

The Wrath of the Lamb

Let's pray:

Lord, we just look to You today. This is a terrifying message today, and I pray that You would help Your people to hear it and to be blessed by it. In Your name I pray. Amen.

This message is on "The Wrath of the Lamb." I was talking to someone at work, and he said, "Why do you speak on something so hard?" I said, "I do not know, but the wrath of the Lamb of necessity follows the holiness of God. It is in the same passage, so I felt the burden to share on it. I was going to share on it the last time, but I did not have time so we will do it now.

Revelation 6:15-16: "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"

Revelation 7:17: "For the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

I am glad I am speaking to family and to people who can pour out grace on me. Have you ever been studying something in Scripture and find yourself arguing with God about it? I found myself in a very unpleasant place, and I believe the Lord had me go to Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?'"

Isaiah 64:8 says, "But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand."

You know, it is sort of humorous about the gods that people make of stone and whatever else they imagine God to be. They fashion God after what they like and what they want. But I had to ask myself, do I do the same with my God? Have I fashioned a god that suits me? I don't readily want to admit that, but I found that I have been, and many times I am brought up short by God's Word. "Lord, what You are saying here is just unsettling to me." And you come to see that you had a wrong concept of who God is and what He is about, and you fashion your God according to what you want.

God's love is wonderful, but we do not talk about what God hates. We talk about God's holiness but not His wrath. We know it is there but that is not really something we want to deal with. As a result, what you think of God becomes skewed, and even the worldly church speaks only of God's love, and how He wants you to be who you want to be. None of it is true; they fashion a god who is not the God of the Bible, and I felt that I had been doing the same. So as I have gone through this study, I am just going to touch lightly on it. I found at the end a much more setlines with the wrath of the Lamb than ever before, and a much more appreciation for the Gospel as a result.

The last time I shared we were in Revelation 4:1 and it said, "Come up here." If you come up here, you see God for who He presents Himself to be, and quite often it is different from what you thought down here. The Lord says, "Come up here, and I am going to show you who I am." We saw the holiness of God, how unutterably holy He is. He is the thrice Holy God, and the seraphim are calling back and forth, "Holy, Holy, Holy," and the temple of God shook, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. His train, His majesty and His holiness fills the temple. The first song that we find in chapter 4 is about His holiness.

The second song that we have is "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

The second song is about the fact that He is the Creator, and we read those verses in Isaiah about Him as the Creator; we are not the creator. As Creator He has the right to declare what He is going to do and what He is not going to do. He has the right to judge according to the way He wants to judge, and it is the way of holiness that He judges.

The Book

Revelation 5:1-7: "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals. And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.'" And when He took the book, there was great worship.

What is this book? I tried to find out and I just gave up; there are a lot of different interpretations of it. Some say this book is like an executor of a will. Others say different things, but the important thing about this book is that it has seven seals, and it is written on both the inside and outside of the pages. So that we know, and it is in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, who I believe is the Father. And the question arises: "Who can open the book? Who can break the seals?" And we know only One can do that, our Lord Jesus.

What is the importance of it being written on? I want to take this opportunity to talk about the written Word of God because what is written is very important to God.

Romans 1:2: "Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures."

Luke 24:44: "Now these are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

So there is a sense in Scripture that what is written is holy, especially these holy Scriptures that we have. But whenever it says, "What is written," there is the sense that it is going to be fulfilled. Something is going to happen, and it is going to be fulfilled; it must be fulfilled. In Revelation when it says, "It is written on;" each seal has something written on it. So when it is opened, something must be fulfilled. And we see that there is only One who can open the seals.

The Only One Worthy to Open the Book

Revelation 5:8-9a: "When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break it seals."

Only the Lord Jesus was able to take the book in His hand and to break the seals. But the point is that the Lamb of God is the One who is going to break the seals. The Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus that we know and love is the One who is going to break the seals, and we know what happens when He breaks the seals.

Revelation 6:1: "Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals," there was conquering that happened.

Verse 3: "When the Lamb broke the second seal," there was war.

Verse 5: "When He broke the third seal," there was famine."

Verse 7: "When He broke the fourth seal," there was death.

Verse 9: " When He broke the fifth seal," underneath the altar were the souls of those who had been slain.

Verse 12: "When He broke the sixth seal," there is terror. This is the Lamb of God who breaks these seals. And here is the part that really unsettled me.

Verse 16: "They said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

You see that the Lamb is in charge of breaking the seals in His time. It is under His authority that the seals are broken, and it is with His approval that these things are happening.

When I was asked what the message was about, it is the wrath of the Lamb, and He said, "It is like an oxymoron, "the wrath of the Lamb?" The Lamb of God received the wrath to become the Lamb, but here it is the wrath of the Lamb.

