

Judgment in the House of God - 1 Peter 4-17

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon explores the church's identity as a chosen people called to reflect God's holiness and purpose in the world.

Duration: 1:16:03

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Matthew 7:21-23, John 6:66, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:11-13, Philippians 1:21, Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Peter 4:1, 1 Peter 4:17

Topics: "Judgment", "Church Identity"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the critical need for the church to align with God's original intention, as exemplified in the life of Abraham. He warns that deviation from God's word puts the church in danger of being set aside, and stresses the importance of a holy calling that reflects God's desires. The sermon highlights that judgment will begin in the house of God, focusing on the need for true believers to be distinguished from mere professors of faith. Beach calls for a recovery of the church's identity as a chosen generation, royal priesthood, and holy nation, urging believers to live in a way that honors Christ as Lord. Ultimately, he encourages a deep, transformative relationship with God that leads to a life fully surrendered to His will.

Transcript

For the church, listen closely. Please, young people, I want you to listen too. I want you to listen, young people, please.

God's intention from the very beginning, which was revealed when he met Abraham. You remember Father Abraham? We sing about Father Abraham. God's intention from the very beginning is seen in his dealings with Abraham.

Now, listen closely. Abraham in the Old Testament represents God's dealing with a man. Showing all who would look in and see his dealings, showing him, it's time for children's church, any of the young children.

God's dealing with Abraham was something that was to teach us a very important lesson about God's heart, about God's intention for a people, about God's intention for a peculiar people, about God's intention for what he really wants his church to be. Whenever we deviate from that which is revealed in the word of God and we begin to accept something that falls short of the word of God, we are in danger, we are in grave danger of being set aside from the Lord because the Lord will always have a company of

people, a company of people who will reflect his desires, who will reflect his holy intention. So as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is essential that the fall of what God intends the church to be would be recovered back to us.

We can call it the ministry of recovery. Now, beloved, one of the outstanding characteristics that we find in God's dealing with Abraham, one of the outstanding characteristics that we find with God's dealing with Abraham, and if you want you may go to Genesis chapter 12 and there we can look at this and we can discover some very important lessons. And I'm hoping that this morning these observations in the life of Abraham will be something more than information, something more than just a mere teaching, that they will actually become something that you can see, you can actually see.

You know, there's a difference between hearing something and there's a difference between really hearing something. There's a difference between seeing something and between really seeing something. And this morning it's our prayer that the Holy Spirit would be graciously kind to us, enabling us to see something of the heart of God.

Now, in Genesis chapter 12, we find God on the scene. God is on the scene. Now, beloved, we have to understand that in the context of this story, we find that God in chapter 11 of the book of Genesis has just confused the languages of the world.

There was a great confusion in the world. Now, let me explain something to you. At the setting of God calling Abraham, the world's setting was like this.

I will try and describe it to you in very few words. The world was seeking to unite themselves together as one people, as one language, as one community, but they were not being united under the headship and lordship of God Almighty. They were seeking a unity.

They were seeking a cohesiveness. They were seeking a joining together, but it was not based on a intimate relationship to God. It was not based on we as a people will bow down before the lordship of Jehovah God.

We as a people will bow down before him. We will forsake the gods of this world. We will forsake the idolatry in the land of Canaan, and we will come before the Lord and serve him.

That's the setting. These people were not intending to come together as one people with the Lord as their God, but they were intending to come together as a people who would serve the gods of this world. They would become involved in all manner of demon activity, and they would serve, listen closely, they would serve their own sinful human lusts.

So understand a little bit of the heart of God now. God is looking down from heaven, and he sees that the world has gone wild. He sees that every man follows the imagination of his own heart.

He sees that man is continually evil in his thinking. He sees that there is a movement, listen closely, there is a movement that is going on in the earth, and this movement is seeking to unite the inhabitants of the earth together in a cohesive manner in order to have strength, in order to have numbers, in order to have direction, in order to have unity, but none of it reflects the desire and intention of the Lord God. Therefore, in light of this setting, we find chapter 12, verse number one.

And beloved, we cannot understand God's intention for the church. Now, I don't think I need to say this, but I will. When I mention church, I do not mean a building.

I do not mean an organization. I do not mean an ecclesiastical system. But when God speaks of the church, he is referring to people who associate themselves with the Bible and Christianity.

He is associating, when he talks about the church, he's referring to people, people, people. Now, that's a very important truth to understand because God is dealing with people in this late hour. Now, again, beloved, please listen carefully.

The setting, you will not appreciate God coming to Abraham and making our Father Abraham as a type. Father Abraham has become a type in the Old Testament. You see, everything God was doing in the Old Testament was always a type and a shadow.

It literally happened. It is true, valid history. There's absolutely no error.

