

Matthew 22-08-21b

After our blessing in music during the break and our fellowship, we're ready to pick up our study here of the Sheep and Goats Judgment, and we're following Dr. Pentecost in his coverage of this because this is the classic view. This is what you will encounter in virtually any commentary that aspires to be conservative. There are people who spiritualize this.

I actually read a progressive Christian analysis of this. You have to wonder when they come to judgment passages, what do they think when there's people being tossed into eternal fire and so on. People have found ways to spiritualize this away and to say that the Sheep and Goats Judgment is a time of great peace, happiness, and contentment.

There's just some that are more happy, content, and peaceful than others, but everybody will be happy over there. They're looking right at this passage and just gloss over the indictment, gloss over the penalty, gloss over the eradication of these people and the basis for it. I have quoted it many times, but one of the wisest things that has ever been said about our propensities toward confirmation bias was Paul Simon in the first few lines of *The Boxer* where a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest.

We want the seed of the Word of God to sink into our soul, not to hit stony ground and lay on top where it's going to be snatched away by the birds of the air, not to only go shallow to produce a temporary fruit that withers and perishes in the sun. It has to sink deep. We have to think.

We have to spend time. So, as we attempt to do so in this passage, Matthew 25, looking at the Sheep and Goats judgment, I am very curious because the consequences of this judgment are severe. So, we've come to the point where we're looking at who is being judged, and very specifically and very clearly and almost uniquely, this is the nations.

The nations are gathered before the King. Once again, reading our passage, when the Son of Man comes in His glory and the Holy Angels with Him, He will sit on the throne of His glory. How long will Jesus sit on the throne of His glory? A thousand years.

Ten centuries. It's a long time. That is a long, long time.

And that's how long He will sit on the throne of His glory. Now, just to make a quick foray into a slightly different area, I mentioned in recent days how progressive dispensationalism was kind of the point of the spear into progressive Christianity. It was part of the shift and the change, part of dislodging conservative, fundamental Christianity off of its biblical foundation.

The Bible doesn't really say what it says, and glossing over and ignoring certain

passages. Just a two-minute excursus on progressive dispensationalism. One of its defining tenets is that the kingdom is now, and Jesus is already on the throne of His glory.

He is already sitting on the throne of His father, David. And because the right hand of father is David's throne, and he is sitting on it now. This is what really put me into the ranks of the opposition way back when I was taking a course on this at seminary from one of the authors of the book.

And I said, well, how can Christ be on His throne? And they said, well, He is. And they tried to adduce two or three passages. But look at this passage in Matthew 25.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, has the Lord Jesus come in His glory? Certainly not physically. He came in His humiliation, and in His servanthood, and in His suffering and dying lamb mode. Behold the Lamb of God.

John the Baptist didn't say, behold, the glory of the Lord is taken incarnate form. Behold the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. How? By sacrifice and by death, by bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.

This is different. When the Son of Man comes in His glory, what is going to characterize that? We've already seen it in the earlier part of Matthew 24. What's it going to look like? As the lightning flashes from the east to the west, every eye shall see Him.

The nations of the earth shall mourn. Remember that? The nations of the earth shall mourn when they see the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. What else happens? What does this verse say? The Son of Man comes in His glory, and what else? All the holy angels with Him.

Now, I don't care how you manage to contort and spiritualize this and say, well, Jesus has come in glory through His body, the church. The church is His, we are His glory. Seriously? Look at the history of the church over the last 2,000 years.

You want to call that the glory of Christ? How glorious have we been? We're pathetic. Listen to some of the anti-fundamental Christian, anti-evangelical, anti-structured church people in the progressive movement. They'll tell you all of the false sins and failures of Christians.

Christians in Germany allowing the holocaust. Christians in the south allowing slavery and promoting it and practicing it themselves. Church-going Germans running death camps.

I mean, it doesn't get any more egregious than that, but that's just symbolic. It has happened down through the ages. People running inquisitions in the name of Christ.

