***Storing up Divine Wrath
RO12-02***

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We continue our study in Romans 2:5.

**Standards of Comparison**

One of the favorite pastimes of people is that of comparing themselves with drunkards, harlots, and hoodlums. Most people, when they are able to have that kind of a frame of reference for comparison, discover that they look pretty good. This is an age-old practice.

**The Prodigal Son**

If you remember the story of the prodigal son in the Bible, the prodigal son had a brother, and the brother felt very self-righteous, and very much of a spiritual gem as he compared himself to his brother, who had gone off and left the family, and squandered his part of the inheritance. The prodigal son's brother didn't mind even assuming things worse about his brother than his brother may have been guilty of. In any case, the brother thought that he looked pretty good, and the brother assumed that he was really a very fine person, because outwardly there was no evidence that he was guilty of the kinds of sins that his brother had been guilty of. But the truth of the matter was that the elder brother was as bad as the younger brother had been, because the elder brother was a mentally evil person. This didn't show on the outside. He was in the habit of doing what we do today – comparing ourselves with drunkards, harlots, and hoodlums.

We have the same thing with the story of the Pharisee and the publican. The publican and recognize what he was, and he had no pretenses to having some kind of righteousness. But the Pharisee was an extremely offensive, self-righteous person. When he looked at the publican, he saw a standard by which he considered himself infinitely superior.

If you are outside of the family of God, and a very good and moral person, it may be that you to think that somehow you have a special acceptance with God, because when you compare yourself with the unbelievers about you; that is, when you compare yourself with drunkards and with harlot's and with hoodlums, you look pretty good. But I want to caution you that even a moron can go to a university, and he can graduate with the degree cum laude, and even summa cum laude, providing the standard of the university is geared to idiots. Therefore, what you have done is compared yourself to spiritual idiots. You have compared yourself to a base standard, as the older brother did with his prodigal brother. So, you come off looking pretty good.

We're going to see how that practice ends up in storing up for the unbeliever the divine wrath of God. This comparison always overlooks the thing that God looks at first – a person's mental attitude. And mental attitude since can freely be indulged in, and nobody can see them. They are hidden to the views of other people. Now you go ahead and keep up a good front and a good reputation in front of others. But at least don't believe it yourself. At least be aware of the fact that, with God, you're in a lot of trouble.

We're talking in this particular passage here in Romans about unbelievers – moral unbelievers. But the same principle is true about you and me as Christians. We too go around with our little fronts and our appearances of being something very special outwardly, and yet inwardly we're shot-through with all kinds of mental attitude. Now the more mental attitude since you have, the more antagonistic you will be outwardly; the more critical you will be outwardly; the more unstable you will be outwardly; and, the more you will be hacking and slashing. You just give yourself away, I'll tell you right now, with that kind of outward combat. It gives away the mental attitude sins that are eating away at your soul.

This is completely the lifestyle of the self-righteous unbeliever. In the matter of eternal life, the standard of comparison is not drunkards, harlots, and hoodlums, but the standard of comparison is the perfect son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God is going to judge a person by the absolute righteousness of His Son. So, it is dangerous for sinners to use a different frame of reference than that which God uses. All human beings have an old sin nature. All, therefore, are condemned to the lake of fire. And it doesn't help to be better than some other senators who are also going to be in the lake of fire. You still possess a fountain of evil within you from the old sin nature, and that's the thing that God sees.