But beyond the natural story, God is constantly teaching us in types and in shadows, all pointing toward the ultimate intention, which is that Christ might die for the sins of the world and call a people out for himself that he might establish his reign in them now, spiritually and in the age to come in a very real, literal way. It was always God's intention from the very beginning to have a people who would honor him, who would recognize him as king, who would recognize him as Lord, who would recognize him as master. Beloved, let me say to you that any form of Christianity or any form of teaching that neglects the need for us to understand that Christianity is a real, true, living connection, if I might use that word, to the living God through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, which results in the person becoming the servant and the Lord becoming the master.

Christianity must return back to this idea. And again, the story of Genesis is a setting that is most grieving to God, most grieving to God. God wants a testimony in the earth.

God, listen, God wants a testimony in your life. God wants a testimony of his reign in your life. He wants a testimony of his kingship as being the Lord of heaven in your life.

And he wasn't seeing it in the Old Testament. So therefore, we find in verse number one of Genesis chapter 12, read this with the setting in mind, now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee. Let us not even go on.

Let us just work right there with that scripture. Beloved, right from the very beginning, we see that God finds a man, his name is Abram, and God is going to take that man and seek to accomplish his purpose in that man as a single entity. And then it was God's intention to fulfill a greater purpose through the seed of this man.

All of it revolved around the ultimate intention of God, which was to have a people where he could reign as the sovereign Lord and King, so that the nations of the world would know that there is a God in heaven who is holy, who is able to come and transform a people who will come to him and bow before his lordship. When we understand the church in any other way that lessens us from that concept, that causes us to be weakened in that concept of the church is the body and Christ is the head, the church is the servant and Christ is the master, that means as master he must be constantly gaining more and more and more of his actual lordship in our life. When Christianity falls from that high and holy calling, it is becoming

apostate.

It is becoming apostate. That word apostate means to fall away. When Christianity is reduced to simply an external religion, it has become apostate.

Christianity in its vital essence is a people who have been radically transformed by a living encounter with the living God through his son Jesus Christ, are indwelt by the living God, have been given a new heart, have been given a new spirit and have been given the holy spirit to dwell in that renewed spirit and who are from the very beginning of its inception on down to the very end are constantly, constantly, constantly finding themselves apprehended by God, dealt with by God in order to yield up more and more of their life so the master and head in heaven can live his life through us. That is Christianity. Now, this is what we see God doing in the life of Abraham.

We see God seeking to realize his purpose in a man amidst a world that has forsaken him who has made himself their lord and their king and their God. So therefore, Abraham becomes a type of the city of God in his own personal dealing with God. Now, we know the city of God in this age is not located in a certain geographical place but the city of God is the church.

That's where God lives. The Bible is very clear and we will not go into that this morning but in the New Testament, we find more and more and more and more that the Scriptures are teaching us that the church is the temple, the church is the city of the living God, the church is the new Mount Zion. Oh, praise God.

So God is establishing, God is establishing a testimony in the church and when the church loses this sight and misunderstands why she has been called as a people out from the nations, out from the world, out from the things of this life to a holy calling where we are before our Lord and allowing him to glorify himself in us, then we are falling from solid ground. We are falling from holy ground and the Lord must bring a recovery back to his people. Now, believe it or not, this is not what I'm gonna preach on.

I just had to share this because it was a burden in my heart and you'll see how this correlates to what the Lord has given me this morning but beloved, we are a holy nation. Let's turn our Bibles to first people. We're gonna probably work ourself right into what the Lord has put on my heart and as we're turning our Bibles to first people, our Bibles to first Peter, could we just bow our hearts and ask the Lord to enable us this morning.

Dear Father, we thank you for thy word. We thank you for the great redemption that is in Jesus Christ. We thank you for the Holy Spirit of God that is given to us in order that we might be able to see, that we might be able to perceive, that we might be able to apprehend those things, Lord, which you are so willing and so eager to give to us freely through your Son, Jesus Christ.

We pray, Lord, that you'll help us this morning to communicate something of yourself to us, Lord, through the word of the living God. We commit this time into your hands, Lord, and ask for your enabling for your life to be imparted. We pray in Christ's name, amen.

First Peter chapter two. First Peter chapter two, verse number nine. Now, this is talking about the church of Jesus Christ.

It says, but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. Notice, beloved, all of these words that are used to describe, or rather they are used to reveal an aspect of the nature of the call of the church. An aspect of the nature of the call of the church.

We begin with by, you are a chosen generation. Now, correlate this back to Abraham chapter 12 and understand the heart of God in this matter. Why are we a chosen nation? Well, when we go back to the type and shadow in the Old Testament, we see that the earth had been entirely filled with men and women whose hearts were continually doing evil.

So God, therefore, chooses Abraham out of the world in order that he might be particularly related to God in a special way. That he might be particularly related to God in a special way. Listen, beloved, we are a chosen generation because God desires to reveal something of himself through the church.

Something of himself through the church. When you, when you, when the church misses the idea of the why of being a chosen generation, quickly, quickly it disintegrates into an abominable apostasy. We are a chosen generation.

