

## God's Judgment of the Firstfruits

(Pentecost—LIVE)

Roger Tointon, May 28, 2023

We're going to talk a little about something that definitely is connected to the day of Pentecost; this great day of the future that God commands us to commemorate and to keep all the days of our life after He opened our mind so that we could know Him and His Plan.

Definitely, Pentecost has a very important part in the Plan of God. I think it has maybe more significance in some ways than we fully realize. There are so many things. God's Plan is so great and so big, I know that we only see it in part.

We may yearn to know more about that Plan and that's why we have to keep pursuing the Word of God. As we do, in do it with the right heart, God will bless us! He really will!

I'm just going to highlight Lev. 23; it's the only place where God, in sequence, points out every major part of His Plan as far as an outline. He doesn't give all the details by any means, but it does. So, what does He do?

It starts with the Sabbath, goes to the Passover and then to Unleavened Bread, What is next—and as Fred has eluded to—a great deal of space is listed right there about the Wave Sheaf Offering and the firstfruits. Do you think that's an indication of how important it is to God?

Pentecost pictures the first resurrection, *the harvest of the firstfruit*, which are very important to God or He wouldn't spend that much time on it, and it would not be in the order that it's in.

God can bring salvation to men whenever He wants to, but He has a very specific purpose for the firstfruits, and that's why it's so important.

1-Peter is where I'm going to spend most of my time. I'm not going to jump around a lot.

1-Peter 4:17: "For the time *has come for judgment*..."

That world conjures up many different things to the human mind. Think of all the different aspects of judgment that people fear; they really do fear! A lot of people in their heart. Even though they are not close to God, don't know God, but they may believe in God. *In their lives there are times when they fear the judgment of God!* They know how they've lived, and they're not quite sure if God is going to have mercy upon them. Judgment does conjure up things!

"...for judgment to begin with the household

of God..." (v 17).

It doesn't say that judgment for all mankind. It's not! What Peter is talking about here is the *first time of judgment* for salvation in the Church of God! That is why it is so important for us to understand!

What is it in this time of judgment—and we are in that time of judgment—when God called us, I don't care if you were 18 or when you were 65 or older, or somewhere in between. *When He called you* and opened your mind, *that's when our judgment began!*

When we did not turn and run away and say 'no, I don't want this.' Of course, some did! Some waited a while and then they turned away. But we're still here and *we are in judgment*, that first time of judgment for salvation!

"...and if it first *begins* with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?" (vs 17).

The world wonders about that and they don't have the answer, because their mind is blinded and they are not truly seeking that in the way that they should. If they did, they, too, could understand it much better in spite of the blindness. So, the Plan of God takes care of that.

Verse 18: "And if the righteous are saved with much difficulty..."

Have you ever felt like your judgment was too much? *I'm sure you have! We all have at times!* When those times when you thought 'I cannot take anymore,' what did you do? *If you're still here, if you're still faithful, I know what you did! You turned to God!* As hard as it was, maybe, at that time—because your mind was on the difficulty—when you turn to God what does He do? *He promises, absolutely promises, that He—IF you turn to Him and you ask Him for the help that you need—THEN He will help!* And He will lead you out of that difficulty.

There is another judgment coming! But right now let's look at the words: *much difficulty!* It is a true judgment period that has many tests and trials.

1-Peter 4:1: "Consequently, since Christ has suffered for us *in the flesh*..."

That brings up a number of things. Christ is not expecting us... First:

- Who is Christ?

- Hasn't God the Father given all judgment to Christ?
- What did Christ do? *He came here below and went through suffering as no man has really known!*

Through the whole course of it! No man has really known that! Sure men have gone through many things, but He came here—our Creator, Who was willing to become a human being—to go through what He did so that the Plan of God could go forward. *It could not work any other way!*

Christ suffered in the flesh for us and eventually for all mankind. The Plan of God covers that, and He was willing to do that while we were still living our life in the world, living in sin as the people around us. I don't care what variation, ***we were still living in sin!*** He was willing to do that, so what does He expect of us? Peter says right here:

**"...arm yourselves also with the same mind..."** (v 1).

The same mind that Christ had when He was going through His judgment! That's exactly what we have to do. Philippians says to ***'let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.'*** That is part of what is expected of us. Christ suffered and we have to suffer.

"...because the one who has suffered in the flesh has finished *living* in sin" (v 1).