**The Wealth of God's Grace**

In Romans 2:4, we found that the self-righteous moral person holds a contempt for what Paul calls "the riches of God's grace" toward the moral unbeliever. The wealth of God's grace is expressed in provisions for life, and the divine goodness in the things that a person needs to live. The wealth of God's grace is expressed in the delay of divine judgment upon that individual sin. God could take that person's life immediately, but he doesn't. Furthermore, it is expressed in the patience of God, in the face of the sinner's contempt for God. The Bible tells us that God saved us while we were His enemies. God loved us when we did not love Him. That kind of patience; that kind of goodness; and, that kind of delay in punishment which we have due to us, gives the unbelieving moral man a chance to get straightened out and to come to eternal life. That's the whole purpose of God's wealth of grace, in order to bring the moral unbeliever to repentance – to the point where he changes his mind about the gospel; about sin; and, about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, you would think that this kind of treatment on the part of God would cause the more self-righteous unbeliever to flee to the security of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. But instead, verse 5 tells us what happens to the average, self-righteous, smug, moral unbeliever. Paul says, "But after your hardness and impenitent heart, treasury up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

I had a funeral this week, as well as a wedding to perform. At the funeral I made reference to this particular verse, and I explained the basic truth that this verse was explaining. And I could see startled eyes sitting out there among the living. It really shocked them. I could see on their faces that some of them were staggered. They weren't quite sure that what they heard me say was really true. I'm going to tell you what I told them.

Paul says, "But." The word "but" here is the Greek word "de." This is a word which is used to indicate a continuation from the previous verse, verse 4. And this ties down to verse 5 the line of discussion which here happens to be the actions of the moral unbeliever. Paul is discussing the way moral good unbelievers act. Verse 4 has told us that these people despise God's goodness toward them; God's forbearance; and, God's longsuffering – not realizing that the reason God does this is not because He has to, but the richness of His grace is doing this to give them a chance to escape the lake of fire. And instead of the poor moral unbeliever understanding this, the average unbeliever is such an idiot, Paul says, that instead, he does this: and he picks it up in verse 5, by connecting it with this little Greek word. We might translate this word as "moreover."

The word "after" is the little Greek word "kata." This is a preposition in the Greek language, and it means "according to." What it is doing is introducing a standard by which the divine wrath will be exercised against the moral unbeliever. This is the standard by which God is going to judge the good people that live in our community who are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This word, "kata," indicates what that standard is going to be. He says that this has to do with: "The hardness and impenitent heart."

**The Heart**

Let's take the word "heart first." This is the word "kardia." Of course, this word in the Greek does refer to the physical organ, that muscle within your chest that keeps the blood flowing through your veins, and keeps you alive. However, it also has a symbolic meaning in Scripture, and that is indicated to us very clearly as referring to a certain part of the mind.

**The Mind**

The mind of a person has a perceptive side (the perceptive mind), and it has the directive mind. The perceptive mind is where we learn things; and, the directive mind is where we make decisions. The "kardia" in Scripture has to do with the decision-making part of the mind. So, we're talking about this part of a person's mentality which guides him in the decisions and the thinking that he makes. The directive mind is the seat of decisions.

**A Frame of Reference**

The reason for this is because there are certain things which are stored in the mentality of the soul. One of these is a frame of reference. We have categories (or principles) of truth by which we make decisions. This frame of reference may be true, or it may be false, but we have categories of concepts by which a person makes decisions. He also has a viewpoint. That viewpoint may be human, or it may be divine. He has a conscience. That conscience is an empty thing when he's born. As he grows up, that conscience is filled with certain values and certain standards. If it comes from the world, it's one kind of conscience. If it comes from the principles of the Word of God, it's a different kind of conscience.

**Values and Standards**

Also, there are values and standards within the directed mind. These are the things by which a person lives. He has certain standards. There are certain things everybody will do, and certain things everybody will not do. There are certain values that a person has – certain things that he counts important; and, certain things that are not important.

**A Memory Bank**

He also has a memory bank. He has things he remembers: things from experience; things he has learned; and, things which also are involved in his living.

**Vocabulary**

He also has, not the least of which, is vocabulary. He has vocabulary which enables him to express certain divine principles – certain concepts or the Word of God.

