say God I think this is why this is happening.

But Lord it is that you would take us up to your level. And we would see as you see. And we would think as you think.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Set your affections on things above. Not on things of this earth.

We need to stop improperly. Responding to God. By trying to make God like us.

And the church in North America does not try to be holy like God is holy. They try to make God as relevant as what we want to be to this day and age. We have cheated everything of God.

Because of that it is an improper response to expect that God is going to bless us. Take care of us. Watch over us.

Heal us. Save us. Love us.

Provide for us. When God says I hate you. I hate your ways.

I hate your prayers. I hate your sacrifices. I hate your life.

I hate everything about you. Because it is everything that is anti God. We are in that place.

Improper responses. Because we start off with this first error. This first mistake.

This first sin. This first iniquity. This first transgression.

We do not know the judgment of God. I have tried to answer that in the seven levels. Why don't we understand it? Why this continued progression in this? It is very simple.

We don't know the word of God. There are pastors who don't read the Bible. There are pastors who don't preach the word.

There are pastors who don't teach the word. There are people who have sat in our churches in North America for 10 years, 30 years, 50 years, 70 years. And they have still never known the word of God.

Study to show yourself approved unto God. Improper responses come out of an improper study of the word of God. If you don't read the word of God, and you don't spend time with God, then you don't know God.

What was Jesus' prayer in John 17? That they may know you as I know you. You cannot know God without reading the word of God. You cannot know God without being in fellowship with God.

And so it is that absence of the word of God and the presence of God that leads us to humanism. Ah, how I hate humanism! It has been the downfall of our nation. I think I can, I think I can.

I can do nothing! Except through Christ's improper response. We are going to win this world for Jesus. We can't win nobody, John 6, unless the Father draws them.

They cannot come. Humanism is an improper response due to a lack of understanding, a lack of time, a lack of discernment, a lack of wisdom, the lack of God. God is absent from the church today.

The pulpit, the prayer closets, the secret closets, the family, the society, He's absent. We're going to see those verses. That God says, I'm so sick of you, I'm leaving.

I am going to depart from you. There are some horrifying verses that is due to an improper response to God calling us to repentance. God calling us to holiness.

Be ye holy, for I am holy. And the first words out of somebody's mouth in the church today, when that verse is preached or read, is to say, oh, well you never can be holy, so why even bother trying? Automatically, that thought becomes an improper response by denouncing what God has said. Be ye holy, for I am holy.

Oh, you can't do that, so you don't really need to shoot for that. Improper response by adding to or taking away from the Word of God. You ought to know, Revelation 22, that at the end of that book it says, any man that adds to or takes away from that book, Revelation, but it is the whole Word of God.

It's not for us to cut out and add and take away and do what we want with it. It's to take all 66 books, it's to take all the Bible and to maintain it for what we have here. Now that's what I want to do.

I'll start in these verses to point out where our error is found in Jeremiah 8-7, and we'll come off of that now to go through the minor prophets. In reading these things, we're going to see where God says, this is not

right. So, taking these things, improper responses in the beginning now, I want to go through the verse.

I'm going to give you the reference to that, and then I'll have a shortened definition behind that, and then we'll come to a conclusion. Now, the next sermon, the next part of this seven levels of judgment is going to be a proper response. What is it going to need to be taken by God's people to stop, to throw that emergency brake that we talked about in the seven levels? What does it take for God to turn away His wrath and bring mercy? What does it take for revival to come? That's a proper response.

What I do believe is that without an understanding of our improper responses, we're never going to get to that level. It's not that it can't happen. God is God, and God can do whatever He desires to do.

But it is for us that we know the Word of God and examine these verses that I'm going to give to you tonight, so that we can begin to see where we've gone wrong, and that we can correct them to make a proper response. Now, what I ask you now to take from Jeremiah, I want you to go over to the book of Hosea. We're going to come back to Daniel in the next time that we have this address on proper response.

Daniel is a clear picture of proper response. What it does take to gain God's approval, and God's favor, and God's blessing, in contrast to what we're seeing in Hosea through Malachi, where the children of Israel and the people of God improperly responded to the Word of God. Now, having said that, we start in the book of Hosea, chapter 4. Chapter 4, verse 6, will be our first reading.

Now, as I made mention just a little bit ago, I was contemplating some of these verses, and I began to look at this dual aspect of proper versus improper, and I began to think of my own life. And then I began to watch the church. I'm a people watcher.

I watch people's responses at public events, and out in public, and in church, and in family situations, and I see the consistency in men. That's one thing that you can guarantee, that men are consistent in their patterns of life, especially when it deals with sin. And so, watching people in church, listening in prayer meetings, watching a choir sing, watching a soloist, listening to a man of God preach the Word of God with the anointing and without the anointing, and contrasting those things to see improper.

Satan comes to undo every work of God. When you look at how God responds to the sin of His people, it's in judgment. And when God's people don't see that judgment, and they continue on in their improper response to Him, it provokes them even that much more.

Now, what are those actions that provoke Him? When I tried to preach this for the first time, and I tried to present a proper response of bits and pieces of Scripture and illustrations that we'll look at, where God's people responded, there was a consistency that they met, that they did, and that the people was the same as whether it was in Genesis, or whether it was in the children of Israel, whether it was in the church, or whether it was today. It was proper, and it was consistent with what God said. I want to give you a quick verse, 2 Chronicles 7, verse 14.

Judgment is found in 2 Chronicles 7, verse 13. When I would hold the brain from you, judgment, drought, and so that, if my people, again, not the world, the church, somebody says, oh, well, that's contextual, it just is real. You don't understand the immutability of God.

You don't know God. God is the same today as He was in 2 Chronicles 7, verse 14 with Solomon and the children of Israel. It is the same standard.

If my people humble themselves, proper response is humility. Proper response is prayer. Proper response is seeking my face.

Proper response is turning from their wicked ways. Improper response is pride, which is the opposite of humility. Improper response is lack of prayer, or lack of prevailing prayer, or lack of praying rightly.

Improper response is not seeking His face, or seeking His face and not finding Him, as we're going to see in many of these verses. Seeking His face.

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