People persecuting other Christians. You've got the reformers killing people over theology. We're heinous.

We're pathetic. We're terrible. There's only been a very small remnant, largely invisible, largely not the organized church, largely not the visible structured large church, that look at the political crimes that have been committed by the quote-unquote moral majority and those who were waving crosses and pictures of Jesus while they were rioting and practicing politics, mixing religion and politics in a very unhealthy way that destroys testimony, drives people away from Christ.

It's pathetic. Trust me when I tell you, if you look at history for five minutes, you will realize that the body of Christ's church on this earth is in no way the glory of His coming. We are largely the opposite, and it is only a few, largely individual, largely out of sight.

Those things that are done in secret will be brought to light at the judgment and so on. So when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, where have the angels been the last 2,000 years other than in the fantasy imagination and on the shelves of trinket stores, books, I saw angels. I remember there was a big fad 15, 20 years ago, and every other book on a Christian bookshelf was angels.

And this obsession, anything but the Word of God, anything but the truth of God, anything but relationship with the Father through Christ, oh no, let's obsess on angels. Let's obsess on fantasy depictions of the shack and all the by the way, the shack, that was one of the early overt manifestations of progressive Christianity. Just be aware.

To redefine God, this is Satan's first lie. He redefined God and His will and His Word to Eve, and that caused her to fall. This is what God knows.

This is why God does what He does. This is why God has His prohibitions. It's to limit you.

These commandments of God limit you. They keep you from being all you can be and becoming like God, knowing good and evil, and He's a bad guy. And now you have Christians saying the God of the Old Testament is a bad guy, and His standards of righteousness aren't really His standards.

These were just people imagining God. They're accusing others of the very thing they are doing. They are reimagining God and then accusing anyone who believes the Old Testament of believing someone who imagined God and wrote it down.

That's what you're doing. How are you any better? If you think the Old Testament people just made up God to suit their political and national agenda, what do you think you're doing? How are you any different? How can we discern you from them? Oh, well, because we support the Jesus of love. You cannot practice love without justice.

Love fails where there is no justice, where there is no structure. You cannot turn hearts

by love. People have loved to death.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself loved us unto death. Greater love hath no man than to give his life. Jesus did that.

How many people accept the Lord Jesus after the sacrifice of Himself? You can lavish your love on someone unconditionally, unreservedly, without limits, and they will turn and tear you to pieces. You can cast your pearls in front of them as they run away, and like swine they will turn and tear you to pieces. But I was giving nothing but love.

I only wanted your best interests at heart. Learn the lessons of history. Learn the lessons of what once or twice as Jesus counsels.

If your brother has ought against you, go and try to be reconciled. If that doesn't work, take a few more with you. If that doesn't work, take a group of sympathetic, God-fearing people with you, and if they will not be reconciled, put a distance between them as you would a heathen or a tax collector.

It doesn't mean you persecute them, punish them, hate them, penalize them, but you do not associate. You no longer have concourse and fellowship. They have chosen to be a heathen.

They have chosen to be an unrepentant tax collector. They are harmful. Touch not the unclean thing.

Hate the garment spotted by the flesh. Come out from among them, and be ye separate. What fellowship has light with darkness? How many scriptures do we need to quote? You can't love people into the kingdom.

You can't love them into fellowship with yourself, much less God. People have their own will and their own way, and when you observe what their settled decision is, we have to act accordingly, and sometimes that is distance. This is the word of God we're talking about.

You can take the word of God, or you can try to operate on the word of man that says, if you just love enough, everybody's going to come around. Sorry, no. And this judgment is part of that.

The holy angels come with Him. He will sit on the throne of His glory. He will come in glory and sit on the throne of His glory.

Why does it keep mentioning glory? Is this just really shiny? Is there just a lot of light? What is the glory of the Son of Man? What is the glory of the King? It is what He is able to do for those who have been faithful and obedient, and what He is going to do for those who attack the faithful and the obedient, who ignore them, who are insensitive and

unkind and hateful to them. His glory is not just in His love, it is also in His justice. You cannot have one without the other.