Well, we are not sinless, and we better not say that we are! God says we would be a liar, and there will be no liar in the Kingdom of God. We are striving to not sin, and when we do, what do we do? *We have to repent!*

That is in the Will of God, and that is in the Plan of God! We have to suffer, and when we stumble we have to repent! ***He will then forgive us!***

Verse 2—*put our name here:* "To this end: that he no longer lived *his* remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men... [as we did before] ...but to the will of God. For the past time of our lives is sufficient **to have worked out the will of the Gentiles...**" (vs 2-3).

What does that mean? *Because we were like them!* All of God's people Israel! That's why He had to eventually divorce them and create the New Covenant. A covenant with people who the Father would call to a time a of judgment. That's what we're talking about! But in times past we didn't know! We didn't know until the Father opened our mind. That's why then our whole life changed!

You can think of people whom you were close to before God called you. A short time ago

Sherry and I had to go to a 'celebration of life' of people who died. I've had to go to that more than one time with other people, and I'm always sitting there like I was this time squirming in my seat because of the things that they say. *You just want to get up and say 'hey...! You want to get up and tell it like it is in God's Word. But they would probably usher you to the door! They would do that.*

I first met this man in 1960 when I had to come to California to find a job. I met him shortly after and we connected. At the time we were really on the same page. He believed in God, and I believed in God and we lived our life accordingly.

It doesn't mean that we were living it without sin. But we were able to do things together and really, really be close friends.

About five years after that, God called me; He opened my mind! Right at first I did mention it to him and his wife, and I said, 'Hey, you need to listen and so on.' They maybe did listen a time or two and decided that they weren't going to 'buy this.' But they still wanted to be my friend. But this was this big guillotine division that came right down between us and we no longer could be friends like before.

Most all of you have experienced that! We were separated! God did the separating, and God did it for a purpose. ***He wanted me and you or He wouldn't have called us!*** When we responded that partition came up and while I got see him when he turned 96-years-old, and he wanted to see me. So, I went over and spent a wonderful two hours going over old things with him. It was still there, we were friends and were of the same heart in part. He simply did not have the knowledge that has been given to me by God.

You can't bring that up. You only offend them at that point. So, you try to cover things in a way that one day—hopefully, and I'm sure they will—remember. That will be wonderful thing. But we know that and they don't! So, he died and we went to the even that they had.

That's what we are called to, ***to judgment now!*** They were not. Does that mean that they were all bad and evil people. Well, they certainly had human nature as Jer. 17 tells us. But there is a lot of differences in how people live their lives. They receive blessings from God automatically as a result if they live a life that in line with the Word of God, they will be blessed for, even though they will not be—unless God calls them—in the first resurrection. ***Those are things that we need to keep in mind!***

Verse 12: "Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial...** [we just talked some about that] ...among you *which is* taking place **to test you...**"

God knows all things and He knows us. That's why He called us; He saw something that we do not know for sure. But He saw it and He decided to call us. We're in judgment, but why does He promise that, which you learned shortly after you were called. I know I did, and I'm sure most of you did. ***You learned that it was going to be difficult!***

- What does that mean? *Trials, tests!*
- What do they conjure up? *It is difficult and it's a test!*

"...which is taking place... [don't be surprised] ...**to test you as if some strange thing were happening to you**" (v 12).

*It's God's will!* God knows that we have to be tried and tested. You can think back to our forefather Abraham. We know that story, it starts in Gen. 12 when God called him and then it goes to Gen. 22. After all the things that Abraham had done and it said that it was 'accounted to him for righteousness, because he believed God.' Therefore, he did what God told him.

That's exactly what God wants with us! But after all those things that Abraham did, and then God said, 'No, one more time!' Abraham was asked to take his 'promised' son and to actually kill him as a sacrifice. He was willing to do it! At that point you know what God said: ***Now I know!***

I don't think that God has said that about us, yet. If He has that's great, but I don't think He has. We don't know what we're going to face. Look at all these things going on around us today that are absolutely beyond the pale, and they are so insane that we say, 'How can this be?'

We know in part, but we ask it anyway! How can this be? *Because things aren't over, yet!* That's why! These things have to come to pass as the Word of God shows. We are learning more and more about that, and we can understand that things are going to come to pass. But we have to be tested!

Verse 13: "But to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ..."

That ties in with v 1; we also have to suffer. that is the way that God wants it, so that we can become true brethren with Christ. Christ does look at us as—those whom the Father has given Him—as His brother. He even calls us *His brethren!* But we have to be seeking to obey Him.

"...**rejoice**..." (v 13).

That is difficult as we know, but we are thankful that we understand that we have to go through it and not drop out like some did. Way too many that I have known dropped out. They went

along good for a while, but things did not happen the way they wanted, and they got offended, or some other thing. The longer they thought about it the worse it got until suddenly they were not there. They turned back, ***and that is unthinkable. For us now, isn't that unthinkable? You bet it is!*** We're in this for our whole life!

