

When God's Patience Runs Out, Part 2

Scripture: John 12:37–50

Code: 43-66

Turn in your Bible, if you will, to John chapter 12. It is the day the Light went out because our Lord begins in verse 35 by saying, “For a little while longer, the Light is among you,” referring to Himself because in John 8:12, He called Himself the Light of the world. He says, “Walk while you have the Light so that darkness will not overtake you. He who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the Light, believe in the Light so that you may become sons of Light.”

That, we saw last time, is the final invitation that our Lord gave to Israel. It is midweek of the Passion Week. The temple is overflowing with people who are there to celebrate the Passover. Jesus arrived on Monday, was hailed as the Messiah. On Tuesday, attacked the temple. Wednesday and Thursday, He does some teaching and instructing. Somewhere in that period of time before Friday when He goes through a mock trial and His crucifixion, somewhere in the middle of the week, our Lord offers this final invitation.

When He says it's a little while, He means it because verse 36 continues, “These things Jesus spoke and He went away and hid Himself from them.” This is really the last invitation and the Light was about to go out. Jesus never again made a public appearance to instruct and teach. The next time He showed up in public was when He was crucified, when He was brought before Pilate, when He was brought before Herod, when He was brought before the Sanhedrin.

After His resurrection, He appeared only to believers. So this really was, “The Day the Light Went Out.” This, as we saw last time, is a judgment. It is a judgment of God. God draws the curtain down. The sun of righteousness sets for the nation Israel. Now, it needs to be said that throughout Scripture God declares Himself and proves Himself to be compassionate, to be gracious, merciful, longsuffering, slow to anger, and extremely patient with sinners. “He is patient, not willing that any should perish,” Scripture says. “His patience - ” says the Bible, “ - is salvation.”

Perhaps the greatest illustration of that is connected to the greatest judgment. The greatest judgment the world has ever known, and they've known many, but the greatest was the universal flood of Genesis 6, which drowned the entire human race except for eight people. God announced that He saw only corruption in the world by then, and man was only evil continually. There was alliance being made with demons. Humanity has descended to the lowest possible level and God declared, “I will not always strive with man,” and announced a judgment.

That judgment literally drown the entire human race, but for 120 years, according to Genesis 6, God ordained a preacher by the name of Noah, who the New Testament says was a preacher of righteousness to warn the world, to warn the world of coming judgment. He had a pretty graphic object lesson, a massive ark that he was building that raised curiosity and endless question and every question was answered with the same answer, “There's coming a flood. There's coming a judgment.” For 120 years, Noah preached repentance, turning from sin, putting trust in the true and living God, and no one paid attention.

The flood came, and the world was drowned with the exception of only eight people in Noah's family, but God was patient. In fact, Peter in 1 Peter 3:20 says this 120 years was the period, "When the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah." While Noah called people to repentance and faith in God and turning from sin.

A little later in Genesis, in Genesis 15:16, God speaks to Abraham and He tells Abraham that there is going to be judgment on the Canaanites, that godless, idolatrous, corrupt, vile people that populated the land of Israel, but that the judgment will be long delayed on the Canaanites because, says God, "The iniquity of these people is not yet complete." In other words, it hasn't reached the final point to activate divine judgment. God pronounced judgment on Assyria later in history. That judgment was predicted by the prophet Nahum, but God determined to postpone that judgment for a generation or more so that they might repent. In Acts 14, we get a summation of this. "God has allowed all the nations to go their own way, yet not without a witness."

Judgment comes. It comes inevitably. It always comes. It'll come on our nation. It'll come on every nation. It'll come on our world. It always comes, but it doesn't come without a warning, and it doesn't come without a witness. In Acts 14, the initial witness is the fact that God dispenses to every nation, common grace. God has given witness of Himself through common grace, through the provision of rain and sun and food, as He puts His creative power for the good of man on display. But God has an end to His patience. Judgment inevitably comes, and it sweeps away all those who don't follow the testimony back to the truth of God, repent of sin, and believe in Him.

Now, more than any other nation in human history, God has demonstrated patience with Israel. Why do I say that? Because all other nations have gone out of existence. They all go out of existence. They all go their own way, but Israel never disappears. You have never met an Amorite, Hittite, Hivite, Jebusite, or any other -ite, Perezite, all those other -ites. *[Laughter]* You've never met them because they're gone. They're extinct, but Israelites are sitting in this congregation this morning, and they're all around us.

