

# An Annotated Summary of Jeremiah Burroughs' *The Saints Treasury*

Jay Wegter, Editor, Compiler

## Chapter One: *The Incomparable excellence and holiness of God*

**“For there is none like the Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, and doing wonders” (Ex. 15:11).** “There is none like Thee” (1 Chron. 17:20; Ps 86:8; 89:6). God so glories in the expression of His glory, that there is none like Him. All that is in Him is originally in Him, He is of Himself, and from Himself, and for Himself. Then, none can communicate Himself as God can, none can inflict evil or convey good as God can. He can make the creature to which He communicates His goodness to be sensible of His goodness as He pleases which none else can do. In other words, God is unique in the excellencies of His nature and in the way of communicating Himself to His creature. He demands a universal worship and obedience (pp. 3-7).

**The spiritual heart of the believer has the remarkable freedom to meet with, and taste God there.** The saints will be sure to reserve their hearts for God—aware of the infinite excellency of God. But, if we are not careful, we will soon fall off from glorifying God as God and our hearts will stick to the creature. Beauty in the creature is but a glory-pointer. We must keep our affections reserved for God. We need to frequently review the Creator-creature distinction lest we fall into the idolatry of creature worship. We must constantly inform our hunger for excellence on the excellency of God, that He is wonderfully separated from the world, and He is redeeming a people for Himself who are wonderfully separated from the world. When we emphasize the infinite distance between God and the creation, we are glorifying Him (pp. 8-11).

**The most concentrated Scripture passage on idolatry is Jeremiah 8:1-2.** “At that time,” declares the Lord, “they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their graves. They will spread them out to the sun, the moon and to all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served, and which they have gone after and which they have sought, and which they have worshiped. They will not be gathered or buried; they will be as dung on the face of the ground.” This passage summarizes the activities and worshipping involvement of the idolater. All the excellencies in the world are infinitely below God. Therefore, it is great wickedness to set our lusts upon these created excellencies. God regards this sin as ‘selling ourselves to our lusts’. We resist this sin by letting our heart be fully set for God (see Eccl 8:11 and 1 Kings 21:20) (pp. 14-15).

**“Let them praise your great and terrible name, for it is holy” (Ps 99:3).** **Your admiration of God must not be in the same category of admiration that you would have for the creature.** For, God is glorious, magnificent, noble, holy, and excellent as the original and thus, infinitely above the creature. Scripture says God is glorious in holiness rather than in power. God can work with sin itself without any defilement of His nature. His character and ways are the standard of holiness. God’s holiness is too bright to be beheld in itself. We cannot behold infinite purity and holiness of God immediately (mediation of it is necessary, in the face of Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:6). We may see a tiny reflected beam of it in the creature, but God’s holiness must be mediated to us. God’s holiness is a dedication of God to Himself as His own last end. He wills Himself as the highest and utmost end, and so He wills all things in order to Himself as the last and highest end. The image of this holiness is that stamp and work of grace that is upon the redeemed

creature. When the creature is enabled to will God as the highest end, and all things in subordination to Him, the creature is then said to be holy. Thus, salvation through Christ is the action of the Lord in working in His people their commitment to God's own commitment to His name. God's commitment to His own holiness appears to be a truth that is lost in much of the church today (pp. 17-20).

**God's holiness is adored above any other attribute of His; God glories in His own holiness.** He swears by His holiness. The glories of heaven are the habitation of His holiness, and only in heaven will God let out, and reveal, and communicate His holiness fully (Ps 47:8; Is 57:15; Amos 4:2; Is 63:15). God rejoices in the holiness of His people. His people are committed to be separated unto His holy Name (Deut 7:6). Christ died to sanctify His people unto Himself, unto God (Eph 5:25-26; 1 Cor :11; Heb 10:10, 14). Holiness is God's highest perfection; holiness is the glory of God (Ps 27:4, 110:3, 111:9) (pp. 21-23).