Justice without love is oppression. Love without justice is impossible. You cannot create an environment of love when you have active criminal behavior about which you do nothing.

How can you express love for your children when predators are carrying them off and doing horrible, nefarious things to them? Is that love? To just say, oh wait, come back, kidnapper. Come back, mutilator. I just want to love you.

Sorry, no, I'm hauling off your kid and I'm going to do terrible things. I'm going to sell them into slavery, as in Joel. I'll sell your son for a harlot.

I'll sell your daughter for wine to drink, because that's my self-gratification. Self-gratifying people do not respond to your love. They haven't responded to the love of God.

What makes you think they're going to respond to yours? God's love is conditioned by, sheltered in His justice. He is able to express His love toward us because of justice. God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Justice was satisfied. That's how God commends His love toward us. It doesn't say God commends His love toward us in that He sent us a wonderful example of unconditional love and hanging out in the brothels and the bars and accepting people no matter what, and going out and seeking them out, going into the highways and byways.

That is not what the Word of God says. That's what the Word of man says. So, back to our passage.

All the nations will be gathered before Him. Now this is interesting. The judgment of Israel, if you go back one step in Pentecost, individual sheep are passing under the rod.

It's individuals. He doesn't say, okay, you shepherd, bring your flock. That whole flock comes in.

Oh, you're a bad shepherd. Your flock isn't coming in. You're a goat shepherd.

None of yours are coming in. It's an individual judgment. Judgment seat of Christ.

What do you think? Group or individual? Do you get to accrue to yourself the accolades of a church or a family or anybody else with whom you're associated? The passing under the rod for Israel, the judgment of Old Testament saints at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom, at the second coming of Christ, is individual. The judgment seat of Christ, the bema, it is sometimes called, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble, each one will be judged, Paul says, according to his faithfulness and obedience. Individually.

The judgment seat of the great white throne. What is that? Group or individual? Whose name is found written in the book. It doesn't say what nation is written in the book, what family is written in the book.

Individual names. As many as names were not found in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire. It's individual.

This is a unique judgment. The only thing you compare it to is Old Testament days when, as we have seen in Ezekiel in particular and some of the other minor prophets where there are woe songs against Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, the Assyrians, and others where God proclaims a national judgment on a nation that has dealt harshly with his nation. And it is a group judgment.

You think, wow, but what if there are a few in there? And that's kind of a separate question. But this is one of those national judgments. Bear that in mind as we go through.

And Pentecost appeals back to Joel chapter three. I do not connect these two passages Dr. Pentecost and everybody else does. It is to be observed from Joel chapter three, verse two, that Israel is at the very center of the whole judgment program.

I will also gather all nations and will plead with them there for my people and my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land. So the Joel judgment is against nations that have dealt harshly with the nation of Israel, my people and their land. You see that? Nations dealing with the nation of Israel.

The prophecy of Isaiah would seem to narrow this reference to Israel down to the believing witnesses mentioning the ministry of a specific group. And this goes to Isaiah chapter 66, verses 19 and 20. I'm going to save that for my reevaluation of this evidence.

But what that basically says, just without turning there, Isaiah 66 says, I will set a sign among them. I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, to Put, to Lud, Tubal, Javan, to the isles afar off that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory. And they, this is talking about Israelites, God is going to send some Israelites as missionaries into these nations.

They shall declare my glory among the Gentiles, and they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations, upon horses and chariots and litters, and on mules, upon swift beasts, my holy mount in Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. So basically Isaiah says that the nations are going to bring brethren, worthy ones who are fit to be in the presence of the Lord, to the Lord, the way Israelites who were unfit themselves would bring a sacrifice that was fit. So the nations are going to bring these people to God in

Jerusalem, in Israel, the way Israel would bring an animal.

I am not worthy, but this animal is my substitute. The nations are not worthy, but they're going to bring these scattered Israelites who are bearing witness to them to Jerusalem and present them to God like an offering. That's what Isaiah 66 says in a nutshell.

