

Christ Came to Start a Fire, Part 3

Luke 12:49-50

The same Jesus who told his disciples that he came to cast fire on the earth. That he's eager to see it kindled, this is the same one, by the way, who has given this revelation to John. So don't miss the point that what he thought about in Luke chapter 12 is what he's expanding on in the Book of Revelation. Now, Revelation 4 and 5. There's a throne, throne room scene in Revelation 4 and 5 and we find there that the Lamb of God, he is the only one, he recognizes the only one worthy to take the scroll. Nobody else can take the scroll, only he can. The breaking of the seals, he's the only one worthy to break the seals, to open the scroll, to read what's written. The breaking of those seals, the opening of that scroll, that is the commencement, preparation and commencement of this final judgement, the Day of the Lord.

You can actually see the Day of the Lord in Revelation. It's actually a series of judgements. You got seven seals in Revelation 6 through 8. Followed by seven trumpets in Revelation

8 through 11. Then there's this brief historical interlude in Revelation 12-14 and that spans the entire, entirety of Israel's history, Revelation 12-14. And then it takes up again the judgements, seven bowls filled with the plagues of God's wrath in Revelation 15 and 16. There's more to cover in the final chapters but I'll hold off on that.

Let's now take that helicopter down from high levels and swoop down to see a closer look and see this fire that Jesus wants to start. So keep in mind as we go through this, cause we're going to take a look at those judgements beginning in Revelation 6, so you can turn there. As we look at these judgements, these are physical, temporal judgements, and all these judgements are a prelude to the full final judgement, which is the second death in the lake of fire. An eternal judgement of pain and suffering.

But what you need to see as we walk through these judgements, and I'm just gonna briefly hit them, okay? But as we walk through these, you need to see that this is what God thinks about sin. I'm telling you, if we see sin and we're disturbed, and we're saddened, and we feel sorrow, and we feel indignation and anger, I mean, we're so weak and so small, and we're so even mixed with sin ourselves that we don't see it purely. We don't

see it from the purity of God's holiness and so you need to understand when you see this horrendous judgement falling on the earth. This is just. This is righteous. This is God and his view of sin. He hates it. Starting in Revelation 6-8, the seven seals, and the first four of these seals, by the way, these are the four horsemen of the apocalypse. But they're portrayed by horses and riders in the first four seals.

First seal, Revelation 6:1-2, it's a white horse. And that white horse portrays the power that's granted to the Antichrist. He comes in peace and conquers. But without war. So there's an administrative takeover. Second seal, Revelation 6:3-4, a red horse. There's a massive increase on the earth in violent crime. People killing each other, slaying each other. Third seal, Revelation 6:5-6, is a black horse. That represents a massive, worldwide famine. Price hikes on basic, staple foods. Fourth seal, Revelation 6:7-8, it's a pale horse. What's that? That's a pandemic. We thought COVID was bad, this one actually kills twenty five percent of the earth's population. At today's count, you know, eight billion people? We're talking about two billion people dead from this plague. It's a lot of people. That's a lot of overrun of hospitals.

Fifth seal, Revelation 6:9-11, the prayers of the martyrs killed after the rapture but before the tribulation. The sixth seal, Revelation 6:12-17. Just read it there, "When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was an earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale."

Look, you got the rich and the powerful of the earth, I mean, if they're still rich and powerful when the Antichrist is alive. It means that they've lined up under him. They've submitted to his rule. They've secured his favor, because they're trying to hold onto their stuff. They're trying to hold onto their privilege, their access, their travel permissions. They're, they're trying to hold onto everything, and so they, they go with it.

The power that they have because of this compromise protects them against some of the earlier judgements. The rise in violent crime. Imagine them in their fortress with their wall and their armed guards. All these former military guys with a lot of skill and experience but no money. They'll be paid handsomely. Their power protects them from violent crime. Their wealth mitigates against things like famine and plague, because

they can stockpile and hoard and if the rest of the world is dying and starving, they're okay in their little fortresses and their compounds.

This earthquake though, these cosmic signs, you know what? God has a way of leveling rich and poor alike. The Lamb opens the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1-5, the result in verse 5 is "peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, another earthquake." These seal judgements fulfill what Joel prophesied in Joel 2:30-31, "wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. Sun turned to darkness, moon to blood, before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes." It's why we're calling this, preludes to judgement, to the Day of the Lord. Fire keeps burning in Revelation 8-11 in seven trumpet judgements.

The first trumpet, Revelation 8:7, there's a third of the earth burned up when hail and fire are thrown down on the earth. Again, that's that word *ballo*, cast down on the earth. Second trumpet, Revelation 8:8-9 is blown. A great mountain burning with fire is thrown, again the verb *ballo*. Thrown, cast down into the sea, it turns to blood killing a third of the sea life. Third trumpet, Revelation 8:10-11, the star Wormwood falls, poisons a third of the earth's freshwater supply, killing many

people. Fourth trumpet, Revelation 8:12, a third of the light that comes from sun, moon, and stars, goes dark. I mean there's, there's no light. People are walking around at dusk all the time. Can't see. It's really a kind of a picture. It really is a picture of their hearts. It really is a picture of their condition.