**The end and goal of all of God's works is to advance and extend the glory of His holiness.** All of God's works are to advance His holiness. Holiness is that which God aimed at when He created heaven and earth. It is what He aims at in all the ways of His providence. It is the end of the great counsel of God from all eternity that He might manifest His own holiness in those two great attributes, justice and mercy. It is the great business for which the Son of God came into the world that He might redeem to Himself a people to serve in holiness—a people committed to be separated unto God's holy Name. Christ gives Himself for His church to this end: that He might sanctify His people and bring them to heaven. Mercy and justice are the branches of His holiness; He will make shine to all eternity. That is the goal at which God aims, therefore, holiness must be the glory of God's name. Unlike the creature, God keeps His holiness whether He is manifesting power, mercy, or wrath. He is holy in discipline and holy in His faithfulness. He manifests that holiness in fulfilling His promises to His people. God is committed to His holy glory; it is dearer to Him than your own eternal soul is to you. God is jealous for every beam of His glory. The saint needs to know why God's commitment to His own holiness is in the believer's highest interest (pp. 21-27).

**For the redeemed, the beauty of God's holiness draws out their hearts to Him. God's holiness makes their communion with Him pure and clean and reliable.** God takes delight in us because we have just some drops of His holiness. Oh, how we should rejoice in Him, then, who is infinite in holiness. He is the source. We have just a little echo of His holiness. Unlike the creature, He is excellent in every part, and in all of His dealings. Holiness puts a luster and glory upon the divine nature itself, so that if you have the holiness, it must put a glory on you. Thus, our holiness is a derivative of His; He made us partakers of it (Heb 12:10; 2 Pet 1:3-4). Holiness fits us to commune with God; for He does not fellowship with sin and darkness. There is no communion with God without holiness in the creature. Holiness is the beginning of eternal life in the heart; it is the principle of eternal life. Holiness is what God delights in. Holiness separates us for God and for eternal life. The believer is a vessel of mercy whom God has set apart for Himself for the purpose of holiness, that God might glorify them with Himself (Ps 4:3). God initiated our holy consecration to Himself. Holiness is the dedication of the creature to God. Definitive sanctification separates the creature unto God as His devoted possession. By way of contrast, there is a kind of horror in the active principle of sin which separates a creature unto eternal wrath and misery. Those separated from God unto their sin will experience sin's eternal and cumulative operation and existence (pp. 28-33).

**Though the wicked may mock you, they respect and reverence you in their heart and conscience. They notice that you walk strictly, they can see that your holiness dignifies you.** Those who injure God's people who are engaged in His holy worship, will experience the terrors of the Lord, for God will avenge His people (Ps 68:35; 110:5-7; Joel 3:21). When we converse with God much and often,

our delight in communing with Him will make us holy (Ps 90:17). It is a great privilege to serve God; we must order our hearts, laboring to sanctifying our hearts in order to serve Him aright (Josh 24:19; 1 Sam 6:20). It would be admirable if in all our dealings with God we would have clear apprehensions of His holiness. “Shall not His excellency make you afraid?” (Job 13:11). And, what of purity of worship? The O.T. priest was not to ascend to the altar upon steps of polished stone lest by his hewing and refining the stones he pollute the altar with the pride of his sumptuous work (Ex 20:24-25; Ezek 7:20). The holiness of God humbles us like nothing else, and causes us to view our sin in its wretchedness (Is 6:5). Do we really know who our holy God is? Were there not a Mediator between the creature and God, God would eternally pour out His wrath upon the creature. We seldom consider the horror of being a sinner outside of Christ. Outside of Christ, even if we could weep rivers of blood from our eyes, God would hate and abhor us, and His wrath would eternally seize us. Christ is such a wonderful refuge for believing sinners; you do not have to deal with God in yourself, but through Christ and in Him you have liberty to come to God (Eph 3:11-12). Study the mystery of the gospel. Make use of Christ that the glory of God’s holiness may not be to your terror, but to your comfort (pp. 34-41).

## Chapter Two: *Christ is All in All*

**The saints enjoyment of God is described in 1 Corinthians 15:28, “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”** The father’s delight in the son of God is found in Proverbs 8:30, “Then I was beside Him, *as* a master workman; and I was daily *His* delight, rejoicing always before Him.” What is the great message that believers are bringing to the world? It is that God communicates Himself through a Mediator. By the light of nature men understand and are convinced that they need divine mercy, but they are ignorant that this mercy only comes through a Mediator. Without a Mediator their cries for mercy will not be heard, and they will perish eternally. It says in 1 Corinthians 1:21 that God was well pleased that through the wisdom of men they would NOT come to know Him (pp. 42-44).