Wrath Defined

What is wrath? Wrath is an expression of God's holiness. Wrath means 'to become heated up, to burn with fury, a burning fierce anger.' So whenever we speak of the wrath of the Lamb, it is a burning, fierce, intense anger. It is lethal; it is fatal fury. It is an intense anger and fury ready to be released. All the way through Scripture you find that wrath has different ways when it is mentioned, but you get the sense that it is an intense anger.

Psalm 2:12: "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled (the sense of fire being kindled). How blessed are all those who take refuge in Him."

Psalm 5:4-6: "for you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with you. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; you hate all who do iniquity. You destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit."

God hates; He takes no pleasure in wickedness. We are getting a picture of who this God is, who our God is; not one that we often see.

Chapter 7:11:13: "God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day. If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts."

Chapter 11:4-6: "The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup."

Psalm 110:5-6: "The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country."

Our brother read this morning from Ezekiel 5:13: "Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased; then they will know that I, the Lord, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them."

You get the idea that this is just a small portion of our God's wrath. It is an intense anger that rises up within our God at the evil doers, the wickedness of men.

In the Old Testament, where do you see instances of the wrath of God poured out? "Sodom and Gomorrah;" that comes to mind first. What else? "The days of Noah." Continue: "The rebellion of Korah." In the teaching of children, we come across these sections of God's wrath, and it is really hard for them to understand. "How can my God do this?" There are many other examples also. Then there is the wrath of God even on His own people. It is poured out towards His own people such as plagues that He unleashed. Famines are the wrath of God, and it is a terrible thing, and it burns with fury and anger against evilness, and evil people.

The Love of God and the Wrath of God

It is hard for me to hold on one side the love of the Lord Jesus who gave His life for me and His intense anger and wrath at mankind, but both are true. The wrath of God extends from His holiness. The Scripture says, "The foundation of the throne is righteousness and justice. This is something in which the modern church has failed. I was listening to some sermons on this by some men who know what is going on in the church today, and this subject of the "Wrath of God" is ignored and cast aside. There is no such thing as sin. Sin is whatever you want it to be. Sin is not based upon God's holiness, therefore God does not need to judge. Therefore, salvation is not

really salvation anymore. Man today has taken away the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus. But if you do not start with the holiness of God and that He is angry at sin, then you do not have a true Gospel. God has never been neutral concerning sin nor the wickedness that we see in our country and over the whole world. His anger burns with an intensity today as it did when this Book was written 2000 years ago, and it still burns.

There is a companion passage in Isaiah 2 which speaks of the fear that the world will have with the wrath of the Lamb. You see in Revelation that they hid; they wanted to hide from the terror of the Lamb of God. Three times the terror of the Lord is mentioned in this chapter, and I believe this is one of those mountain-top prophecies. You know what a mountain-top prophecy is. God is speaking the prophecy here in Isaiah, and there is a big valley and then you see the same thing pop up here, and it is what I call mountain-top prophecies. This is talking about God's universal reign.

Isaiah 2:10-11: "Enter the rock and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and from the splendor of His majesty. The proud look of man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day."

Verses 17-19: "The pride of man will be humbled and the loftiness of men will be abased; and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, but the idols will completely vanish. Men will go into caves of the rocks and into holes of the ground before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble."

Verse 21: "In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?"

So the reaction in Revelation to the intense burning wrath of the Lord is that men, small and great, want to hide in caves and under the rocks from the terror of the Lord. Their reaction to it is fear and dread. What should our reaction be to this terror of the Lord, this burning wrath of the Lord? Let us look at the martyrs. What are they saying to this wrath of the Lamb?

Revelation 6:9-10 which is the fifth seal: "When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

The martyrs here, the ones who had been slain over the centuries are crying out for vengeance, for the wrath of God to come. They are crying out for justice. I think all of the children who have been murdered are under the throne also crying out for justice. But there is a continual cry going up before the Lord from the martyrs themselves that are crying for justice and vengeance.

What is the reaction of those who witness the One who has the book in His hand? We see great praise and worship. Heaven is rejoicing that the Lamb's wrath is come. Heaven is praising the Lamb of God.

Revelation 5:9-10: "After He took the book in His hand, "They sang a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

We have the reaction of the people who witnessed, who were on the earth when the wrath of the Lamb is come. They hide, they run. There are the martyrs who are continuing before the throne saying, "Lord, come quickly and judge the earth." And there are those who saw the seals being broken ,and they are worshipping and praising God.

God's Judgments are True and Righteous

Revelation 19:1: "After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous.'"

So heaven itself declares that the judgments of the Lamb of God are true and they are righteous judgments.