What is our life in this world? *It's nothing, especially if you're as old as Fred!* {joke} *I'm a little bit behind!* Look at what they're doing to our children, how they are ***absolutely destroying our children in so many ways; physically and spiritually!***

What does this world have to offer? *It doesn't! It really doesn't!* Some of you younger people, yes, I know it's easier to get your mind on things you want to do in the world. That is in human beings. But trust me, when you get as old as I am, if you ever do, it won't matter anymore. ***It just won't matter!***

So, we have to look at what God offers! What does He offer us? *It's absolutely amazing!* We cannot fully inculcate it, ***but it is real!*** It will come to pass ***IF*** we're faithful! ***IF*** we suffer now, ***and be willing to!*** When they come after us; if they come to our door we don't what will happen, ***That's up to God at that point! Absolutely up to God!***

Those kinds of things will happen in this nation! Other nations around the world, where God's people are, so ***'we ain't seen anything, yet!'***

It's really amazing how God's Word is and goes together. You know that! I'm not telling you anything new today. I'm doing what Peter has always mentioned. He was telling them that they would remember when they went over what he wrote to them. One of the first words out of James' mouth when he starts his epistle:

James 1:2: "Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials."

Didn't Peter just say that?

We have to get the right perspective of trials, because they are necessary. How many times have you awakened to what you what you had done. Maybe just done, maybe it took a few days or even weeks before you realized what you had done. Satan is behind so many of them. Satan is accusing us to God, just like He did Job. I am sure that he is accusing us every time we mess up in any day.

That's why Christ is our Intercessor! He is running intercession for us through the Father. Why? Because He had to here below in human flesh with human nature and go through the trials that He went through so that He could empathize with those whom the Father would call in this time of

judgment.

Verse 3: “Knowing that **the testing of your faith produces endurance.**”

The very word *endurance* conjures up difficulty doesn’t it. If you’re really going to endure something difficult, you know you’re going to have to apply your whole heart and mind to it. What does Christ say to the seven churches, every one of them: ***He who endures to the end!***

The end is not here, yet. My feeling is that it’s very close, but it is not here, yet. *To him who overcomes*

- every one of those tests
- every one of those trials

*That is the one whom I will give a place in My House, in My Family as My son or daughter!*

That’s what He says, and we have to remind ourselves of that all the time. The harder it gets, the more we put our nose right here in the Word of God, because that is where we get true help! God is not going to call down Mt. Zion and talk to us. If you run into anybody who says that God talks to them, it’s best to kind of distance yourself! God is not going to do that. How does He talk to us? Paul says that He talks to us through His Word (Heb. 1).

- that’s where it is
- that’s why we have it
- that’s why we have to study it

Hebrews 2:14: “Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same... [I just covered that] ...in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil.”

Before Jesus began His ministry, you know that in Matt. 4 and Luke 4 He had to be tested, face-to-face with the devil. We cannot really understand the pressure that was on Him at that time. Christ knew that if He sinned, even once... He was in the flesh, and knew He was in the flesh, He hadn’t eaten for 40 days and 40 nights or drank any water. He knew He was in the flesh, and knew that if He sinned it was all over and the Plan of God could not go forward. Therefore, He did have to take part in the same ***so that He might annul the power of Satan!***

When that day comes, that is another major part of God’s Plan, when the great Atonement comes and Satan is locked up, then the Plan of God can go forward in a very, very wonderful way! It will go all the way to the end.

Verse 17: “For this reason, it was obligatory for *Him*[Christ] to be made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest...”

Jude says that God sanctifies us through Christ and He gives us to Christ to shepherd. Christ is the Great Shepherd, and He shepherds those whom the Father calls, the way that the Father wants Him to. That He can be:

“...made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (vs 17). *He was willing to do that!*

Verse 18: “For because He Himself has suffered... [before we have had to truly suffer] ...having been tempted *in like manner*, He is able to help those who are being tempted”—*and in judgment now!*

*Our judgment is not over! It will not be until our last breath! Or on that glorious day when the firstfruits of God who have gone through judgment and were faithful are raised to glory! **That glory will be to God Almighty Who has called us!***

**So, let’s fight the good fight!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Peter 4:17-18, 1-3, 12-13
- 2) James 1:2-3
- 3) Hebrews 2:14, 17-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Jeremiah 17
- Genesis 12; 22
- Hebrews 1
- Matthew 4
- Luke 4

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