**The Mind of an Unbeliever**

In the mind of the moral unbeliever, all of these things are contrary to what God thinks. All of these are against God's viewpoint, so his frame of reference are the principles by which the world lives. There are certain opinions and assumptions that he makes that are entirely his own creation. He has a viewpoint which is human. He has a conscience which is filled with false values – values that justify immorality as being a right thing, for example. He has values and standards that are of an animal nature, and not those that would come to him from the Word of God. He has a memory of many things that are wrong and false and evil that give him a guideline for his actions. He has a vocabulary that lacks the capability of expressing divine phenomena at all. He has a mind filled with opinions from other people; with ignorance from other people; and, with assumptions.

Now, at a funeral service, you can really stress how offbeat the decision-making mind of a person is, as you call attention to what people commonly think in the face of death. And there are some fantastically gross ideas about death. People pick these up from other people. And if they stop and think about it for a moment, they will realize what a terrible amount of ignorance they carry.

Do you know why the undertakers become so wealthy? Because these minds are filled with ignorance concerning death. One of the ignorant ideas about death is that when a person dies, the thing you should do is to embalm that body; preserve it; don't let it decay; hang on to it; and, do it up well. The Russians do it beautifully. They have Lenin under a case where you can go by and see them. And every few weeks, they give them another shot of formaldehyde; he kicks a little; and, they keep him operational so they can preserve him.

**Funerals**

I want to tell you again about funerals. One of the toughest kind of funerals to preach is where you have an open casket – where you have the body laid out there, and the thing is open. It's really tough to try to talk to people about their souls when the dead body is there on display. It is really tough on the survivors. That's why, if you have some divine viewpoint on a funeral, here's what you would think. You would understand that when that person dies, that is dear to you, that they have departed out of a human body (out of a tent). And you would know immediately that they have gone not out of existence (that's one of the ignorances of human viewpoint), but they have changed residence into the Lord's presence. You would be aware of the fact that, on your part, there is sorrow, and that sorrow is expressed in tears, and that is legitimate, providing the tears don't go too long, and that the sorrow is not prolonged. You are aware that there is an absence on your part of this person, but that he is now in the Lord's presence. Therefore, you immediately realize that the body is no longer of any significance. The body is simply something that is to be disposed of in some dignified way.

Therefore, you should avoid letting yourself be trapped into the mortician's routine that is generally followed, which is to take the grieving family, who is all upset, and all torn up, and you visit his establishment, and they play music in the background. They get all the details from you. Then they lead you into this big room, and this room is filled with caskets. And they will take you around, and they will explain the caskets. There is a little card there, and it tells you how much the funeral will cost with that particular casket. That's the price for the whole bit: the embalming; digging the hole; filling it back in; the flowers; the perfume; and, the incense – the whole thing.

So, what they'll do is they'll take you to this casket and say, "Now this is one of our best caskets. This, you will see, has innerspring mattresses. It has it has all-temperature air conditioned cooling in the summertime, and heat in the winter. One of the options that you may want is this music attachment so that there is music playing here through this casket for all eternity." Then they'll lead you over here, and they say, "Now this one is particularly designed for Christians who are going to face the rapture. This has a flip-top lid on. It has an instant flip-top, and for a small additional charge, you can have an automatic ejection seat that will give you a little boost, a little ahead of the other people. It's going to be crowded in heaven when you first get there until they get everybody separated out, and it's good to be in line first." They go through all these things. I'm not kidding you. This is exactly what you told from one to the other.

Here these people are all going through this. Finally, at the end of the line, they get you down here in the dark corner, and here is the cheapest; the crummiest; and, the worst-looking casket. It's discolored. It's moldy looking. You've gone now from the $1,500 to $2,000 dollar job to this one, which is $475 dollars. Now, are you going to take a loved one and bury them in this boxy-looking $475 dollar job? It's cheap, man. I can tell you that it looks cheap. If you touch it, it feels cheap. But that's what you should use.