God in the Old Testament snatched Abraham out of the world and began to work in his life in the most peculiar ways, in the most drastic ways, in order to bring him to a posture of humble dependence upon God in heaven. In order to teach him that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes out of the mouth of the Father. In order to teach him that as a chosen man, as a called out man, he has lost touch with his old life.

He has lost touch with the old family. You know, Abraham's father was an idol worshiper, an idol maker, and God called him out from that family on a pilgrimage. And here's what the pilgrimage was.

A continued discovery of who God was. A continued discovery of who the Lord was and how the Lord could become the resident boss in Abraham's life. Father Abraham, ye who are in Christ, the Bible says, are the true children of Abraham, the true children of Abraham.

And if we're the true children of Abraham, may I say that we are gonna experience the very same kind of dealings in our life that our father experienced, because that's the characteristic of being father's son. If we are the children of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ, then we can learn a lot about how God dealt in Abraham's life and expect him to deal that way in our life. So you see, the aspect of the nature of the church, we are a chosen generation.

Chosen in that we are called out of the world to be a testimony, listen, reflecting the nature of God through the Lord Jesus Christ who has become our life. That's the positive aspect. And the negative aspect is standing against the darkness, standing against the vileness, standing against the wickedness of this world.

Now we'll see that. You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. Oh, beloved, we don't have time to go into it, but the priesthood of the church, the priesthood of the church is seen in the church's call to go to God on behalf of the people and to go to the people on behalf of God.

That's the calling of the church. You are to go to God on behalf of the people and pray for them and intercede for them, for yourselves, for your loved ones. And then we are to go to people and we are to speak on behalf of God.

We are to speak as if God was speaking through us. That's what Paul said. He was an ambassador, 2 Corinthians chapter five, and he begged the Corinthians.

He said, I beg you, Corinthians, as if God was speaking through me. Wow, what a holy calling to have the very words of God, to have the very words of eternal life and communicate them. So you see, are we getting a picture this morning of the nature of our call? We are a chosen generation.

We are a royal priesthood. Now listen, a holy nation. Oh my Lord, the word holy there has to do with set apart.

The word holy has to do with different than the nations. Different in that we don't serve the God they serve. We don't walk the way they walk.

We don't have our hearts affections on the things that the ungodly nations have their hearts on. See, we are a holy nation. We are all together separate.

We are all together removed, not geographically, but spiritually. We are not in the world. We are not of the world.

We are indeed in Christ. Oh my, how the Lord needs to help us to see. Amen? And the Lord is gonna help us to see.

So now we've seen a little bit of the aspect of the nature of the church. First of all, it is a chosen generation. Like Abraham, it was chosen out from because God wanted a people that would be his own particular people who would submit to his lordship and to his heavenly reign.

Oh, how God has always desired that. You know, that's what God's intention was at the beginning with Adam. But Adam blew it.

Adam was deceived. Adam and Eve fell. And since then, the entire human race has been poisoned and perverted, full of sin.

And God has rejected the whole human race. God has rejected every single human being. And the only hope is a new creation.

The only hope is a new man. The only hope is to be born from above. The only hope is to be changed by becoming a born again, new creation, child of God.

There's your only hope, beloved. And then when that happens, God doesn't see you as part of the old sinful human race. He sees you part of a new kingdom, part of a new creation in which his son is the head.

It's a total severing from the old to the new. And God would want his church in this late hour to fall before him and say, oh, dear God, give me a holy passion for you. Give me a holy passion to understand who you are.

Help me, dear Lord, to love you more and more. I look to you for all my strength. Can you see it? Wow.

So we have a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. Now watch this, a peculiar people. Oh, now, what do you think the nature of being a peculiar people is? All right, let me show you.

It's right in the book of Peter. First Peter chapter four. First Peter chapter four, verse number one.

Watch this. For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. For he that hath suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

Now that statement in the Greek, ceased from sin, actually means to be done with. To be done with. Has God brought you to the place where you're done with the old? That you, through the incredible grace of God, have gotten sick and tired of being sick and tired of being sick and tired? Oh, may I say that it's God's intention in every true blood-washed child of God to bring you to where you are sick and tired of being sick and tired.

And that you are crying out for the new. Oh, dear Lord, only what's of you in my life. Oh, dear Lord, I am tired of the mud.

I'm tired of the muck. I'm tired of the filth of this world. I'm tired of these words that I speak, that grieve my loved ones.

I'm tired of these lies that I tell. I'm tired of these secret little things that I'm doing. And I don't think anybody sees me, but yet how foolish I've been, Lord.

You see me, Lord. You behold all that I do when no one else sees me. Oh, dear Lord, have mercy.

There's the nature of the true child of God. One who is not content with anything less than growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. One whose heart, a few days ago, I gave an illustration where a certain person is a Christian and this person was troubled.

And the reason why is because many times Christians are like eagles, but they're tied down to the chicken coop. And they're running around with the chickens. And you know, the nature of an eagle is to soar in the heavens.

