

A WORD ON WORSHIP

REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM FEBRUARY 7, 2016

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Revelation 14:18-19

“Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.” So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.”



I heard of a pastor who was talking with a colleague about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The colleague said, “Well, if that’s the way God really is, then I’m not going to believe in Him!” That is strange logic. Not believing in God doesn’t make Him go away. Yet I’ve often heard people dismiss God’s judgment by saying, “I believe in a God of love. He would never judge anyone, except maybe the worst of the worst of sinners.”

Or, some will say, “I don’t believe in the Old Testament God of judgment. I believe in Jesus, who never condemned anyone.” Really? Jesus spoke more often and more graphically about hell than anyone else in the Bible. He used the story of Sodom’s destruction to warn about the final judgment when He returns (Luke 17:29-32). The entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, reveals a God who will bring judgment on sinners, but who shows mercy to those who repent of their sins and trust in Him.

What John is told to write is a beatitude in the preceding verses, a pronouncement of blessing or divine happiness upon those individuals who comply with certain truths or principles of Scripture, but always on the basis of grace. In Scripture a beatitude is always seen as a reversal of man’s viewpoint by setting forth God’s viewpoint, values, priorities and ideas. To the unbeliever, obeying the beast and worshipping him is more blessed than death; even slavery is better than death. For many death is feared, viewed as an unknown, or the end. But to believers, God’s viewpoint and the promises of His Word teach the direct opposite. To accept the beast is to forfeit trusting in Jesus Christ and so to forfeit eternal life. But death is never the end, it is only the beginning. This life is a place of preparation because our choices and works follow us into eternity.

Jesus didn’t come and die on the cross just to give us warm, fuzzy feelings about God’s love. He offered Himself to pay the penalty for sin that we deserved to rescue us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10). God’s past judgments - the angels who sinned, the world under the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah - are there to warn us that God will surely judge all that have sinned against Him. The preservation of Noah and the spiritual redemption of the thief on the cross at Jesus’ crucifixion give us the hope that if we trust in Christ and turn from our sins, God will mercifully spare us from the judgment to come. Believe in Jesus Christ and you will not perish, but have eternal life.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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