Here's the way you avoid the human viewpoint pressure. Have a private burial. Just tell the mortician, "I want the cheapest service you have. I want the cheapest box. Dilute the formaldehyde – cut the stuff 75%. Use the cheapest thing you have. Just put some mothballs in it just to get us to the cemetery – whatever it takes. And get the hole dug. Get yourself a dignified service with the family or whoever you want, and have grave site burial. For that matter, don't even look at the person again. Just tell them: "Put the body in there; close the lid; and, nail it down. We remember. We knew him in life. We don't need to see him in death. And then have your burial, and then have your memorial service with dignity; with honor to the Lord Jesus Christ; and, with rejoicing in what the destiny of the believer is. And if you have a speaker who knows how to say appropriate words, it can be a time of rejoicing instead of a tear-jerking emotional trauma.

I appreciated a remark of one of our ladies. She said that the first time she ever attended the funeral here at Berean Memorial church, she went out of the service just feeling so exhilarated and happy that she was ready to ask the corpse to move over. She was looking forward to sharing the experience.

For the person who has departed, who is a believer, absence from the body is to be present with the Lord, and it is an exhilarating experience. He has entered the most magnificent experience of his whole life. But if you have a human viewpoint mentality, you won't understand that. Therefore, you won't have the courage and the stability to give that kind of direction to a mortician, and have no further carrying on of the paganism that is associated with funeral services because of people who do not have God's point of view, and who don't know what it's all about. Therefore, they are stressing the dignifying something that they should not be dignifying. Rather, they should be dignifying the experience that that person has gone through in moving into the Lord's presence.

For the moral unbeliever, all of these things in his mind are offbeat. They are completely distorted, because the only way you get a frame of reference; a viewpoint of conscience; values and standards; memory of significant and right factors; and, a vocabulary to express them, is through being taught doctrine, and through your inhaling doctrine into your thinking. Gradually, all of this gets straightened out. You're not born with this. And suddenly you get to looking at life in a totally different way. And then you see what fools other people are who do not have God's frame of reference. Then you become what you should be in God's royal family – one of His children who is acting as a member of the princely family to which you belong.

So, Paul says that these people have a heart that is going to bring something very terrible upon them. And that heart he describes with two words. First, he calls it: "A heart which has a hardness upon it." That's a "sklerotes." "Sklerotes" means "stubbornness." It means "obstinacy." It comes from the word "skello." This is a Greek verb. And "skello" means "to be dry." "Sklerotes" is the result of something drying out. When something dries out, it becomes hard and calloused to the touch because it lacks moisture. Ladies don't like their skin to become callous. Therefore, the markets are flooded with things called moisturizers. That's what ladies do. They put something to avoid a "sklerotes" condition on their face. They put moisturizers on their face, and that helps a great deal.

This same term, you may recognize, has been absorbed by the medical profession. In English, it has been converted into "sclerosis." The word "sclerosis" in the medical world comes from this Greek word "sclerosis" (hardening). Sclerosis means a hardening, like of the arteries, or the liver, and so on – tissue which hardens.

In the spiritual realm, the significance of this word is talking about a hardening. And this is what he's saying. He's saying that their directive mine has experienced, first of all, a "sklerotes" condition. This is the first thing that happens to the moral unbeliever's thinking. What he is saying is that this person has been negative in the face of God's rich grace (to God's opposed) for him to turn from sin to the living God. The result has been that his mind has experienced a spiritual sclerosis toward the gospel and toward justification by faith.

**Impenitent**

Not only has his mind hardened, but Paul says that there is a thing equally as bad, and that is that your heart has become impenitent. Now we come to the world "ametanoetos." "Ametanoetos" means literally "without a change of mind." We looked last time at "metanoeo," which means "to change the mind," or it is generally translated as "repent." Yet this word comes from the same word "metanoeo." "Metanoia" means "to change the mind." That's what repent means. Repent does not mean to weep, and to wail, and to cry, and to be sorrowful. "Metanoeo" has no emotional connotation. This word "ametanoetos," that comes from it, neither has any emotional connotation. What it means is unrepentant; that is, a person whose mental attitude toward the gospel just will not change. His attitude toward the living God just will not change. His attitude toward the Bible as the authority in spiritual things and matters of salvation just will not change. So, he refuses to change his thinking.