The nature of an eagle is to soar in the heavens and learn how to get above the storm clouds. So when things down here in earth are all being shaken up, the eagle's up above where the sun is shining. And I'll tell you, if you're a true child of God, that is, if you've been born again, if you've been given a new heart, you have the nature of an eagle, spiritually speaking.

That is, you have been called to partake of the heavenly nature, of the heavenly character, which your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, imparted to you. And Christians are not content being down here with the chickens. They sense a sense of call.

There's a sense of destiny in them. God has got a hold of them. God has put His Spirit in them.

And God is constantly calling them heavenward, heavenward, heavenward, to become more and more like their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So in 1 Peter 4, we find that the peculiar aspect of the church is verse number two, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. Now watch this.

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excessive wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries, here it is, wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess. The peculiarity of the church is to be, they no longer walk with the crowd that they once walked with.

They no longer find enjoyment in the things that they used to find enjoyment in. They're peculiar, so peculiar, that the world looks at them and says, what strange people. What strange people.

They've got this unspeakable joy, but yet I can't pin it down to anything earthly, because it's not that they're joyful in their home. They're not joyful in their car. They're not joyful in their money.

They seem to be unattached from this world. They seem to have a heavenly calling. They seem to have a passion that can only be fulfilled with something that we can't find in this world.

What is it about their peculiarity? I'll tell you what it is. It's being a partaker of the Son of God. It's being a partaker of a new heavenly heart.

It's being indwell by the Lord Himself. Now, you see these different aspects here? We're peculiar because we don't follow the ways of the world, and that's what God desires for His people, that we don't follow the ways of the world. So, you see, God called Abraham out, and you'll see that in the life of Abraham, God wrought all of these aspects.

He made him a holy man. He made him a peculiar man. He made him a priest.

What did he do when he saw Sodom and Gomorrah was about to be destroyed and his nephew Lot was in there? He started interceding for Lot. He started begging God. There you see the priesthood of the believer interceding.

Oh, dear God, could it be that you would save more people? Oh, dear God, could it be that you would deliver the righteous out of the ways of the world? Oh, what a beautiful picture of the priesthood. And then we see Abraham as a holy person. Lot camped by Sodom.

Remember that? We can go into this very extensively, but you remember Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom. That means Lot had an eye for the world. But the Bible says Abraham camped by the trees of Mamre, the big oak trees.

And here he chose a way that set him aside, that set him apart from the way of the world. Can you see God working in Abraham the heavenly way? Can you see Abraham more and more becoming distant from the way of the world and following in the heavenly pattern, the heavenly way? See, Abraham's a little shadow of what the church should be. A people who are set aside.

A people who are holy. A people whose passion is to walk before their Lord. A people who say, I'm a stranger and a pilgrim in this old world.

A people whose eyes are on heavenly things from whence they look for a savior, Charlie. The Savior's in heaven, He's not down here. He's in heaven.

You see, the whole call of the church is one out of earthly into the heavenlies. Out of the natural into the spiritual. Out of the carnal into the beauties of what Jesus Christ is.

And all of this is connected to, it's not just a part, it's connected to the ultimate intention of God. Remember, that a people would come out of the world and represent to the world God's intention for man. Satan destroyed Adam and Satan came and took the place of God in Adam's life.

And now we see the result of it, the perverted seed. But there's a good seed. That good seed is made up of all those who know the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are the fruit of his travail. They are the fruit of his labor. And that's the seed that God has his eyes on.

And may I say that if you're a child of God this morning, would I encourage you, may I encourage you to look to the Lord and beg Him, beg Him to work these things in your life. Beg Him to bring you more and more into a heavenly perspective of your calling. Don't get too comfortable down here.

Don't get too detached. Don't get too attached to earthly things. No, beloved, no, beloved, don't.

We're looking for a house from heaven. We're looking for a savior from heaven. We have no inheritance down here.

Our inheritance is the Lord. It's a heavenly inheritance. Okay.

So in connection with this thought, may I invite you to turn your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter four. 1 Peter chapter four. I guess we're right there, aren't we? We did eventually work ourself right to it.

1 Peter chapter four. One thing I'd like to do if I may is borrow your watch, please. Thank you.

Just so that we don't lose a sense of time, which we've done before. Okay. The message this morning, and I feel that it was appropriate that the Lord enabled us to understand what was just said, because that sort of puts the whole picture together.

Why is God doing what he's doing? Listen, he has a passion. He has a longing. This longing was with him from eternity, and now he's wrapping things up, and it all revolves around his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God from the beginning of eternities. Now, eternity doesn't have a beginning, so that means from all eternity, God intended to bring everything under the lordship of his son, Jesus Christ, so that everything would be under his authority, under his power, and reflect the glory of his person, not their own person. God's kingdom was never a self-interest kingdom.

We see self-interest infiltrating the body of Christ as a cancer destroying many, many lives. Self-interest. Let me tell you something.

You were not saved in order to fulfill your interest. See, that's a whole perversion. That's a man-centered gospel.

We are saved to fulfill the intention of God. We are saved in order, listen, you are saved in order to be related to a whole. You're saved in order to be related to something.