Fifth trumpet, gets even worse here. Revelation 9:1-11, the bottomless pit is opened, and by God's command, he releases demons that come to torment people such that verse 6, "people will seek death and not find it. They'll long to die, but death will flee from them." Imagine a whole bunch of failed suicides. Sixth trumpet, Revelation 9:13-19, four more demons. They're released to kill another third of mankind.

Then this in Revelation 9:20-21, all this has happened. All this has fallen on the earth. And it says, "The rest of the mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands." What? What in the world? They didn't give up worshipping demons, idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. I mean, folks, can we just agree that we're going to give up worshipping these things just by reading this? "Nor did they repent," verse

21, "of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts."

Listen folks, it's, it's here, at this point, before the seventh angel blows the seventh trumpet, many scholars see that this is where Elijah comes. In Revelation 11:3-13, we read about the two witnesses. The two great prophets who will come in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah. And this is what fulfills Malachi 4:5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes."

Now let's read what happens when that seventh angel blows that seventh trumpet. Revelation 11 starting in verse 15, and reading to verse 19, "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.' And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign."

"The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name, both

small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.' Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail."

For the sake of time, I'm going to leave you to read the rest of the story in Revelation, the symbolic interlude that covers all of Israel's history in Revelation 12-14, the seven bowls of wrath, Revelation 15-16, pouring out judgements of physical pain and suffering upon the worshippers of the beast. But all these escalating judgements, they enrage the beast.

God uses the hatred of the beast to judge the whore of Babylon, according to Revelation 17:16. That economic system that covers the entire earth, that network, that interlocking, symbiotic network of covetousness and greed is judged. Because of the anger of the Antichrist that's stirred up by God. And Babylon's destruction is so sudden, so violent, so thorough, Revelation 18, it's as if the beast has set off a nuclear, holocaust device to cause utter and complete devastation and destruction.

Just as a brief overview of Revelation 19-22. Christ, he comes as the beast surrounds the land, he destroys the armies of



the beast. He throws the beast and the false prophet, alive, into the lake of fire. Satan himself who has been indwelling and inhabiting the beast. He is bound, cast into the abyss for a thousand years, during which time Christ will reign for a thousand years, literally on the throne of his father David in Jerusalem.

After that, God sets free Satan for a time, sets him free from the abyss. To gather all the unbelieving on the earth to make war against Jerusalem. You think, well wait a minute, if all those people were destroyed before they went in the millennium, how do we get unbelieving people at the end of the millennium? Well it happens because there are believing people entering into the millennium in their physical, natural bodies, who are not given glorified bodies. They enter into the millennium, protected by God, enter in, start procreating, making, building families.

In fact they populate nations. A thousand years time, in the productivity of that time is going to result in a widespread population boom around the whole entire earth. So some of those children that grow up in those believing homes, entering into the millennium. They're going to be born. They'll start growing up, because they too are born sinners in their natural

state. They have to put their faith in Christ. They have to repent of their sin. They are those whom Christ will rule the rod of iron during the millennial reign.

The end of the millennium though, having been suppressed by Christ's rule over the earth, Satan's released. He comes, gathers all those unbelieving, they come, surround Jerusalem again in a Gog, Magog like invasion once again. And Christ destroys the devil's armies, once again, with the word of his mouth. He throws the devil in the lake of fire and he enters into judgement with the earth, at the great white throne.

It's after that final judgement, where all unbelievers, at that judgement, they will be raised from the dead according to Daniel 12:2, "Those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." They'll all be given resurrected bodies, fit for their eternal destiny. It's a horrid thing to think about, when you think about fit for everlasting fire. They'll all be cast in the lake of fire, death and hades will be cast into the lake of fire as well. So, no more death ever. That's the death of death.

This ushers in a new heaven, a new earth, the beautiful city, the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. We enter into

the eternal state. All that to say, I wanted you to get a broader picture so you could have a glimpse of what Jesus saw so clearly, what he was thinking of in Luke 12:49. Thanks be to God for having the Holy Spirit move Luke to write these verse to give us insight into his mind. All this that he later revealed to John and wrote the book of Revelation. I wanted you to understand some of those things that Christ is thinking about.

One more question, for today, a fourth question. Who? Who will suffer the fire? Who will suffer the fire? Who will escape the fire? Who will suffer the fire? Everything that we just saw is what Jesus means by fire. That symbol captures the sum and total of all these end time judgements. The prelude, the buildup, the Day of the Lord itself, and the lake of fire, its excruciatingly painful, it's physical, it's temporal expressions of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord. It's final judgement, eternal imprisonment in the lake of fire.

Listen, if you were to stack all those prophetic judgements on top of each other, I mean, I only just, we just, we just got the tip of the iceberg in what we covered today. But if we take all those judgments and stack them all on top of each other, and we pile them up one by one, we consider the individual nature of the suffering on each individual who goes through it. We add to

it the, the sense of loss that every individual and every community feels collectively, together. Groaning in pain, sorrowing over the loss, over the judgement.