**Unrepentant**

It comes from the Greek word "metanoeo:" to change the mind. You put the "a" in front of it, which in the Greek is a negative. So, it means unrepentant. Changing the mind about Jesus Christ means to believe in Him as your personal Savior.

Let's look at a few verses to demonstrate what changing the mind means. Matthew 12:41: "The men of Ninevah shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented (they changed their mind) at the preaching of Jonah, and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here." What did the men of Ninevah do? They changed their mind concerning the sin in which they were engaged, and the God concerning whom Jonah spoke to them of.

Mark 1:15 says, "And saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.'" Change your mind, and then it tells you how to change your mind. Believe the gospel.

Luke 13:3: "I tell you no, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." To repent means to what? To change your mind about the Son of God who is standing there speaking to them, whom these Jews were rejecting.

Let's look at Luke 15:10: "Likewise I say unto you: there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."

Luke 16:13: "He said, 'No, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." The rich ruler found himself in Hades, while Lazarus found himself in the place of Abraham's bosom (paradise). The rich ruler, speaking to Abraham, says, "Please, I have brothers. Send Lazarus back, and when they see him, they'll change their mind about God. They'll change their mind about there not being a hell and a heaven. And the answer from Abraham was, "No, they won't. Even if somebody is raised from the dead, they won't change their minds. How do we know that's true? Well, if you go back and read the story about the raising of the man named Lazarus (a different Lazarus), the brother of Mary and Martha, you will notice that when he was raised from the dead, that the Bible says, "From that time on, the Jewish leaders sought to put Jesus to death." It was at that point that they decided, "We're going to have to kill Him," which is just exactly what Abraham said. No, they'll see somebody raised from the dead, and they won't say, "I'll believe it now." No, the heart (the mind – the directive mind) of the unbelieving moral man is absolutely so hardened and so calloused over, that he cannot respond.

**Calloused**

So, Paul says that this moral man's mind, first of all, is calloused toward God and toward His Word. Consequently, it is also unrepentant. It will not change his mind.

How do you stop being unrepentant? How do you start becoming repentant? Again, I cannot stress this enough to you because there is so much confusion on this. The words "repent" and "believe" are synonymous. There are not steps in salvation.

Take a look at Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." God saved people on credit. He overlooked the fact that they died without a price having been paid for their sins. But their trust in God to solve the problem was applied to them when Christ did die on the cross. They did repent. How? The way Abraham did – he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout all the borders of Judea, and then to the gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works fit for repentance. There you have the word of changing your mind (repentance) explained – to turn to God. To turn from what? To turn from their dead sins and the dead works.

Hebrews 12:17: "For you know how, afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears." This is describing Esau's condition. Esau wanted God to change His mind, and God would not repent. God would not change his mind.

One more: 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slightness, but is longsuffering toward us; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

**How do I Repent?**

Let me tie this down. How do I repent? How do I do this, which is described as a change of mind? The way you repent is described for us in John 1:12: "But that is many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name." That is how a person repents – by believing on Jesus Christ as Savior. Thus you change your mind against your sin and in favor of the gospel.

So, the moral unbeliever, because of his negative volition to the Word of God, has a spiritually calloused, directive mind, and he is unchanged in his attitude of self-righteousness. So, he rejects the gospel. So, what does he do?

Well, a consequence of that is that he pursues good works as the way he is going to approach God. He is mentally and morally insensitive and stubborn to his true condition before God. The moral person has the same mental attitude toward the gospel as the immoral person does. The difference is that there is a totally different expression on the two. Here is the sin nature. It has an expression of sins, and it has an expression of human good. In the case of the immoral unbeliever, lasciviousness dominates his old sin nature, and he expresses himself in sins. What is he expressing? He is expressing his calloused mind and his unrepentant thinking toward God. But the man who is the moral unbeliever, he is strong on the ascetic side of his old sin nature. So, he expresses his unrepentant, calloused mind with human good.