You're not saved in order for everything to relate to you. It's so perverted. I've given this illustration before, and forgive me for you who have heard it, but it does bring the truth home.

If I am a man, let's take my father, let's take his business. If he buys limousines, and he started the business, and it's his intention to build up his business, and he hires an employee to come and work for him, what in the world would my father feel if after hiring someone, this guy takes my father's cars and goes and builds up his own business and gets, listen, gets a self-related interest in working for my father rather than an interest that relates to his intention since he's the owner and he's the boss. May I suggest to you that my father would eventually say, I'm sorry, but I hired you for a particular purpose.

You working for me is not a means to further your own interest. You have come to work for me so that you can work with me because I have an interest. I have a purpose.

I want to build up my limousine service. All right. That is a fleshly example.

It's a human example. However, the analogy carries through, of course, in a weak way, but nevertheless, it's there. It carries through into the kingdom of God.

God is the boss man from eternity. God is the employer from eternity. God has a plan.

God has a plan with his eternal son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here's God's eternal plan with his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who also is eternal, who is just as much part of the Godhead as the Father is. Here's the plan.

The Father sees the Son, finds total satisfaction and total joy in the Son. The Son is the Father's chief delight. The Son and the Father have been together for all eternity.

So God's plan is this. Son, when eternity has come or when time is no more and eternity exists, I will have accomplished a great work. I will have, through your death and your resurrection, called out a company of people from every nation, from every tongue, from every tribe, from every continent, from every state, from every island, from all the world.

I've called out this company of people and I will, through the power of the Holy Spirit, enable them, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to reflect in their lives the beauty of who you are, my dear Son. So that at the end, everything will connect to the ultimate purpose. The ultimate purpose is that the Son would be glorified for all eternity in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's God's intention. Now, the problem is this. We, as a Christian community, we, as the church, have drifted from God's intention.

We have fallen and we have become numb in our apprehending of God's intention and we see salvation now as it relates to ourself and not as it relates to God's intention. Now, mind you, salvation does have something to do with you as an individual. Number one, it enables you to escape the terrors and eternal damnation of hell.

Amen. It enables you, as an individual, to experience personally the unconditional forgiveness of God based wholly upon the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So there we see that there is something about salvation that relates to ourself.

Thirdly, that you have become partakers of the heavenly calling. Now, this is where we get things twisted. God qualifies us to become a Christian through cleansing us by His blood, delivering us from the law, delivering us from the power of sin, delivering us from eternal damnation, not so that we can become a Christian and then have self-related ideas about why God has made me a Christian, but God qualifies us to become a Christian so we can be let in on the family secret.

Guess what the family secret is? Jesus is Lord. We're a part of a family now. It don't revolve around us.

It revolves around the resident boss. See, coming into the church enables us to discover a profound family secret that's been with God from eternity past and will be made known as eternity comes, as we see eternity coming more and more and time is being wrapped up. Here's the family secret.

We're all part of a marvelous family in which God, listen, has placed His only begotten Son as the preeminent one. He's the head. In other words, God did this whole thing in order to bring a company of

people together who would bow down and honor the Lordship of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the family secret. We have no basis of going on with God when our ideas drift from God's family secret because it becomes self-oriented, it becomes self-serving, it becomes personal kingdoms, private kingdoms, works that men do that do not reflect the glory of God, that are not chiefly concerned about God's people growing in grace and becoming more like the only beloved Son of God who alone is blessed and holy. These private kingdoms do not reflect that, but there is something deep within these things that the Holy Spirit has got His finger on and that is there's something of self-interest in it.

There's something where the man, the creature, wants glory. And God says, in My kingdom no man shall glory, no flesh shall glory, but he that glorieth, let him glory in this, that he knows the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Now I know that this might be difficult to apprehend.

I know that I'm saying it quickly. Forgive me. Perhaps I should slow down.

Overlook the frailty of the vessel. Overlook it. And may God help us to see and hear His burden.

He wants us to know that He does love us. He loves us with an everlasting love, but He has a purpose. He wants us to be turned on, if I can use that word without sounding irreverent.

He wants us to be turned on to the whole, the whole main attraction of this new family secret, and that is the exaltation of the Son of God, the glory of the Son of God. He wants a people where He can reign as King. He wants a people where He can become their lover and He, and a relationship where it's just so close and so intimate.

That's God's heart for the church. Therefore, therefore, in light of these two concepts, as we began a message last Sunday, we're going to briefly go through a certain aspect of it in order to zero in on a new aspect this morning. In light of this, in light of what biblical Christianity is, the Bible says that judgment shall begin in the house of God.

Judgment shall begin in the house of God. Judgment shall begin in the house of God. We hear a lot about God judging the nations.

We hear a lot of Christians talking about judgment, but beloved, may I say, through the meekness of Christ, that the church needs to chiefly be concerned in this late hour, not so much of the judgment that's going to come upon the world, but the judgment that will begin in the house of God. Now, here's what we're going to do. We're going to break it down to three points.