God's patience with Israel is unique, and He is still being patient with Israel because in the future Israel will be saved. Romans 11 says, "All Israel will be saved." There's coming salvation to the Jewish people, but throughout their history, God has run out of patience on certain generations and brought judgment. We all know that historically. We know the terrible judgments that came upon Israel, even in the time of the judges. We know the terrible judgments that came at the hands of their enemies and the times of the kings. We know the terrible judgment of God when God turned them over to the corruptness of their own hearts and their apostasy, and they were given over to idols and all the horrors of idolatry.

We know the great holocaust of the Babylonian captivity, 586 B.C. when they were carried away into captivity and the nation essentially went out of existence for 70 years. We also know the historic judgment that came, sweeping, massive judgment like the Babylonian judgment that came in 70 A.D. when the Romans set siege against the city of Jerusalem and conquered the city, destroyed the temple, massacred hundreds of thousands of people, slaughtered Jews in 985 towns across the land of Israel. We know the history of those judgments.

God delays, but God will judge. God is patient, and as we come to this passage, this is a judgment

pronunciation and a call to faith. This is the final invitation Jesus gives during the Passion Week, and then He disappears from public view as far as any invitation or any ministry of teaching is concerned. As I said, the only other time He appears, He appears before those who are putting Him on trial. He is brought before the crowd by Pilate, and He appears hanging on a cross.

But even that did not exhaust God's patience because the Roman judgment didn't come for 40 more years. Do you know what happened during those 40 years? I'll tell you what happened. On the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 Jews were converted. A few days later, 5,000 were converted and the church exploded in the months after the ascension of our Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Tens of thousands of Jewish people came to Christ. In the period between when judgment was passed and sentence was executed, that 40 year period, the church flourished and grew and sent out apostles and ambassadors to establish the gentile church. The Jews fulfilled the call of Acts 1:8 to go into the world and be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

So God even delays the execution of a judgment that is pronounced this week. He delays it for 40 years. This is kind of like the parable in Luke 13 where the vineyard hasn't produced anything, and the owner says, "I'm going to destroy it," and he's pled with, "Please, give it another year. Give it another year. Give it another year," and he relents and says, "Okay." That's God giving more time for repentance. God is not only patient with nations, but of course He's patient with individuals.

I think the apostle Paul would make – I don't think patience was one of his great virtues, but Paul was pretty aggressive. But I think that Paul would have exhausted even the patience of God. We find, however, that Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:16, "I found mercy so that in me as the foremost sinner - " the foremost sinner, " - Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example of those who believe." God was patient with Paul, an apostate Jew who was arresting Christians. God turned him into the great apostle. God is patient with nations. God is patient with people, but God's patience has an end. It has an end.

Because God is patient, sometimes believers wonder why, God, aren't you acting? Why are you allowing this? Like the prophet and the martyrs in Revelation. "How long, O Lord?" How long are you going to let this evil go on? And on the other side, because God is so patient, sinners take advantage of that. Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore, the hearts of the sons of men are given fully to do evil." Sinners fill up the patient space, the long-waiting of God with more sin.

You remember the scoffers in 2 Peter, "Where is the promise of His coming? You keep saying He's coming. He's coming in judgment. We haven't seen it. He hasn't come. We don't think He will come," and Peter says, "Did you forget the flood? Did you forget the flood?" It won't be water next time. It will be fire, and it will happen and the whole universe will explode in an atomic holocaust. But sinners see the patience of God as license, but God will act.

For more than three years, our Lord has been presenting Himself to the people of Israel. This is the most intense revelation in human history to the most privileged people. They had the law of God, the promises of God, the Scriptures, the prophets. They had all of redemptive history played out in their little country. They had everything necessary. Then they had the Messiah himself, who is the fulfillment of all of that. Three years of daily exposure across the length and breadth of that small country. He supported His claim to be the Son of God by doing miracles and by saying words the likes of which no one had ever heard. It all sort of led to a crescendo when He raised Lazarus from

the dead.

Folks thought, well maybe He is our Messiah. So when He came into town this week on Monday, they hailed Him as the Son of David. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Here is our Messiah," threw palm branches down and hundreds of thousands of people saying His praises, "This is the Messiah." That's Monday. Tuesday, He attacks their temple. Wednesday, He teaches in their temple, the truth, which is not what the people normally heard there from the false religious leaders. Then He announces He's going to die. He says, "Unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." Then He says, "The Son of Man must be lifted up," a euphemism for crucifixion. When the people hear that, that's the final straw.

