

A MINISTRY OF JUDGMENT

*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that **he himself hath suffered** being tempted, **he is able to succour them that are tempted.***

Hebrews 2:17-18

Years ago there was a popular folk song called, “Walk A Mile In My Shoes”. One of the lines went: “*Walk a mile in my shoes; walk a mile in my shoes; before you criticize and abuse, walk a mile in my shoes*”. The Scripture says that’s exactly what Jesus did. He came to earth and experienced what it’s like to be a human being. He experienced temptation. He experienced loneliness. He knew what it was like to be misunderstood and misjudged. He experienced rejection and betrayal by those He loved, by those He was trying to help get free from spiritual bondage. Jesus is a *merciful High Priest because* He knows first hand what we go through.

The same applies to us. If we respond to it properly, suffering will break our pride and the hardness of our hearts. It will produce in us a capacity for mercy and compassion which nothing else can. I have been through my share of suffering, and God has worked a great deal of compassion and mercy into my personality. I certainly don’t say this for the purpose of tooting my own horn. I only say it to reassure everyone who is listening that what I am going to share is not coming from a callous heart or an arrogant, self righteous attitude.

As New Testament believers, we have lived all our lives under the *mercy* of God. We have lived all our lives in an *age of grace*. The only God we have ever known is the God of forgiveness. Even when we come under the chastening hand of the Lord as a result of sin, we know that as soon as we turn and seek His forgiveness, He will instantly show us mercy and restore us. The reason we know this is because this is the only God we have ever known. He is “*the God of another chance*”. But we are about to meet a completely *different* God. We are about to meet “*the God of no more chances*”—and I’m not sure we are ready to meet Him. We are about to meet the God who, in the Old Testament said things like:

*Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: **I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:***

Proverbs 1:24-28

*He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, **shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.***

Proverbs 29:1

*And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore **pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.***

Jeremiah 7:15-16

*For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal. Therefore **pray not thou for this people**, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: **for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.***

Jeremiah 11:13-14

You see, we have never known a God who says that when you seek me, I will *not* be found of you. We have never known a God who says when you cry out to me because of calamity, not only will I refuse to hear your prayers, I will *laugh* at what's happening to you! We have never known a God who gives those who were *once His people*, over to a destruction that has *no remedy*. We have never known a God who tells us not to even pray for people (whether they be brethren, family members, or the unsaved), because He will no longer hear our prayers regarding them, for there is *no mercy left* for them! We are about to meet the God who, in the New Testament, said things like:

*And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and **the door was shut**. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

Matthew 25:10-12

*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and **hath shut to the door**, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*

Luke 13:24-25

*He that is unjust, **let him be unjust still**: and he which is filthy, **let him be filthy still**: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

Revelation 22:11

This is a side of God which, for the most part, was seen only by those living during the Old Testament. National Israel saw this God and they still have not recovered from it. We see a glimpse of this God in the New Testament, when He kills Annanias and Saffira for lying to Him. But for the most part, we haven't seen this God throughout the entire Church Age. However, all that is about to change.

The time is soon coming when the Master will rise up and shut the door. When that moment comes, the age of grace will have come to a close and we will have entered a terrible time called the "Day of the Lord". Once that day begins, there will be no more mercy, no more forgiveness, no more second chances for those who have not prepared themselves. Just as in the natural, when God told Noah to prepare an Ark so He could survive the coming wrath, so today, God is telling His people to get in the spiritual Ark, in order to be protected from the wrath that is coming. Once the door is shut, everyone is going to have to deal with the God of wrath.

*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, **cruel** both with **wrath** and **fierce anger**, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

Isaiah 13:9-10

*The sword of the LORD is **filled with blood**, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a **great slaughter** in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and **their land shall be soaked with blood**, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences **for the controversy of Zion**. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; **the smoke thereof shall go up for ever**: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*

Isaiah 34:6-10

*For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, **a day of vengeance**, that **he may avenge him of his adversaries**: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk **with their blood**: for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.*

Jeremiah 46:10

*God is jealous, and **the Lord revengeth**; the Lord revengeth, **and is furious**; the LORD will **take vengeance** on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

Nahum 1:2

*The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. **That day is a day of wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, **a day of wasteness and desolation**, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and **their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung**.*

Zephaniah 1:14-17

When we consider the day of God's wrath, we need to understand that God is not going to do what He does all alone. He is preparing a people to somehow participate with Him in that day. This is what John is talking about when he describes the "two witnesses".