Number one, the nature of the judgment. Number two, after we discover the nature of the judgment, we're going to look at the means of the judgment. And then number three, the results of the judgment.

The nature, the means, and the result. Okay, 1 Peter 4, verse number seven. We read this last week, and we simply want to point your attention to it.

1 Peter 4, verse number 17. Now, I hope that you will connect this message with what we have just previously said. In light of Christ's passion, in light of Christ's desire to have a people who will reflect His glory, in light of why He called Abraham out, which was a type of what God has done through Jesus, Christ has really enabled us to be able to be called out as a people separate for the Lord's use alone.

Okay, so in light of all that, read verse 17 with perhaps an accelerated understanding or a clearer light of what it really means. For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God. We're going to stop right there.

Judgment is coming at the house of God. Now, it would just be as if my father had a service, had a business, and a few employees that would have to begin in that limousine service. In other words, there'd have to be a dealing with these employees in order to stop their self-interest endeavors because these self-interest endeavors were frustrating the purpose for which the company was created.

All right, we understand that clearly. Now, take that concept into the church. Why is God going to judge the church? Now, when I say the church, I'm simply going to make a general statement and then we'll specify it later.

But the church, it encompasses all who associate themselves with Christianity, either by name, I'm a Christian, or I go to a Christian church and this church is generally accepted to be a Christian church. Judgment is coming to that place. And it's coming with the same analogy as the story about the limousine service.

There's things going on in the church of God that have absolutely nothing to do with the eternal purpose and counsel of God in calling the church out to begin with. That's why it's got to happen. So therefore, this judgment is coming because there is personal interest amidst God's family when God's family all must become united after one interest, the Son of God.

Listen, He's the big stuff in the church and no one else can be big stuff. He's the big stuff. He's got to be the big stuff in your family too.

He's got to be the big stuff in your life. You know, a lot of Christians get critical, God's going to judge the church. You go and live with them for six months and they forget that the church starts at home.

You might see some areas of inconsistency in the church. You might disagree with some things going on in the name of God. And perhaps you have a legitimate reason too.

But I say to you, be careful. Because if you claim to be a member of the church of Jesus Christ, God's going to visit your home. He's going to put His finger on everything that you have set your heart to do.

And He's going to test it to see whether or not it's in accordance with His purpose or not. And if it's not, then the judgment that you pronounced on the church is going to find its way right in your home. And it's not going to be God getting mean and wanting to hurt you, but it's going to be God putting things in order.

He wants to put things in order. So therefore, may I say that the judgment that is coming to the church, the nature of this judgment is twofold. Okay? Number one, it's going to sever the professor from the possessor.

It's going to sever the possessor from the professor. That is, as God begins to bring judgment to His house and begins by the power of the Holy Spirit and by a continued searching within the hearts of people, He's going to begin to sever between the casual professors of Christianity and those who really possess eternal life through a vital living relationship with the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I'd like to just, if I may, bring you to the book of Matthew as a Scripture which would indicate this to be God's desire.

Matthew chapter 7, beginning in verse number 21. Now remember, don't look at this as mean. Don't look at this as, oh, God is unfair.

Remember, God's got a game plan. The game plan is that everything in His house is going to have to come under the lordship of His Son who He has made to be both Head and Lord of the church. You see? He's the preeminent one.

He's the reason why we call ourselves Christians. Sometimes I think we forget that. We're Christians because there's a Head in Christ and we are to be His body.

We're not our own. We've been bought with a price. We're called out for His purpose, not ours.

You say, well, what about our purposes? We'll see that in the coming section here. All right, Matthew chapter 7, verse number 21. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

So immediately we see that there must be a doing of the will of God through the power of the Holy Spirit as evidence that the profession, Lord, Lord, is genuine. There must be. But this is the nature of salvation.

He gives us a new heart. Now, it does not mean that we are perfect. It doesn't mean that we fail and stumble.

But what it does mean is that there's something in us that will not allow us to be content or rest in anything that God shows us to be, not His will. And it will result in grief and sorrow. And we have to pray that we continue to sense this as God would show us certain things.

Verse 22, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Now, I want you to notice, Jesus did not say, I knew you, but you fell away from Me.

He did not say that. This is not talking about backsliders. This is not talking about Christians who get entangled in the world and their testimony is blown out and they don't make any use for God.

It's not talking about them. It's talking about people who professed to be Christians, who were associated with the Christian church, who were involved in doing things that seemed to imply that they were Christians, but at the very end, when the Lord makes the counsels of the heart known, He says, I never knew you. This is the first aspect of judgment in the house of God.

Now, I want you to remember, God is going to do this judging, don't you? Don't you start trying to guess the motive of a person's heart and start saying, well, that person's not really saved. Be careful, because the Bible says that right along with this, the wheat and the tarry grow together. So, you don't judge anyone's heart.

You just make sure that you are walking softly before the Lord, that you are tender before the Lord, and that you are praying for all people seeking their good. This thing about pronouncing curses on other Christians in the church is abominable. Jesus never cursed anyone.