So in verse 34 of chapter 12, "When the crowd heard Him say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up,' they said, 'Who is this Son of Man?'" That's scorn and mockery. We reject you. We thought you might have been the one on Monday. Now we know you're not because you're talking about death and, "We believe the law of God says the Messiah will live forever." Well, that's true. The law did say Messiah would have an everlasting kingdom, but the Old Testament also said He would die, He would be cut off, He would be wounded for our transgression. But they couldn't accept that, so they turn on Him mid-week, and by Friday, they're just screaming, "Crucify Him!"

It's in that context that verse 35 opens up our section, and Jesus gives the final call to unbelief, the final call to unbelief. "For a little while – " and it's only hours, " – for a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." The Light of God, the Light of glory, the Light of life is there, the living God in human form, offering salvation. He says, "Walk in the Light." That's metaphoric for believe in the One who is the Light.

Back in chapter 8, He said, "I am the Light of the world." In chapter 8, He also said that, "If you do not believe in Me, you will die in your sins, and where I go you can never come. You will die in your sins." He repeats it twice in chapter 8. "If you do not believe in Me, you will die in your sins, and where I go, you will never come." That's the final call, and then verse 36 says, "He hid Himself. He hid Himself." Boy, they didn't have much time between the final call and the hiding. The sun had set, a nation had gone dark. The daystar marking the arrival for the day of the sun of righteousness has still not appeared in the world and will not until He comes again. Israel went pitch dark when Jesus disappeared.

Starting in verse 37, John writes some final concerns about faith and unbelief. Verses 35 and 36, the final call to unbelief, to turn while you can. Secondly, the fatal components, the fatal components of unbelief. There are two components that are terminal to unbelief, that lock a sinner into judgment. Number one, verse 37, "But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him." A continuous action verb. "They were not believing in Him." That is the first component of unbelief. That's the first fatal component: the stubborn will of man, the stubborn will of man, stubborn ongoing rejection.

Jesus had said to the city of Jerusalem, "How often I would have gathered you. How often I would have gathered you, but you would not. You who kill the prophets, stone the preachers that are sent to you. I wanted to gather you as a hen gathers her brood. You would not. Behold, your house is

left to you desolate, desolate.” Desolation will come. But the first thing is they were not believing in Him. That is the first fatal component, continued unbelief that by human will, but human will. I’ll say more on that in just a moment.

The second aspect we looked at last time. First, the stubborn will of man and then the second fatal component of unbelief, the sovereign will of God. We saw last time from verse 38 down to 41 that they would not believe, and therefore they could not believe. God’s plan is not thwarted. In fact, this was predicted. We saw in verse 38 that Isaiah said this would happen when he said, “Lord, who has believed the report given to us?” speaking for that generation of Jews living at the time of Christ. “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” We didn’t see the arm of the Lord being revealed in Christ or the power of God. We didn’t believe the report that He brought. We rejected what the prophets said. We rejected what the Messiah said. We rejected it.

That doesn’t surprise God. That does not surprise God. They would not believe. Verse 39, “For this reason they could not believe.” They were then judged and locked in unbelief, and that’s quoted from Isaiah 6. He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.” In other words, they would not believe so they could not believe. They passed the point of opportunity.

By the way, verse 41 says when Isaiah saw that vision in chapter 6, it was Christ that he was seeing there on the throne. So here the apostle John relates that whole vision to the way that the Jews had treated Christ. The judgment falls because of two fatal realities. One, stubborn unbelief on the part of the will of man. Two, sovereign judgment on the part of the will of God. We looked at those things.

By the way, that passage in Isaiah 6:9-10 that talks about judicial blindness and judicial hardening by God as a sovereign act of His will on people who won’t believe is repeated in the New Testament.

But let’s go back to the first point about the stubborn will of man. Back in verse 37, they were not believing in Him. We didn’t really talk about that last time. They were not believing. They had opportunity. Isaiah 55:6, “Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call on Him while He is near.” Well, they never got any nearer than our Lord Jesus walking through the villages and towns of Israel. They had opportunity, but they were not believing. They were not believing. This sets in motion the sovereign judgmental will of God. The stubborn will of man.