So this judgment, Dr. Pentecost concludes, must be a judgment to determine the spiritual condition of those being judged, to determine whether the one judged is saved or unsaved. A casual glance in the passage seems to show that this is a judgment based on works. How did you treat people? You're either going to have eternal life or eternal fire.

Closer observation will not support this conclusion. First of all, number one, it is an accepted principle in Scripture that a man is never saved by works. Nowhere is salvation offered on a works basis.

In Matthew 25, verse 46, it says, These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. We thus see that the eternal destiny of the people appearing before the judgment is being decided. It cannot be a judgment of works, for eternal destiny is never decided on that basis, but on the basis of accepting or rejecting Christ's work for us.

We agree with this fully, right? Neither is there salvation in any other. There is none under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Right? We agree with this.

Number two, further, those that have fed, given drink to, clothed, and visited the brethren are called righteous. If this is a judgment of works, they must have been constituted as righteous on the basis of what they had done. Such would be contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saves us. Right? Not by works of righteousness, which we have done. And this creates a great difficulty for the sheep and goats judgment, because it is manifestly done on the basis of what did you do, what did you not do, specifically toward these brethren.

It seems to be, did you express love, sacrificial love, beneficial love, toward these who were in some form of need? And Jesus goes to great lengths to detail what those needs were. He goes through them three different times. It's no light detail.

It is central to this picture. So, therefore, in accordance with the general analogy of the Scripture on the subject, declares that when He comes with His holy ones in glory to set

up His kingdom out of the nations, those who exhibited a living faith by active deeds of sympathy and assistance, shall with those that precede them inherit a kingdom. So the conclusion is, we know they're saved because they have done these works.

And the outworking of the faith is love. You remember the old campfire song, they will know we are Christians by our love. And so we'll know they are saved because they have expressed this love.

This is a bit of a touch here. Saints will persevere and will be on an upward path. And so if you're saved in some way, shape, or form, you're going to express love.

It's just inevitable because you're saved. There's no such thing as a backslidden, recalcitrant, disobedient believer. If you're a believer, you will practice love and that will be the outworking.

It's just odd to me that Jesus leaves faith completely out of the picture here. So let me just, in the 15 minutes that remains to us, tell you my problem with this view. You can go to it in more detail, but the observations I'm going to make will pertain to the things we've not specifically addressed.

Here's the thing. If you look at this idea of nations, and that this is not an individual judgment, that is an important clue. Nations.

Now, let's think about judgment on nations. Did God judge Babylon eventually after the Babylonian captivity? Did God judge Assyrians using the Babylonians after the northern kingdom was taken out? Has God judged nations in accordance with Old Testament prophecy in days past? Yes, He has. You can think about the beast visions in Daniel and so on.

Let me ask you this. If this is going to be a judgment on the nations, and they are the nations of the seven year, 70th week of Daniel, and how do they treat the 144,000? This is the conclusion. If I took you all the way to the end of Dr. Pentecost, it is the nations of the earth, and during the seven years of the 70th week, how did they treat my brethren? The notion is they're being persecuted by the pair of beasts.

Everything is against them. There's all kinds of hounding, and they don't take the mark, and they're discriminated against. Nations who take them in are going to be blessed, and nations that don't are going to be cursed.

Let me ask you this. If I just, out of a clear blue sky, said, you remember that whole thing about the tribulation in the 70th week and the seals, trumpets, and bowls, you know that the wrath of God is going to be poured out on the nations. What would your answer be when I say, how is God going to do that? How is God going to judge the nations during and after the tribulation? What's the judgment? The seals, the trumpets, the bowls, frying a third of the earth at a time, boiling away the seas, the fish die, the rivers turn to

blood, the sun is darkened, the moon turns to blood, there's scorpions with stings in their tails, there's people crying out for the rocks to fall on them, and so on.