**Oh, how sobering a truth this is that not one drop of divine mercy unto eternal life can be communicated from God except through Christ the Mediator. It is the work of the Spirit to know this, for it is spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:12-16).** There is no growing up unto godliness and spiritual maturity until we come to know that God is giving Himself to us in Christ. God communicates himself through Jesus Christ—this is the way in which we come to be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3:19). We do not honor God merely as Creator of heaven and earth. God does not accept natural honor. We must honor Him in an evangelical way; that is through the Gospel. Otherwise the honor and service we give will not be accepted (pp. 45-49).

**Paul tells us in Ephesians that the blood of Christ has brought us near (Eph 2:13), only those who have an interest in the blood of Christ have anything to do with God.** Like a son of a king taking a banished traitor to his father, Christ takes us by the hand and leads us to God—we are thus accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6). There was such a great need for a second covenant (Heb 9:8-9; 10:1-4). For all of Adam’s descendants are covenant breakers. A second covenant was needed because the law condemns us, and thereby stops mercy. The law condemns all souls found in their natural state who are not found in the Son of God. Why is that so, because divine mercy will not stir until justice is satisfied. What is the error that has ruined countless individuals? They get no further than the following steps: One, they become sensible of their sins. Two, they believe God is infinitely merciful. Three, they believe that recognition of the first two,

along with their remorse that they have done well enough. This is wrong, without an interest in Christ they will be undone forever. No one was ever saved by trusting in a general divine benevolence. The ground of the new covenant with its promises to believing sinners are grounded upon what passed between the Father and the Son in eternity past in which the second person of the Trinity agreed to take on our nature for the purpose of redemption (Is 53:10-12; Titus 1:2). Adam as head of the first covenant had his covenant breaking imputed to all his descendants. Only a second covenant could reverse this so as to recover us. But if the fulfillment of the second covenant depended upon us for its performance, we would have broken it and failed. The curse of the law cries for our judgment and condemnation. The law's curse upon the transgressor must be born if we are to be delivered (Gal 3:13). Now here is a revolutionary truth for the rising generation to hear, a truth that is foreign to their value system: the dishonor to God brought about by our sins must be answered by suffering, His divine justice requires that (pp. 50-54).

**God's trampled honor is recovered and vindicated in the death of Christ.** Christ's suffering makes up for the dishonor. In effect God says, "I will have as much honor as I had dishonor in the sinning of the creature. These are the conditions upon which I will be reconciled to man." Your sin dishonored Me, how will you be recovered and delivered? But the sinner argues, "You are merciful." God's answer: "I will have as much honor by suffering as I had dishonor by your sinning. I will vindicate my holiness." This is why the damned in hell will lie there forever. And so in the new covenant Christ lays down the price to God so that He shall have as much honor by his Son's suffering for sin as He had dishonor in sin being committed. Thus, through Christ's propitiation (accomplished in His atoning sacrifice) divine mercy streams out to the children of men. In Christ God shows forth His righteousness (Rom 3:24-26). Christ conveys God's goodness by performing the obligations of the covenant, and in so doing satisfying divine justice. Christ's mediation as our Substitute involves presenting His merits on our behalf in a continual work of intercession (Rom 8:34)—the great thing we need from God is acceptance of us as righteous. This is found in the justification won for us by redemption in Christ's blood (Rom 3:24) (pp. 55-57).

**Justification is by faith through grace alone, the sinner comes empty-handed.** When Christ is in the bridal chamber with us, it is Christ and faith alone, only those two, but when we go abroad with Christ we manifest other graces so that our bond with Him becomes evident. There is a great danger in the church today; it's amazing how easily the truth of justification is lost, faithful churchgoers hope that God will accept their deeds, their duties, their performance, their faithfulness—and in so doing, God's mercy ultimately shall bring about their justification. But, God only accepts a perfect righteousness, woe to all the professed biblical saints if their combined righteousness is what they depended upon for salvation. Many church individuals have bought into the error that God adds His mercy to their efforts so that they may eke out their justification. No! We must have a righteousness beyond our own. God in Christ did not come to add his mercy to your efforts. "Do your best and God will do the rest" is the devil's gospel, and if that is your hope, it will take you to hell (pp. 58-59).

