

Text: Rev. 16:1-7

Title: "Heaven's response to God's judgment"

Time: 4/8/2018 am

Place: NBBC

Intro: Last week my heart was encouraged in the Bible doctrine of creation at our NRBFC spring conference. We enjoyed three powerful messages from the Word of God and three insightful lessons from the evidence of science presented by Dave Woetzel, which bolstered our faith in the biblical account of a young earth and a literal six-day work of creation as presented in Genesis 1-2. We have some literature in our foyer that contains the content of some of those lessons, which I would recommend to you this morning.

Brother Woetzel's first lesson takes the form of five questions that each of us needs to know how to ask a person who believes in the lie of evolution:

1. Where did it all come from? (First cause)
2. How did a big bang produce an exquisitely ordered cosmos?
3. How did life come from rocks?
4. How did complex biological systems arise by accident?
5. Why do I have a soul?

No evolutionist has a good answer to any of these five questions, which threatens the credibility of evolution.

We all know, of course, that we have Charles Darwin to thank for the popularity of the lie of evolution. He was a man who believed that the biblical account of creation was a lie, and that led him to the conclusion that Christianity itself is a lie. Here is what he wrote about his view on the truthfulness of Christianity in his *Autobiography*: "I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the [biblical] text

seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my father, brother, and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine." Charles Darwin concluded that we should wish Christianity to be false because it teaches that God will judge the unbeliever.

If there is anything we have learned from our study of the prophecy of Revelation thus far, it is the truth that God will judge the unbeliever. Darwin responded to passages like the one before us in unbelief.

This morning I want us to notice from our passage that heaven responds to the reality of God's coming judgment in a far different way, and I want to encourage us to have the same response of faith when it comes to the reality of God's judgment upon unbelievers.

I want to say two things about this: (1) heaven sees that man is worthy of God's judgment, and (2) heaven sees that Jesus Christ is worthy to judge.

I. Heaven sees that man is worthy of God's judgment (vv. 2, 6).

Illustration: As creationists we understand that our planet is uniquely designed to support the life of God's creatures. The unique properties of water are one key to that design.

Unlike virtually any other known substance, water contracts as it cools until it reaches 4 degrees Celsius, and then it expands until it freezes, so ice is less dense than cold water, which means that it floats on the surface of our ponds and streams. We had a bad ice dam on our river here in New Boston this year, but it was no problem for the fish

who live in the river, because the ice stayed on top of the river, not on its bottom. That unique characteristic of water is evidence of a Creator's wisdom.

We also learned this past week that salinity levels in the oceans are evidence for a young earth. The oceans are filled with salt water, and the salt water comes from all the water that runs into them from land. When ocean water evaporates, the salt content is left behind and so the salinity level in the oceans increases over time. Currently, that level is about 3.5%, which means that this process has not been going on very long, certainly not long enough as required by the faith of evolutionists.

Appl: Heaven knows how water is an amazing gift to mankind. And angels must marvel that sinful man is not more thankful that his Creator has given him a gift like that.

During the Great Tribulation period, heaven will witness the way unbelievers will quench their thirst with cool springs of water so that they can perform the false worship of the antichrist (v. 2). They will use God's gift of water to wash their implements of murder with which they execute the bloody slaughter of God's saints and prophets (v. 6).

Illustration: What they will see then will actually not appear to be something new to them, for they see the same kind of thing happening in our day. Open Doors' 2018 *World Watch List* reported the following realities of Christian persecution today:

- "215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution in the countries on the *World Watch List*. This represents 1 in 12 Christians worldwide. . . .
- "During the *World Watch List 2018* reporting period: 3,066 Christians were killed; 1,252 were abducted; 1,020

were raped or sexually harassed; and 793 churches were attacked.

- “Islamic Oppression fuels persecution in 8 of the top 10 countries [of Christian persecution].”

Appl: Heaven sees all this. They see there that sinful man is worthy of God’s judgment.

It turns out that in order for you and I to be saved from God’s judgment ourselves, we have to see that the same thing is true about our sinfulness. We too are worthy of God’s judgment.

How many cups of water have quenched our thirst so that we could avoid worshipping the true God in order to walk according to the course of this world, which is dominated by the spirit of antichrist, in pursuit of its possessions, pleasures, and pride? Have we ever felt hatred against God’s saints or God’s prophets? Have we ever treated our local church with contempt? Whatever the nature of our sin, each of us must recognize that he is a sinner worthy of God’s judgment before he can be saved.