Under this scenario, after the judgments of the seals, the trumpets, the thunders, which we don't know anything about, and the bowls, this is the wrath of God. The cup of God's wrath is full, and He pours it out on the nations. Then, what are you going to do? You say, well, we're not raising anybody from the dead.

So, these are the tribulation survivors. These are the ones that managed to suffer through and survive all of those revelational judgments, all of those apocryphal judgments. So, now, Jesus is going to gather them, and anybody that survived that wasn't nice to His people, He's going to throw into the lake of fire, and anybody that did, He's going to say, enter the kingdom.

By definition, these nations were opposed. In the age of Israel, if you're for God, and you're for God's people, you come to God, and you join God's people. Uriah the Hittite, Ruth, Rahab, any number of Old Testament examples of those who came out of the nations, Naaman the Syrian, I come to the people of God.

I can't stay here, so I'm going to take some dirt back because I feel like I belong to this land now. I believe the prophet of God. I've been healed by the grace of God.

I'm with God, and may God forgive me if I have to bow with my king to do my duty, but my heart is here. Gentiles, you proselyte to Israel. Salvation is of Israel.

It is in Israel. In Israel is the information. In Israel is the means of worship and sacrifice and cleansing.

In Israel is the priesthood. In Israel is the fellowship. In Israel are the promises to Old Testament saints, including those in the last seven years.

So if you came to faith, you're no longer of your nation in the age of Israel. You are now Israel. That's how it works.

So if these nations have been judged, ultimately culminating in Armageddon, who's left? And what is the meaning of this judgment? You've got a scattered few. There's a limited number of people on the earth anyway. I mean, it's a great number, but it's a limited number during the Tribulation.

So why sheep and goats? And here's the thing. When you go to Joel and you look at the context, wake up the warriors and call them to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There is a warlike context in Joel preceding the part that we looked at and following it.

You go down to verse 9. Proclaim this among the nations. Prepare for war. Wake up the mighty men.

Let all the men of war draw near. Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.

Let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord.

Let the nations be wakened and come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The very same valley that we saw compared to the place of the sheep and goats judgment. There I will sit and judge the surrounding nations.

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come and go down, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their is great.

You remember the reaping images in Revelation. One like the son of man puts in his sickle and reaps the harvest of his people. And then the other angel comes with his sickle and reaps the vintage.

And the grapes of wrath are stomped out. This Joel 3 context is not talking about the Irenic scene you have here. These are sheep and goats.

Now, how did, how does, why does the shepherd have to separate them? Remember how I always say, when God says return to me, what does that mean? It means he's talking to believers. He doesn't say, come to me, you heathens, come to me, you formerly unrelated. When God says, return to me, to Israel, what is he saying? You were here and you left, please return, come back to where you were before.

Same thing here. If you are going to separate sheep and goats, what do you know about them? Until the separation, they were mingled. They are mingled together, right? Kind of like the wheat and the tares.

Let them grow together until the harvest. An enemy has sowed these and gone away. The enemy is gone, but the seeds remain and they're growing up, but they will not be distinguishable until the harvest because the wheat is going to have heads of grain.

The tares will not. I saw an interesting, a really great analysis of this. A man published some tracts over in England, I think, a long time ago, decades ago.

One of his observations was, one of the ways you can tell the wheat from the tares at the harvest is when these heads of grain fill out, they're heavy and the wheat bows over with that weight. The tares don't have any such fruit and so they're still standing straight up. They're standing tall, but the bowing under the weight of the grain, and bowing is kind of a sign of humility.

There's an element of humility. This fruit is not of me. I was sown.

I was watered. I was protected. The rain fell on me and I've produced this fruit.

The wheat bows low with its fruit. The tares are standing tall. There's nothing to bend them.

That's why they're easily distinguished at the time of harvest. I thought that was interesting insight. The sheep and goats are flock animals, largely docile.

Goats tend to be more willful and they don't have the herd instinct that sheep have. Sheep tend to flock together. Goats will just go anywhere they think they can find something to eat, but they have grown together until the time of this judgment and now they are separated.