**It is a soul-damning error to get the relationship between mercy and justification wrong.** The true work of God's mercy in justification is to take a soul off of himself, to remove his carnal foundation, to bankrupt him, or as Burroughs says, "to un-bottom him"—to make him sensible of his unrighteousness and uncleanness, that is the mighty work of God's mercy. The Holy Spirit only shows the welcoming arms of the Savior to those He has bankrupted of all self-righteousness. The only righteousness that is acceptable that we offer up to God is the righteousness of our Mediator. No one goes to heaven except those who are righteous by faith, and the only reason you will be in heaven is because your Substitute is righteous. Luther

said it well, ‘Countless church goers have a false confidence, for nothing is harder than to take Christ alone for righteousness. People have a false peace and are complacent when conscience is napping. But let the conscience come into violent conflict and trouble; that is when it is most difficult to take Christ as all in all in our justification—that is a true test of whose righteousness we are trusting’. True believers are regarded righteous because of their union with Christ (Jn 1:12). Luther observes of the unregenerate religionist, “it is harder to comfort an afflicted conscience than to raise the dead.” Sanctification flows to us through Christ; the only way to overcome our corruptions is to understand that God is letting out his grace through Christ. When that flows into the soul you will have power for sanctification (2 Pet 1:3-4). Christ was anointed by His Heavenly Father to quench your lusts and corruptions. He came to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8)—first, in His own people by means of redemption, and then in our planet by means of fiery judgment (Heb 9:27-28; 2 Thess 1:6-10) (pp. 60-63).

**Christ is ‘Source Person’—our life (Col 3:3-4), our ‘robe of righteousness’ (Is 61:10), and our fountain of endless supply (Jer 2:13).** None of our duties or services to God are accepted without Him. Yet, the gospel is incredibly counter-intuitive; it does not fit the light of reason and nature. Sinners find it scandalous that if they cry to God for mercy and pardon and deliverance from their sins (with tears, remorse, and regret), that God will not deliver them without a Mediator. Countless sinners attempt to make a savior out of their sorrow and contrition. Why does God only communicate Himself through a Mediator? Only in Christ is God’s justice glorified perfectly in the payment of the debt. God’s infinite wisdom appears in the reconciliation of justice and mercy (Rom 3:25-26). God is infinitely just and infinitely merciful, but these two attributes are only reconciled by the blood of the Lamb. The cross shows God’s hatred of sin, it is the greatest manifestation of His hatred of sin, even more of a manifestation than eternal hell (pp. 64-70).

**Countless individuals say that they believe in the God of the Bible. But most have only seen His footprints (Ps 77:19).** Only by Christ and Him crucified can we behold the glory of the Lord, and see that glory reflected in the face of Christ (2 Cor 3:18; 4:4-6). An enlightened sinner, begins to reason, “If this is the wisdom of God, that He conveys His mercy through Christ, why then should I remain alienated from God in unbelief?” That posture of heart is the effectual work of the Spirit—namely that God is addressing directly the transgressor in his inability, ruin and dilemma. God appoints from all eternity that all grace and mercy that men shall have from Him shall only be through His Son, that all may honor the Son even as the Father (Jn 5:22-23). Creation, providence, and the cosmos are but “a low piece of work” (Ps 8:3) compared to redemption (Is 52:10)—the stars are the work of His fingers, but salvation is the baring of His holy arm (pp. 72-76).

**What is the strong evidence that you have salvation and are a gracious (saved) soul?** The evidence is that God has opened your eyes to see the glory of the mystery of the gospel, and your heart is taken, and overcome by it—this is the warranty that you’ve received mercy, for this truth is hidden from those who hope to be saved in some religious formal way. Do you love the way God saves sinners, and love God for it (Rom 8:3-4)? If you’ve seen the mystery of the gospel, then your heart has been raised up with boundless admiration for what God has done in Christ, and the glory of the world has now been darkened to you. For, where the cross is applied, it never leaves a man as a worldling. “May it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14). We must constantly bless God that the great mystery of the gospel has been revealed to us (Is 49:8; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:1-2). Preachers must bring this question to their hearers: has the mystery of the gospel been opened to you? That God is giving Himself, letting Himself out to His people through

Christ? Has God taught you that the infinite distance between you and God is fully made up by the Mediator? Luther said, “God looked upon—outside of Christ, is most dreadful and terrible” (Rev 6:12-17). “We must know Him only as a God who can be reconciled to us through his Son” (2 Cor 5:18) (pp. 77-83)