There’s an illustration of this unbelief that I think is really instructive down in verses 42 and 43. So having introduced unbelief in verse 37, He then discusses the sovereign judgment of God, and then comes back to the issue of unbelief in verse 42. “Nevertheless, many even of the rulers believed in Him.” We’ll stop there and say, well, that on the surface sounds great. That sounds like that’s a lot of hope there, they believed. Many of the rulers; that would be chief priests, Pharisees, maybe Sadducees, scribes, Sanhedrin members.

What does it mean they believed in Him? Well, there were a lot of other people who fell into that category at the very beginning of His ministry, for example, back in John chapter 2. Do you remember these words? When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, this is the first Passover of His ministry. Now, in John 12, we’re at the last one. Going all the way back to the first Passover, during the feast, “Many believed in His name. Many believed in His name.” They believed that He was who

He claimed to be. They believed that He was a teacher sent from God.

One of them was Nicodemus who says, "We know you are a teacher sent from God because nobody could do what you do unless God had sent Him." We're not too sure all that that means, but we do believe in you. We believe in your name, who you claim to be. They were observing His signs, which He was doing. But whatever this faith was, it wasn't sufficient because Jesus on His part, "Was not entrusting Himself to them for He knew all men, and because He didn't need anyone to testify concerning man because He knew what was in their heart." What He knew was it was an insufficient faith. It was an insufficient faith. It was an insufficient faith. They believed that Jesus was who He claimed to be insofar as they understood that, but that is not enough to save, and Jesus knew their hearts.

Well, you have the same thing here in verse 42 of John 12. "Many of the rulers believed in Him," but the condition of their heart was not sufficient to demonstrate a true saving faith. Now, we know there were a lot of superficial believers. Chapter 6, right? "Many of His disciples walked no more with Him," walked way. Judas, like a branch that bears no fruit is demonstrating false faith. There were people who believed in Him, John 8, but didn't continue in His Word and, therefore, were not genuine disciples.

It just needs to be said here that there will always be and have always been people with a belief in some of the facts concerning Christ. It's so important that that's the kind of illustration our Lord uses here of non-saving faith. It could have been that he said there were some tax collectors and some conmen and some petty criminals and some prostitutes and some adulterers who believed in Him. We would see them as the model of unbelief, but the model of unbelief here is the religious elite leaders of Israel, the rulers of Israel, the members of the Sanhedrin. They are the most religious people in the nation, highly religious, believing in Jesus. They are nonetheless doomed because theirs is a false faith. James would say, "It's demon faith." James 2:19, "The demons believe." Did you know that the demons have a clear, orthodox theology? They have a better theology than we do because they have been created originally as holy angels. They know the truth concerning the trinity and the truth concerning God and His revelation. And so they have massive insight and understanding. They know the truth. They know the truth is the truth, but they're on their way to the lake of fire forever. Why? Because they hate righteousness, love sin, and will not acknowledge, cannot acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Satan is their Lord.

You can believe the right facts and have Satan as your Lord. You can believe the right truths, the right information, the history concerning Jesus, and be doomed. In John chapter 5:44 we read this, "How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God." You would rather receive honor and glory and accolades from each other than from God. That is what is said – go back to John 12, in verse 42. Why were they not confessing Him? Because of the Pharisees. They were not confessing Him for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

They believed the facts, but they didn't love God. They didn't love the approval of God. They didn't want to be put out of the religious establishment. How many people have you met in your life who maybe in Roman Catholicism are locked into that system, believe the facts about Jesus, will not, however, acknowledge their sin and lostness and the uselessness of their works and come, fall on their face, cry out for salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ because they can't let go of the system because it gives them the affirmation?

Well, that was Pharisaic Judaism. They believed the facts about Jesus. That's not enough. Really, there are several realities that have to be taken into consideration. I'll give them to you just briefly. What is the nature of genuine faith? First of all, it has an objective component. Then it has a subjective one. Okay, what is the objective component of saving faith? You must believe that God is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, as Hebrews says.

So you must believe in God. You must confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, Romans 10:9-10. So there are objective truths. You believe in the true and living God, the Trinitarian God. You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God incarnate living a sinless life, dying a substitutionary death, rising from the dead, validating His sacrifice. You confess Jesus as Lord. Those are objective facts that must be believed.

But saving faith has a subjective side as well. It has a subjective side, and that side is not so much connected to the Savior side as it's connected to the self side. It's not only a question of how do you view the Savior. It's a question of how do you view you? These rulers wanted to hold on to everything they had become, everything they had achieved, everything they had trusted in. They had a wrong view of themselves. To help you with that, look at James chapter 4. James gives us I think as good and as succinct a look at the subjective realities of truth faith as any place, perhaps paralleled by the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.