Well, we have documented for ourselves the time of the wheat and tares judgment. It is at the end of the millennium. Someone has sown tares into the kingdom.

It's not before the kingdom. That doesn't make any sense. It is a time of peace.

It is a time of rain. It is a time of decision during those 10 centuries. Are you going to recognize God and His salvation and His Son or not? And at the time of harvest, the wheat and the tares judgment is at the end of the millennium.

The reason the tares are gathered into bundles and burned is that the judgment following the millennial kingdom is the great white throne. And at the conclusion of judgment at the great white throne, you either enter into life or you are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

This sheep and goats does not parallel Joel, which is speaking of the days of Armageddon. And by the way, you remember the resonances of prophetic scripture. Armageddon resonates forward to Gog Magog and ultimately the valley of decision, which will exist at the end of the millennial kingdom because it was created at the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

The valley of Jehoshaphat is going to be filled. And you remember in Joel where it says, he calls the mighty men and he says, beat your plowshares into swords. What's the signature verse? I've got it engraved on an artillery shell.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not rise against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore.

To what does that pertain? The millennium. If they beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not rise against nation. There will be nations but they don't rise.

So what is the upshot here? These nations will exist to and through the millennial kingdom. Turn with me quickly to Revelation chapter 20. Nations that exist, let me just repeat myself, the nations that exist during the last seven years of the age of Israel, led

by the beast and the false prophet, are judged with the seals and the trumpets and the thunders and the bowls.

That's the judgment. But when you get to Revelation chapter 20 and you're looking a thousand years later at the great white throne judgment, I want you to notice something. Look at chapter 19, verse 19.

19 of Revelation. I saw the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse and against his army. The beast was captured and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image.

These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, just those two, the beast and the false prophet, the first two and only two inhabitants of the lake of fire, starting at this point. The rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of him who sat on the horse and all the birds were filled with their flesh. That is the judgment on those that Dr. Pentecost and apparently everybody else in the world says are the goats.

They are not sent into the fire. They are killed with the sword and they rot on the earth. These are part of the rest of the dead that are going to live not until the thousand years are complete.

This is their first death and then they will suffer the second death in the upcoming few verses. So chapter 20. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Pay attention now. Tribulation is over. Armageddon is over.

Beast and false prophet have been cast alive into the lake of fire where they, I believe, perish. But they are cast in there alive. There is no need to judge them.

They have already demonstrated who and what they are. They are two unique individuals. Their track record is manifest.

So this is sort of execution on the spot. But not Satan. The Satan that enabled and empowered.

The Satan whose plan they fulfilled is not cast into the lake of fire. Very interesting. So he laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan.

What happens to him? And bound him for a thousand years. Now look at verse 3. Put a star by it. Put Matthew 25.31ff next to it in the margin.

Cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal on him. Why? So that he

should not deceive whom? The nations. If he were left around during the millennium, the nations could be deceived.

But Satan is removed. His purposes, God's purpose in allowing him to exist and function, are not complete. But he is taken out.

He is taken off the board as a playing piece for a thousand years. Specifically why? So that the nations of the millennial age are not deceived. At the end of the millennial age, when the nations are judged, and they say, but I was fooled.

No you're not. The deceiver has been in prison in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. You cannot appeal to satanic deception as a defense.

God took that away. When God restores the deceiver at the end of those ten centuries, what happens? All of these people voluntarily flock to him and join the Gog Magog rebellion and surround the camp of the saints. If you surround the camp of the saints, where do you end up? In the valley of Jehoshaphat.

And that's that adumbration, that's that foreshadowing that you have in Joel 3. So he is shut up so that he does not deceive the nations until the thousand years are finished. When the thousand years are finished, he is released and what's he going to do? Deceive the nations. He's going to gather them together with the thought that they can win, they can prevail against the people of God and take over the millennial kingdom with all of its benefits.

After these things, he must be released for a little while. It's a part of the plan and purpose of God. Take him off the board and then put him back.