Here is the immoral man, and here is the moral man. Both of them are speaking out of the sin nature, so everything that they produce is evil, and therefore, they are under the judgment of God. One man is outwardly a horrible acting person in everything that he does. He is dominated by sensuality and lasciviousness, so his sins pour out from him of the worst kind imaginable. Everybody knows that he's immoral and evil. But the moral unbeliever is dominated by aestheticism – putting on a good front. So, he pours out human good. He gets into social action things. He gets into all kinds of welfare programs, and all kinds of do-goodism. He gets into all kinds of things, and he considers himself a very fine person before God. And he looks up here at this immoral character, and he holds him in contempt. He does not realize that he is in exactly the same boat, though this immoral guy is expressing loathsome sins in his callous, unrepentant mind; whereas, this man is expressing human good in his calloused, unrepentant mind. They are both before God in the same condition.

What's the result? Well, Paul says here is what these people are doing. They are treasuring up something for themselves. The word "treasuring" is the Greek word "thesaurizo." "Thesaurizo" means "to store up." But after the callousness and the unrepentant directive mind: "You are storing up for yourself." This is present tense – constantly the case of the unbeliever. It is active voice. He chooses to do this. It is indicative – a statement of fact. And it says, "He is storing up to himself." This is the Greek word "seautou." It is an emphatic little word, it means "for yourself." And if you're interested in the grammar, this is the dative case, and it is a dative of disadvantage. He disadvantages himself by storing up something through this kind of mind that the moral unbeliever has. What does he store up?

First of all, he stores up the wrath of God, which is the Greek word "orge." "Orge" actually means "anger." "Orge" refers to an outward expression of the mind. It is an abiding condition of the mind. It isn't something that's a flash of temper. There's a different Greek word for that: "thumos." "Thumos" means to flare up in your temper – to zing up and down. But this word is very significant. God said what the more unbeliever stores up in Me (the living God) is an anger which is a settled condition of my mental attitude toward this person. But it is an anger which in time explodes itself outwardly toward that individual. In the case here of the moral unbeliever, the anger of God toward his callous mind and unrepentant mind is going to explode outwardly when God sends him into the lake of fire at the great white throne judgment.

It says, "Against the day of wrath." The word "against" is the Greek word "en," so it means "in the day of wrath." And the day of wrath refers to the day of God's judgment, which you have described in Revelation 20, at the great white throne – the judgment before which all unbelievers will be standing. God's anger against evil is openly expressed by sending these people into the lake of fire, after the callousness and unrepentant directive mind: "You store up unto yourself personally the anger of God, which is an abiding condition to be expressed outwardly in the day of wrath, the day when you stand before the great white throne judgment, and the revelation." The word "revelation" is the Greek word "apokalupsis," from which we get the word "apocalypse." It means "revelation" or "the unveiling." The character of what God is really like is going to be brought out into the open at the great white throne. All these smug people who are so morally righteous are going to stand before God, and they're going to look upon Him. And they're going to say, "There is the loving God. He'll certainly be kind toward me." Then they're going to discover God turning to his angels and saying, "Take him to the lake of fire."

They're going to see God turn to one of the angels who sits over here with a book. It's called the book of life. God will look at the angel, and the angel will look at God, and the angel will say, "It's not here, Lord." The name which had been written in when that person was born into this life, has been scratched out; gone; and, erased. Then God will turn to the other angel on this side, and this angel will open up a series of books. He'll find this person's name in which is recorded everything that flowed out of the old sin nature. These books not only have sins, which are not an issue with God (He has paid for those), but it also has human works, which are not an issue with God because He has also paid for those. But unless the person has accepted the payment of Christ on the cross, then these works recorded against him are indeed an issue, because what is revealed is the righteous judgment of God.