*And I will **give power** unto my two witnesses, and **they shall prophesy** a thousand two hundred and threescore days, **clothed in sackcloth**...And if any man will hurt them, **fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies**; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

Revelation 11:3 & 5-6

Soon a very special “ministry” will be granted to those believers who have been prepared and trained specifically for this purpose. This ministry will *not* be a ministry of reconciliation, so they won’t be trying to evangelize people. It will *not* be a ministry of revival, so they will not be trying to restore the Church. It will be a ministry of *judgment*. This group of saints will be endowed with supernatural power that is *destructive* in nature. They will stop the rain (ruining crops and bringing starvation); they will turn the waters to blood (causing people to die of thirst); and they will smite the earth with all manner of plagues as often as *they* will—and not just any old plagues, but *the* plagues described in Revelation, which will kill millions and millions of people.

Not only will they be granted supernatural destructive power, they will be granted supernatural protection which is also destructive, for John said if anyone tries to hurt them: “...*fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies*; and if any man will hurt them, he **must** in this manner be killed.” Notice it says anyone who opposes this ministry **MUST** be killed. It’s not an option. There is no opportunity to repent; there is no mercy granted.

Those who have been called to this ministry must be *completely* broken. They must be *utterly* humbled. For it says of these witnesses that they are “clothed in sackcloth”. Sackcloth in Scripture is a symbol of *mourning* and *humility*. These people have been clothed spiritually. The sackcloth isn’t a legal position in Christ. It’s a reality that has come from being broken again and again and again, through suffering, until they have been humbled in truth. All arrogance and self-righteousness will have been burned out of them. Every ounce of human hardness will have been melted; every bit of human pride crushed, so that *only* the hardness of *God* is manifested; only the judgement of *God* is revealed. Those who have allowed God to bring them to this place will not *enjoy* the power they are given, and they will take no delight in seeing millions of people perish as a result of their ministry.

Many of us have friends or loved ones that are not saved, or who are “Christians” but are not really serving the Lord whole-heartedly. Do we realize the day is soon coming when the door will be shut and the time of mercy for them will be over? God Himself will shut that door, and wherever they are spiritually, that’s where they will stay. Do we realize it’s possible for “Christians” to perish in God’s wrath, along with the wicked?

*Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: **be not cut off in her iniquity**; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.*

Jeremiah 51:6

When I read verses like this, I often wonder what goes through the brain of Christians who assume they could never experience God’s wrath because they are His children. Who do we imagine the Lord was talking to when He spoke these words? He was talking to HIS covenant people, Israel. Those of His people who heeded the warning of Jeremiah were spared. Those who did not, were *destroyed* along with the wicked.

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, **my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye **receive not of her plagues**...Therefore shall **her plagues** come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

Revelation 18:4& 8

God is going to pour out His wrath on this world, and on the beast, and the great whore who rides that beast. That wrath is going to come in the form of “plagues”. Anyone who has not separated themselves from these things will experience that wrath, and that includes “Christians”. If the ones God refers to as “*my people*” refuse to leave Babylon, they will partake of the *same* wrath that comes upon it. So we can see in the Scripture there are *at least* two possible groups we can be a part of in the last days. We can be part of the group which is smiting the earth with the plagues, or we can be the ones who are experiencing those plagues along with the wicked.

If we have a desire to be part of the two witness company (or we think God is calling us to be part of it), then there is a special kind of training we must submit to. It includes great suffering that will utterly break us. It will also include an emotional preparation, for the day will come when we will be required to do what the Levites of old did, when God used them to judge thier brethren, and in some cases members of thier own families.

*And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, **Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.** And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: **and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.** For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.*

Exodus 32:19-29

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matthew 25:41

Jesus hates sin. He hates it so much he created a Lake of Fire where the father of sin, Satan, will be tormented *without mercy*, for all eternity. Many Christians are now rejecting the Jesus who created the Lake of Fire. They are rejecting the God of wrath and judgment.

*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. **And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.***

Revelation 11:7-10

When the two witnesses are finally slain by the beast, many *Christians* will be rejoicing along with the wicked of this world over the fact that they have been silenced. For, just like the wicked, they hate the God of judgment and wrath. So whether we desire to become part of that group or not, we will still have to embrace the God of vengeance and judgment who is about to reveal himself.