And we who are His children ought never to pronounce judgment on people or bring curses. We're to bless them that curse. We're to do good.

We're to help all Christians. We're to assume that we are to help anyone who seeks help. But we bring them the message of the gospel and then let the Lord deal with it.

Alright? So, the nature of this judgment is God's going to sever the professor from the possessor. And the second aspect of this judgment is God is not only going to sever the professor from the possessor, but He's going to get a hold of the possessors, that is, He's going to get a hold of the true children of God, and He's going to do a further severing in their life. And He's going to sever between that which is spirit and that which is soul.

That which is of Him and that which is of the man. That which is coming out of our own selves, which God has considered to be, sorry, rejected. So, we see the two aspects of the nature of this judgment.

And the Scripture that we would like to use for this is Hebrews chapter 4. Now, I'm hoping that these things will fall on good ground, and the Lord will bring fruit. In a few weeks, a few months, you'll say, oh, that's what that means. We're not looking for an immediate harvest.

We're not looking for an immediate apprehension of these things. Sometimes you have to cast your bread upon the waters and commit it to the Lord. But these things will, you'll find, as you go on as a Christian, crystallize and you'll get more understanding.

Hebrews 4, verse 12, For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The soul there represents that natural life that is in every believer. This is not talking about a Christian versus an unbeliever.

But within the Christian, there's a natural life that God says through the power of the Holy Spirit must be rejected, must be denied, so that we are living by Him. We're being inspired by Him. We are being led by Him and not by the old.

It's the soul, the soulical part of our being. And that's what Jesus meant when He says, if you save your life, you'll lose it. That's the life He's talking about.

And that's only a work that the Holy Spirit can do and show the believer the difference between, is this you, Lord, or is this me? And you know, we can come up with some real good religious things. And the Lord goes like this, it's not me. It's not me.

Now, there's very few Christians who will go on with the Lord to this extent. They're just very content in being saved. But the Lord would want to call as many as will hear, follow Him to the depths of this severing, this separating between what's you and what's the Lord, what's His perfect way for your life.

Okay? So it divides the soul and spirit and the joint and marrow, listen, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. So here we see that there's a severing that needs to be done in the church, in the life of the true believer, distinguishing between that which is coming out of our own self and that which is springing out of the Lord who lives in our spirits by His Holy Spirit. And this is the pathway to Christian maturity.

But that's when we lose our life. That's when we come to know that I can do nothing of myself. That's when we fear to take a step because we want to make sure that it's the Lord leading us.

In our youthfulness as Christians, we assume a lot. But the Lord goes with us because He loves us. But there's a time when God says it's time to grow up.

It's time to put off the childish ways. And that leads us to our next aspect. And that is the instrument.

The instrument of this judgment. And beloved, I'd like to, if I could, bring you to Galatians 2.20. The instrument of this judgment. This instrument will be instrumental in both the first aspect of severing the professor from the possessor and the second aspect of severing in the life of the believer that which is soul and that which is spirit.

This is the all-important instrument that the church has to be reacquainted with. Galatians 2.20 I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. Galatians 5.24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

The cross as a subjective experience every day within the Christian's life is God's testimony. Listen, it is not only God saying my son died on the cross, it's God saying you died with Him. That is, everything that pertains to your flesh, the desires of your flesh, the affections of your flesh, and the lusts of the flesh and of the natural man.

All of that in God's eyes is reckoned as crucified with Christ and not acceptable before Him. So therefore, the instrument of this judgment will be a continual unveiling to the child of God regarding what the message of the cross means to them every day of their life. Notice Paul considered himself crucified with Christ.

You'll find that in Galatians 1.21 Here is what it means for the cross to become something in your life that signifies the death of what you are as to your fleshly life and the only place for that life to be brought daily by faith. Here is what it means. Philippians 1.21 For to me to live is Christ.

There it is. Do you see it? For me to live is Christ. When the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, where He was crucified in order to obtain our eternal redemption and to bring forgiveness of sin and to place us in a right standing before God becomes not only the place where our Lord was crucified and the place where we become forgiven and we become saved and we find acceptance before God.

All of those things are absolutely true but they are not the end. They are means to an end. The end is God says to you as a Christian that not only was my son crucified in order to atone for your sins but He brought what you are in your old self to the cross too and He nailed it there so that now all that we are as to our old fleshly life is pronounced by God as crucified and cursed and we ought not to touch the unclean thing.

Now, only God can reveal to you the implications of such a statement. What does that mean? You're gone in through. You're through.

Now you are brought stricken before God realizing that only what is of Christ by Christ, through Christ and inspired of Him is accepted in His eyes. That's what the new creation is. The new creation is God sets aside the old and He makes you a new person, gives you a new spirit and comes to dwell in you and then says, now you live by Me.