You add the sadness, you add the fire, the brimstone, you add the poison, the blood, you had terrifying tortures at the hand of terrifying demons, add the famine, add the plague, pile all of it just on top, one after another, and then individualize it and stack that up; add the eternal suffering for all sins of all mankind over all time, each and every individual sin. Get the picture? I mean you've got like a planet sized mountain, like Jupiter. A planet sized mountain of sin pictured in our mind's eye and judgement accompanying sin and that is what God thinks about sin.

Unbelievers will experience the full weight and force of that suffering, of God's anger due for every one of their sins. He will administrate it justly. He will execute it without mercy in Jesus Christ. What about us? What about those who repent and believe? What about those of us who are trying to pursue a wise and faithful stewardship? What about our sins? Is there justice due for our sins as well? Is there wrath in there for us? Go back to Luke 12:50, let's look at this verse, blessed, this most blessed verse. Jesus said in Luke 12:50, after talking about the

fire, he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!"

The noun baptism, pictures plunging someone into water, fully covering them in water, immersing them. The verb baptize just describes the action of doing that, immersing them. So what's this baptism language about? Here he's looking ahead to a future baptism. So he's not talking about the baptism with John the Baptist, he's not talking about his baptism by the Holy Spirit, the commissioning for Messianic ministry, that's all past, that's all past tense.

Here he's looking ahead. He's looking to the future, and notice, it's putting him in distress, until he sees it accomplished. This baptism that he has to undergo is a baptism of judgement. He is going to be immersed completely under this deluge of the wrath of God. Divine wrath poured out on him for the sins of his people. No wonder, as he's picturing the fire to come and knows the wrath of God for sin, no wonder he is thinking and feeling some distress about it.

I mean, he's eager to get it over with, to see it accomplished, but this is real humanity. Looking ahead, anticipating his own baptism by fire, his own atonement, atoning sacrifice, satisfying God's wrath. I mean, oh the whipping, the

scourging, the curses, the spitting, even the nailing of his hands and feet to the cross, being lifted up in public shame and scorn, oh that's one thing; the real pain and suffering in that is the wrath of God that fell upon him. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Until it's accomplished, he's going to feel this way until it's accomplished. The verb *teleo*, to finish, to fulfill, to complete, refers to a prophetic fulfillment. Same word Jesus used on the cross, *tetelestai*, declaring it is finished and he gave up his spirit. So until Jesus Christ *tetelestai*, he's feeling this distress with his disciples here at the end of his ministry.

To help us picture what this must have been like for him, I mean, we can't really at all. But take that massive mountain of divine wrath, all that sin piled on top of each other, all that wrath for sin piled on top of each other, just payment for our sins, and then just plunge Christ into the middle of it. Immerse him in it. Cover him over completely with the wrath of God. Or better yet, take that mountain of wrath and, and invert it, turn it upside down so that the base of the mountain points upward and the peak point downward and then let that point of wrath of that mountain fall on the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, that's what Christ endured, for our sakes, for your sins, for my sins. His body was broken and no wonder. His blood was poured out, to take that entire mountain of the wrath of God which we rightly deserve, to suffer in our place. Yeah, obviously this distressed him. He sees the whole scope of future history and while he rejoices in that, he knows what it's going to cost.

That's why some refer to this text as a prelude of Gethsemane. Before he got to the garden of Gethsemane, praying in the garden in the night of his betrayal, he spoke these words. I'm distressed, until it's accomplished. But on that night in John 12:27 says, Jesus prayed in a similar way, he said, "Now is my soul troubled. But what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? For this purpose I have come into this hour."

Beloved, we've been given a gift by Luke, we've been given a gift by the Holy Spirit, we've been given a gift by the father, we've been given a gift by Christ. We've been given privileged insight into our Lord's innermost feelings here, his recognition of his mission, his mind and his mindset about the future, and he's pleased to share it with us, to bring us into his thinking, to help us to understand him.

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it's accomplished!" At the same time, it was for the joy that was set before him. You marvel at that ever? "For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and he's now seated at the right hand of the throne of God." What's he doing there? Interceding for me and you. What a savior, amen?

Let's pray. Our Father, what can we, again, what can we say but thank you? What could we do but offer ourselves as a living sacrifice? Lord Jesus please be with us, by your spirit, by your word. Help us be faithful to you. Help us to be good servants, wise and faithful servants who execute a wise and faithful stewardship, entering into your work, understanding just something, a glimpse of your mind, your suffering. Let it spur us along to love and good works. I pray Father for our church that you would keep us faithful, wise, good stewards, loving you, loving one another, and proclaiming this gospel of salvation from your wrath.

We thank you so much that you have covered us in the blood shed on the cross. We thank you that you have passed over us by your grace because we are covered with the blood of the Lamb. We look around us and see the sins of the world that we ourselves





have committed, and we recognize that the only difference between them and us is your choice. Your gracious choice. We're so grateful to you and we just ask that you would help us to walk in a holy way. Be humble, submissive to you, loving Christ, loving his word, loving one another. For Christ's sake we pray, amen.