**The Righteous Judgment of God**

This is one word in the Greek: "dikaiokrisia." "Dikaiokrisia" comes from "dikaios" (righteous); and, "krisia" (judgment). And God's judgment is a righteous judgment, and God's judgment is fair. It's accurate. He does not act in an arbitrary way. When God looks at the fine, sincere, moral unbeliever, He has a ground for this judgment which he brings against him. And His judgment is a very conclusive, fair judgment.

Let's close with turning to Revelation 20:11-15, when God's settled, anger explodes outwardly against these people. Please remember that we are speaking about a judgment which is fair, and a judgment which is the result of an honest God (a genuine God), who, because of His essence, cannot be anything but fair. But it is a judgment against the finest person in your community who is without Christ: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was no place for them."

**The Great White Throne**

There was a song in one of our hymn books (not one that we use now, but one that we used to use). The opening line of that song was, "I want to stand at the great white throne." I'm sitting in church one Sunday night, and Paul Dirks was our song leader (the associate pastor of the Church of the Open Door). He gets up, and he starts leading this song, and all of a sudden we're singing, "I want to stand at the great white throne." I just about fell off my chair. I said, "Now I have seen lyrics of songs written by idiots, but this guy was locked up when he wrote this one. It shows you how ignorant people can be about doctrine. The youngest junior here would know that if he find himself standing at the great white throne, he's in a lot of trouble, and he's not going to go around strumming his guitar and singing, "I want to stand at the great white throne."

As you see, this is a place, we find in Revelation 20:11, such that someone is sitting upon this throne who is so awesome that: "The earth and the heavens fled away, and there was no place found for them." All of creation stood in awe because this was the Lord Jesus Christ about to pass judgment in behalf of God the Father: "And I saw the dead (the unsaved dead), small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another (singular) book was opened, which is the book of life (where the name should have been), and the dead were judged out of those things (out of the books – plural) in which were written their works." They were judged according to their works.

The people here are found not to have sufficient good works – good words which are acceptable to God. The reason we know that is because their name was not found over here in this one book, the book of life – the book of those of all dispensations who are born-again. Because the name is absent in that book, they know that everything written of good works in this book over here does not count for anything. Yet, the moral unbeliever was counting that, while God was going to have a record of his sins, God was going to have a better record of his good works.

Well, the Lord Jesus Christ, because of unlimited atonement on the cross, died for all people. And He died for their sins and their human good, both of which are evil. Those who receive Christ as Savior had the death of Christ applied to them. His atonement was unlimited – sufficient for all men, but its application is limited to those who believe.

The unbeliever counts on his human good to justify him before God, and this is where the awful truth comes home to him – when he finds that his name is not in the book of life; that what he did was never acceptable; that all of his evil has been recorded and rejected by God; and, that all of his good works have been recorded and rejected. Then the self-righteous person realizes the awful truth about himself, and he realizes too late the eternal consequences of that decision. All of his life, he was so moral that he had really impressed himself, and he had impressed the people around him, but he had never impressed God.

So, dear friend, if you're counting on the fact that Jesus Christ provided an atonement which covers all the sins of the world, and that you will therefore not have to face the issue of sins, I warn you that I except you receive Christ as Savior, His death will be of no value to you. If you are counting on the fact that your good works are going to have some merit before God, forget it. He is not impressed by anything that comes from the old sin nature. And if you persist in that line of thinking, then you will be a fine moral person standing at the great white throne, and then God's judgment is going to be revealed. That's when the "apokalupsis" will take place, and you will see a loving God explode in anger before your very eyes. That anger of God, his wrath against sin and against human good, will send you into the lake of fire.

So, take care what it is you are trusting in if you are an unbeliever, and a good person. That is a very dangerous thing to be. Better that you should be an immoral unbeliever, so that you have no delusions about yourself and your need to accept Christ as Savior.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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