Notice that the beast and the false prophet can't be brought back because being cast into the lake of fire, there is no return. That is a one-way ticket to oblivion. Why didn't he just cast in Satan and then pull him back out? Let him bob around in there with the beast and the false prophet because there is no coming back from the second death.

There's no coming back from the lake of fire. That's why Satan has a separate fate because he must be released for a little while, but he is taken off of the board so that he does not deceive the nations. I submit to you, these are the nations that are now being judged.

These are the tares that are going to be gathered into bundles and burned, or the grain that is harvested and taken into the barn of eternal life. We'll have more to say about this next time and more scripture supporting this idea, but you can go to many passages in scripture. I'm not even going to do that because I'm going to save myself plenty of time next time, but we observe, we interpret, and we apply.

Why does it matter to us when and where these nations are judged and for what are

they judged? Why is it a national judgment and not an individual judgment? Because this is related to the function of the Lord Jesus Christ as King and His millennial kingdom followed by the kingdom of the Father. To not understand these kingdoms, to not understand their inception, to not understand their conclusion, to not understand the dispensational nature of these parts of God's plan where there is a specific expectation from God of the people alive on the earth at that time, to not know what the judgment is and what it's for, is to conflate, confound, to corrupt, and to misunderstand, and to be deceived by Satan who is not in the bottomless pit. He is alive and actively deceiving believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as I speak.

And the deception is twisted truth. The deception is partiality in the Word of God, what Malachi condemns the Levites for, taking bits and pieces of the Word of God and lining them up in a way that is self-serving, that is self-gratifying, that lets me off the hook for sin. Progressive Christianity diminishes sin to non-existence, diminishes darkness to the point that it's just not there.

Everything is light. I just put a flashlight in my eyes and all I can see is light. But you can't see the plan and purpose of God.

You can't see the future. You can't see your purpose and your mission because, as the old song says, you're blinded by the light. We're not to be blind, and we're not to be the blind leading the blind and both falling into the ditch.

It is important to understand God's program. What portions of Scripture apply when, where, and how? And to say that it is kingdom now, that it is King Jesus, and we are building His kingdom, we are participating in His kingdom, we are kingdom followers and kingdom people, is Satan's own lie. And when you do that, you lose sight of what we are supposed to be doing, which is preparing for kingdom life.

You can't run around at Quantico as a second lieutenant in training leading battalion charges against enemies that don't even exist. You're in training. There are training parameters.

It's different in training than it is in the future reality. And to forget where you are, to think that you're living the movie, or living the dream, or living the vision, you are disconnected from reality. And the modern media, internet, tech complex is invested in divorcing people from reality.

Reality is what I want it to be, what I think it is, what I am told it is, instead of what God says it is. And so distinguishing these things will ultimately help us focus on what our mission is today. And we are not building a kingdom.

We are not functioning in a kingdom. Jesus is not our King. He is our head.

We are His body. It is a different picture. There's a different functionality.

We represent Him in presence. Our light should shine to draw others to God through Christ, not social action, not trying to love, recalcitrant, disobedient, fleeing people by tossing pearls at them. We are deflected.

We are neutralized. We are out of action. We are decommissioned.

We are useless, worthless servants who will come to the judgment, trying to pull a talent out of our pocket, wrapped in a rag, or digging it up out of a hole in the ground, saying, well, you know, I knew you were harsh and unyielding, and you had all of this justice going on. I didn't want to be a part of that. So I just buried what you gave me.

Heaven forbid we should suffer the fate that those parables indicate. Well, more about this next time. But Great Food for Thought will close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the wisdom, the insight, as we've seen in the first chapter of Proverbs, that it gives to us so that we can walk a straight path. We can live a life of meaning and purpose that is fruitful, that pleases You, that You can bless.

You can prepare us for future work of service and function and participation in Your glorious plan and purpose and be fitting representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, both now and in the ages to come. We pray that our reflections and our meditations on these truths will be blessed by Your Holy Spirit to our hearts in a way that will create improvement and clarity and insight for now and the days ahead. We pray all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.