The apostle Paul put it this way, speaking of himself: “Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:13-15).

Can you say that about Christ Jesus and your sin this morning, that you have been given saving grace? If not, heaven sees that you are worthy of God’s judgment. Like Paul did, you need to recognize that and ask Him to save you from

your sin by His grace in Christ Jesus who died and rose again for you. Which brings us in part to our next thought.

II. Heaven sees that Jesus Christ is worthy to judge (vv. 1, 3-5, 7).

III: This past week I came across a fairly ancient English ballad called, "The King's Disguise, and Friendship with Robin Hood."

The song tells a story about how King Richard brought about Robin Hood's restoration from Sherwood Forest to the king's court in London. To do so, the king disguised himself as a monk, found Robin Hood, and asked him about his view of the king.

The two stanzas in which Robin Hood passes the king's test go like this:

"But we are messengers from the king,  
The king himself did say;  
'Near to this place his royal Grace  
To speak with thee does stay.'  
"God save the king,' said Robin Hood,  
'And all that wish him well;  
He that does deny his sovereignty,  
I wish he was in hell."

Appl: I believe that we must say that Jesus Christ is the one ordering the bowl judgments in this passage for two reasons.

(1) One is a truth we find elsewhere in Scripture: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:22-23). So

wherever we read in our Bibles about God's judging mankind, we need to understand it is God the Son doing so.

(2) The second reason I believe that we must say that Jesus Christ is the one doing the judging in this passage will be more clear to those of us using newer translations this morning than those of us using the KJV. Let me make a long story short by saying that the phrase *and shalt be* is better understood as originally *O Holy One*. Let's read the verse that way.

The title *O Holy One* comes from Psalm 16, where David prophesies that God would not allow His Holy One to see corruption, a prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The risen Jesus is the Holy One. It is used in 15:4 – "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For it alone is 'the Holy One.'" He is the King of Saints (15:3).

So heaven knows that this passage is about Jesus Christ, the Holy One who died for man's sin, and the Holy One who arose victorious over man's sin and man's death – the Holy One who was not allowed to see corruption.

Now when we read from this passage this morning that heaven sees that Jesus Christ is worthy to judge, we are immediately struck by how rarely we think of Him as judge, aren't we? His royalty is very obvious to heaven, but it is less so to us. It is as though the king has come to us in disguise to find out what it is that we really think of Him. A little like the legend of King Richard, He has come as sacrificial Priest and as shepherding Prophet, but not yet as judging and ruling King. It is as though our King's royalty has always been disguised in a way that we cannot see it with our eyes.

But heaven instructs our blind eyes in our passage this morning. It tells us that the crucified and risen one is worthy to judge.

1. He is worthy because His authoritative and great voice originates in the holy of holies of heaven's temple (v. 1). That is the same voice that spoke the universe into existence in six days.
2. He is worthy to judge because He is righteous (v. 5). There are few things worse than an unjust judge. Christ is never unjust (v. 7b).
3. He is worthy to judge because He is independent and eternally self-existing (v. 5, "who art and wast"). He depends on no one for His existence as judge or his ability to judge correctly.
4. He is worthy to judge because He is Lord God Almighty (v. 7a). He can carry out the sentence that He renders.
5. He is worthy to judge because He is the Holy One (v. 5). He suffered the judgement that man deserves because of sin in order to save man from judgment. He did so victoriously over that sin and the grave, rising as God's prophesied Holy One. Heaven sees that for this reason, He is worthy to judge.

Conclusion: Robin Hood said of his king, "He that does deny his sovereignty, I wish he was in hell." The angels of this passage say that about unbelieving man. They have a special appreciation for God's sovereign right to judge as King, but they do not understand what the disguise was all about – Jesus as sacrificial Priest and shepherding Prophet. We are the redeemed, and like our Savior, we can wish that no one goes to hell and do everything in our power to prevent that like He has done.

Evangelism must be our response to the reality of God's judgment. Hear atheist Penn Jillette, "I don't respect people

who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward . . . how much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?" In this day of judgment withheld, let's share the gospel the way our Savior did, endeavoring to proselytize people out of hell into heaven.

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*