Verse 5: "Give praise to God all you His bondservants, you who fear Him, the small and the great."

Here is where it gets personal to me, and hopefully to you also. Can you worship the Lamb of God as the great Judge? When you read through the seals, the trumpets, the bowls, and you see the wrath of God being poured out on the earth, can you worship Him in the midst of these judgments? Can you say that is true, that is righteous, that is a just thing to do? Is your heart full of worship and praise as you go through these things? We can because our God is holy, He judges, and His judgments are true and right. This is what got to me. "Lord, I have not worshipped You in that way. I can worship You up to, You are the Lamb of God, and You are waiting, but can I also worship You for judging, for executing Your wrath on this sinful world?" I doubt if many believers can, but we should be able to. We should be able to worship the Lamb who judges.

There is a great change and viewpoint when you go to heaven and see from heaven's viewpoint. Heaven views this earth in a far different way than we view the earth. Heaven views the judgment that the earth deserves in a much larger way than we do. We do not like sin; God hates sin. We say, "Well, it is not quite that bad," but God judges sin eternally and the wickedness of men.

In our Bible study, we were studying about the apostles being sent out to the villages and the cities to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. What did it say when someone rejected that Gospel? They shook the dust off their feet. What follows after that? It says, "In the day of judgment, God have mercy on that city because you have rejected the Gospel of the kingdom." It seems to me this is a divine shaking off of the dust of the world, and God saying, "The world is kaput; it is finished. Judgment has fallen.

Sinners are Always Beckoned to Come

One speaker I listened to shared it like this: “The Lamb of God has His hand up trying to stop the tsunami of His own wrath, but it gets bigger and bigger as the years go by. With His other hand He beckons the sinner to come: “My blood is spilt for you; My salvation is there for you.” But when that person, nation, the world rejects it, there is a time when His hand goes down, and the Lamb who offers His life for the sinner, the world sees His wrath, and it is the wrath of the Lamb. The wrath of the Lamb is a terrifying thing, but yet there is a wonderful interlude. I am not going to get into the ecology of it all because I think you lose a lot of what the Lord is trying to say here.

Chapter 7:14-17: “I said to him, ‘My lord, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and He will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.’”

What tenderness of the Lord! There is His wrath, His intense burning rage against the sin of the world, and yet for you and I He is the Lamb in the center of the throne as a Shepherd, as One who tenderly cares for us. To me it is as if all around us there is wickedness, so wicked that we know our God hates it with an intense anger. Yet He tabernacles over us who are His people; His presence is with us; He is our Shepherd. And you will notice that while other people hide from Him, these people do not hide from Him. They willingly are led by the Shepherd. Where others see death and destruction, these people are experiencing pastures and springs of living water. Do you see the great contrast? It is all from the same throne, and the Shepherd is in the midst of the throne.

God is Worthy to Judge

I mentioned before how when I started this study I was very upset about the wrath of the Lamb. But I began to see that the wrath of the Lamb is so intense because His holiness is so great; it is beyond our comprehension, and His wrath is beyond our comprehension. Yet if you see it from God’s side or the angel’s side, you begin to worship the Lord as worthy to judge. He is worthy of worship, worthy of praise, worthy of all that we sing in so many songs about His worthiness. He is worthy to judge, and as you begin to worship Him as the great Judge which we are to do, there is a great compassion that comes up in your heart, isn’t it? There is a compassion for those who are the judged, for those who are the walking dead that are under the wrath of God.

Brothers and sisters, somehow I think because we do not truly understand the wrath of God, we are not as evangelistic as we should be. If we understood the wrath of God that hangs over this world, we would ask the Lord to give us a real vision of the wrath of God. I made a few mistakes here. I said that we are getting into something good when we talk about the Shepherd, but actually from heaven’s viewpoint judgment is good also. My dad used to say something when I was a kid which I really did not like. God gets as much glory of souls going to hell as going to heaven. What does he mean by that? It is because the righteous demands of God are met in judgment as well.

Let's pray:

Lord, I just want to thank You for readjusting me. I feel like You have done a good work in me to really worship You and praise You as the righteous Judge. Lord, I want to say with all of heaven that You are true, righteous, and Your judgments are good, for they are correct. Lord, I do pray that we would know the tenderness of the Shepherd's care in this world that is so wicked and evil. We might know that You are leading us into green pastures. Lord, and You are feeding us with Your good food. We ask that the Spirit of God would be in our midst, and that You would tabernacle with us. Lord, we say when we see these verses, we are not fearful of what the world may bring, but we want to have great compassion upon this world. Lord, we do want to say that You are the Lamb of God. Blessed be the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.