And the old life, you know, the self-sufficient, self-preserving, self-determining, I know best, my wisdom, all that has been brought to the cross and is pronounced by God as crucified. And now the believer is brought down on his knees as a branch connected to the vine whose only life is that life that is flowing from the vine. You've been severed from your old life essentially in your spirits.

You've been connected to the living, risen Christ through the Holy Spirit and now God says, submit to My fatherly discipline and let Me wean you from that old which has been pronounced by the cross as crucified. Let Me wean you from it. Let Me wean you from living by it and following it.

That's the source of all the church's trouble. God's going to dwell in a crucified church. Now you see, a crucified church is a church who renounces what she is in her old and clings to the new and looks to the Lord alone as the source of strength.

That's God's intention for the church. A crucified church. A church that is dead to the world.

Paul said, the world is crucified to me and I am crucified to the world. My Lord! The whole thing just opens up and we see that God desires a temple where His Son would have the preeminence. Now we see why John 6, 6, 6 was written.

You know, 6, 6, 6 is the number of man. It's the number of the devil. You know what John 6, 6, 6 says? You think I'm kidding.

I'm not. Jesus pretty much told the people in a different way what we've been just preaching on this morning. Christianity is all or nothing.

In other words, Christianity is the death of the sinner. You're set aside. And now there's only one preeminent person in your life.

That's the head, Jesus Christ. And after Jesus said that, look what John 6, 6, 6 says. From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him.

Why do you think many stopped following Him? Oh, now Jesus. I mean, we can see identifying with You. Jesus, we can see, you know, calling ourselves Christians.

We can see Lord giving some of our money. Lord, we can see doing good works. Lord, we can see singing songs.

But eat Your flesh and drink Your blood. What are you saying? You mean to say that You have to become to us what natural bread is to our physical body? Well, Lord, natural bread is our very sustenance. In other words, Jesus, we can't live.

We can't survive without natural bread. You're telling us that we have to get so hooked to You that we can't live without You. Now, Lord, that's a little extreme.

God is saying nothing less than that to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saves us to show us that we have been justified, forgiven, granted eternal life, and crucified with Him so that the rest of our life might be a life that is being lived through and by Him, which alone can bring forth fruit that will glorify Him. And now can you see the Father's intention? I close Ephesians 4. Verse 11, And He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.

Now here is the intention. Here's why God has a church. For the perfecting of the saints.

For the work of the ministry. For the edifying of the body of Christ. Now watch verse 13.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man. Now that is not necessarily speaking of individual. It's talking about corporately.

That is, God's vision for the church is a complete, perfect, mature man. That is a redeemed man. A chosen man.

A blood-washed man. What for? What's the purpose of it? Because it sounds to me like too much attention is going on the man, the church, and it ought not to be. But watch this.

Watch what happens. To a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. There it is.

A perfect man. A crucified church. A church who understands that God has set their old life aside.

And here's the intention. So that we can know the fullness of Christ's reign in our lives. That is, so the fullness of Christ's reign.

Remember, He's the head. We're the church. We're the body.

The body is to allow the head to do what He wants. And the fullness of Christ is all of what Jesus wants to do in and through His body. He will be able to do because we have put off the childish ways and we've come and followed Him to the cross and said, Lord, it's Your life now and Your life alone.

Have Your way in my life. And that's God's intention that we see in Abraham as a type and shadow that is realized in the Lord Jesus Christ and His church. Now that's the holy, heavenly calling.

Beloved, I don't know about you, but that only puts us in one place, on our knees, before a holy God, thanking Him for this great salvation, thanking Him that He is committed to bring us to this place. We don't have to get there ourselves. We don't have to start saying, Oh Lord, I've got to.

What we have to do is fall down on our knees and say, Lord, be the King and Lord of my life. He is committed to bring us there if we will simply go His way. Shall we bow our hearts in a word of prayer? Dear Lord, we love You.

We thank You, Lord, that You have saved us with an everlasting salvation and that You have called us with a holy calling. And Lord, we commit this whole message to Your hands. Holy Spirit, make it real in our hearts.

Speak to us. Apply it to us, Lord. I pray You'll bring every person here to a place of decision.

Every person to a place of decision that would reflect an attitude such as, Dear Lord, please, do whatever You have to do in my life, whatever the cost, whatever the loss, to establish Your Lordship in me. For I know, Lord, that if I'm truly saved, this is the very reason why I'm saved. Lord, I have no confidence in myself.

I have absolutely no hope that in my own power this can be done. But I'm looking wholly to Your power to do it. I simply indicate to You, Lord, that I am willing.

I want it to be done in my life. And Lord, not only in my life, but do it in all the church so that the preeminence of the Son of God might be seen in all that we say and do. We pray in Jesus' name.

I'm going to ask Sister Colette as we just, please, give the Holy Spirit a few moments to sing the song, Jesus be the Lord of all the kingdoms of my heart. Jesus be the Lord of all the kingdoms of my heart. Now, let's sing it to Him.

Make it a prayer. If you want special prayer, please come. Okay? Please come.

And let God's Word encourage us this morning. Everyone together.

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