In James 4:6, James says God gives a greater grace. God provides grace. We all know that salvation is by grace. All of God's gifts come to us by grace. So how do we receive that grace? What is the requirement? Listen, "Therefore, it says - " this again is quoted from the Psalms, " – God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." All right, so first of all, if you want to receive grace you need to be what? Humble, humble, which means you have no confidence and trust in yourself, and that gets really clearly defined in a series of commands. "Submit therefore to God." That's like confessing Jesus as Lord. "Resist the devil, turn away from him and he will flee from you. Draw near to God with holy aspirations, holy affections. He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners." Call for the change in your conduct. "Purify your hearts." Call for a change in your thought life and motives, "you double-minded," and have a proper attitude towards self. What is that attitude? "Be miserable, mourn, weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." He will exalt you is parallel to He will give you grace.

So you have an objective component in faith, and that is to believe in God, the true and living God, to believe in Christ, and to confess Him as Lord, the one who was raised from the dead. Those are the historical realities that must be believed, but the subjective is equally critical where you turn and look at yourself, and you realize the vile, wretched sinful realities of your own life. You cry out for cleansing and purification and you mourn and weep. This is the beatitude attitude. Blessed are those who are meek, blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Well, you don't see that with these rulers in verses 42 and 43. Like the people in chapter 2, like the people in chapter 6, like the people in chapter 8, they believe the facts because they are inescapable. They are inescapable. No one ever denied the miracles of Jesus. None of the rulers ever denied them. The collective Sanhedrin never denied them. They never could deny them. So they believed them, but believing them alone doesn't save then or now. You must turn inward away

from the Savior and realize your own spiritual bankruptcy. They were putting all of their hope in the honor of others, all their hope in the synagogue religion. They didn't want to be alienated by the Pharisees. They would rather be alienated by God. They would rather have the approval of men than the approval of God.

So they are illustrations of unbelief. I think it's really the Holy Spirit picking unbelief off at its highest point because we assume so often that if somebody believes the facts about Jesus, that's sufficient. We sort of scoop everybody who believes that into the kingdom as if they belong there, but it's not that. It's about whose approval do you seek? In John 5, Jesus said, "He who honors Me, honors my Father." So when you want to give complete honor to Jesus, you acknowledge that He is who He is, that He did what He did, that He is Lord, and you express submission to Him. Submit to God. Turn from the devil. Humble yourself. Now that leads us to the final point.

So those are the fatal components of unbelief. First, the stubborn will of man. Secondly, the sovereign will of God. Keep on in unbelief and God will judge you with further unbelief. Harden your heart and God will harden your heart. The judgment will be, you will not be able to repent. You would not, you could not.

Now, a final point, as we come to verses 44 to the end, John gives us some of the sayings of Jesus. Since Jesus is hid already since verse 36, John is reaching back and pulling these out as a summary. Did Jesus say these things that week? Probably, most likely this is where they fit. But He said them before He went into hiding, but He didn't say them only that week because these would be things that Jesus would say day after day after day as He traveled and taught.

In fact, it was way back in chapter 8 that He said He was the Light of the world that whoever followed Him would never walk in darkness. So the kind of language, the kind of calling for people to believe that it's going on here would have been just a part of His ministry at all times. But we can assume that when John says in verse 44, "And Jesus cried out and said – " that it's probably true that these were things that He actually said that week. This final section lays out the forever consequences of unbelief. Look what they are.

First, verse 44, "Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.' " Here's the first consequence of unbelief: you don't know God. You don't know God. A lot of people think they know God. "Well, I'm a very spiritual person. I believe in God. I have strong feelings about God. I even believe in one God. I believe in the God of the Bible." If you do not believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord and acknowledge His resurrection and give Him your whole heart, submitting to Him as your master, you do not believe in Him, then you do not believe in the one who sent Him. You have no faith in God. Jesus put it this way, "No man comes to the Father but by Me." It's a package deal. You can't reject the Son and honor the Father. John 5, "Who honors Me, honors My Father. Whoever honors My Father, honors Me." You can't split that up.

That message needs to be given to Jewish people constantly, even in this generation, every generation. You say you believe in the God of Scripture, but you reject Jesus Christ as Savior and Messiah, you do not know God. You do not believe in the God who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the first thing. Knowing Christ means knowing the Father. Loving Christ means loving the Father. Receiving Christ means receiving the Father, and the opposite is also true. Rejecting Christ is rejecting the Father. This is constantly articulated throughout John's gospel,

and we have seen it numerous times.

Chapter 10, verse 38, "If I do the works of My Father, you do not believe Me, believe the works so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father." They tried to grasp Him and arrest Him to execute Him on the spot. Jesus claimed to be one with the Father. Knowing Christ, believing in Christ means you believe in God. Rejecting Christ means you don't know God. That's verse 44. Verse 45, "He who sees Me sees the one who sent Me." Conversely, if you don't see Me for who I really am, you don't see God. Therefore, verse 46 is true. "I have come as Light into the world. so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness." So you don't know God, you don't see God because you are in the darkness.

That's the forever consequence. Obviously, the forever consequence of believing in Christ is that you believe in God, you see God, and you walk in the light of truth and holiness forever. "I have come into the world as Light. Everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness." If you reject me, you reject God and you reject light, and you are in the dark.

Verse 47 adds another forever consequence. "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them," does not keep them, disobedience. What are the results of not believing in Christ? You don't believe in the true God. You don't know the true God. You're in total darkness and living in disobedience. In fact, your disobedience is even blasphemous because the Father said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." If you reject His Son, you have blasphemed the Father. There is no one who knows God apart from Jesus Christ. So if you don't believe in Me, you don't believe in God. If you don't believe in God, you don't know God. You're in darkness, and you're in disobedience.

There's one more forever consequence. "I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world – " now, " - but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."

So here's the final thing. You're now under death sentence. That's going to be literally executed at the last day, the final judgment. Revelation 20, the great white throne. Forever consequences. You don't believe in God if you don't believe in Christ. You don't know God. You're in the dark. You're disobedient, and you're headed for judgment and sentence has already been passed. It doesn't get any more serious than that.

But notice for the sake of time, just a thought. Christ said, "I didn't come to judge the world, but to save the world," this time. Obviously, He came to be the Savior. He will come next time as the judge. But He says in verse 48, "The word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. The word I spoke is what will judge him." What in the world does that mean? Think of it this way. You go to court and you violate the law. The law is established. The law testifies against you. This is what the law says. This is how you behaved. You are guilty. You are sentenced. That will happen at the great white throne. There will be books. The books will be opened, and the record of the law that will stand as a witness against your behavior will bring about your sentence, but that's not all. There's much more.

The gospel will be a witness against you because you not only violated God's law, you violated the gospel. People are condemned on the last day for violating the law of God and rejecting the only

remedy, the gospel. So the gospel, like the law, gives testimony against you in the judgment. The more of the gospel you hear, the greater the record of your violation against it will be. Jesus really can't be separated from His message, from His truth, from the gospel. I would go so far as to say that's true of Israel, but it's also true of us. It's true of every generation. Every gospel sermon you've ever heard will one day stand as the record against you in judgment if you reject. You have violated the law of God, yes, but that's remediable. You can be saved from that, but you cannot be saved from violating the gospel.

So the gospel stands as the final testimony. The law says, "Do this or die." You violate it, you die. The gospel says, "Believe this or die." Unbelief leads to eternal death. The last day, that will all become clear.

A few final words. Verses 49 and 50, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak." Again, He's connecting Himself with God. Then He adds one great, glorious reality for those who believe. "I know that His commandment to believe," and the gospel is a command, "His commandment – " to believe, the commandment that He gave Me. It's mentioned as a commandment in verse 49 and repeated in 50. "The commandment that He gave me is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

The gospel is the gospel of God. Paul calls it the gospel of God, comes from God, comes through Christ, comes through Him to us by the Holy Spirit, through preachers, through the Scriptures, and brings eternal life. The forever consequence of unbelief? Disastrous. Judgment, eternal death. The forever consequences of believing? Eternal life. Sum it up. Just one statement from Jesus, John 8:42, He says, "If God were your Father, you would love Me." Isn't that great? It's as simple as that. If God were your Father, like you think, you would love Me. You would love Me. "Whoever loves Me, keeps my commandments."

Father, we thank you for the warning, thank you for the promise. Such powerful teaching, preaching, so necessary for us. Thank you for the privilege of considering these things in our lifetime and with clarity. Thank you for letting the light shine on us here when so many in the world are void of this gospel message. Lord, I pray that you will cause people to turn to Christ, to believe before their unbelief is hardened finally.

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