### Chapter Three: *The glorious enjoyment of heavenly things by faith*

**“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known” (1 Cor 13:12). We are to live by faith in all of our circumstances in order to persevere in this life.** Faith illumines what the eye cannot see. Hope ‘sees’ what we will be delivered from; all sin, a groaning body, and sorrow. The unbroken communication of God to us, in body and soul—we are made perfect in order to experience this. All things will be new with everlasting rest and excellence (Rev 21:3-7). The great purpose in being conformed to Christ is to experience this uninterrupted, everlasting communication of God to us (2 Thess 2:13-14). Hope is realism, the greater the hope, the greater the perception of reality. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:13). Hope is a defense against all that opposes our pilgrimage—hope is an anchor (Heb 6:19), and a helmet (1 Thess 5:8). Faith makes hope substantial in its grounding upon its object. By contrast, the carnal heart has no spiritual vision or sight. Therefore, it is only fixed on the value of shallow, temporal things. In Psalm 17:13-14, David prays, “Deliver me from men whose portion is [only] this life.” For the believer, God is the strength of their heart, and their portion forever (Ps 73:26) (pp. 84-89).

**Abraham’s faith ‘saw’ the substance hoped for in the City of God—he would settle for nothing less, so his ultimate investment was not in this life (Heb 11:8-10, 15-16).** Only eternal things have substance (2 Cor 4:16-8). Above we shall see more excellence in Christ than we thought possible (especially in the communication of God through Him to us). The true substance of faith is God’s communication of Himself (Heb 11:6). This communication is the design and goal of redemptive history—the truth of which raises hearts up to God in seeking His face. God’s design from all eternity shall be realized in eternity—the full communication of Himself to the creature. Faith lets us discern glory and excellence—for we have only begun to comprehend all that God is toward us in Christ. Faith lets us converse with God, perceiving the treasure of God. Faith converses with the deep and glorious counsels of God Himself, with His Son (2 Tim 1:8-11) (pp. 90-93).

**God’s design is to communicate Himself though a Mediator. Thus, our confident faith feeds upon the covenant of grace and the gospel (Heb 3:6; 10:35).** Real faith is regular digging, and mining the great things of God. Faith receives the testimony of the Spirit regarding the deep things of God. The soul ventures upon this, building itself up in solid hope upon the sure foundation of faith. Our daily discipline in feeding our faith is essential if we are to have a battle-hardened faith. For the real test of faith, as Burroughs states, is not when the plague is far from your home, but actually in your home. The patriarchs saw by faith the promises from far off (Heb 11:39-40). Faith produces spiritual sight and clarity of vision by fetching the things that are absent and making them present. Faith enables spiritual vision and sight so as to perceive the gloriousness and blessedness of God. Therefore, faith spurs us on by granting us this power of vision. The doctrine of hell should drive you to tuck yourself deeply in the wounds of Christ. Part of the torment in hell is the knowledge that there shall never be relief, only endless despair. The saint daily exercises saving faith in trusting Christ alone as his soul’s support. Paul could say of this continuous posture of faith, “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced

that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day” (2 Tim 1:12). The power to believe savingly is described in Ephesians 1:20-2. It is a miracle of God’s power on the order of a magnitude consistent with the resurrection of Christ. Those who are Christians in name only have only done in the sphere of religion what nature is capable of. Therefore, they do not have saving faith (pp. 94-101).

**Paul describes the fruit of faith as a life devoted to Christ (Phil 3:8-11).** The eye of faith perceives eternal things, things too glorious for the unaided faculties of reason and sight. Sense and reason cannot attain to them. True treasure in Christ is hidden from sense and reason (see Mt 11:25-27). In the lives of the patriarchs, many providences appear to contradict the promises of God. Their faith looked beyond these difficulties and apparent reversals. The things of God are beyond sense and reason; is it any wonder that the world slights them? The natural man sees no excellencies in them (1 Cor 1:22-25). By contrast, faith does not subject itself to conclusions that can only be reached by sense and reason. By believing, we come to be sure and certain about things not seen (Heb 11:1-3). Thus, faith is the source of certainty in matters of the soul and assurance. Faith is an essential element in spiritual warfare that carries the believer through opposition. We deal with doubt by renewing our faith; that is how we slay doubts and fears. Casting yourself on Christ is faith, not presumption. Do not fixate on your corruptions to determine whether or not you have favor with God; look up to Christ renewing your faith again and again. This is a most glorious work of renewing your faith and venturing upon Christ again and again. Christ is honored and we are comforted when we venture on Him in the face of guilt, dark providence, and the terrors of the Law. Christ is honored when we venture on Him, when we feel most unworthy of Him, this magnifies the free grace of God. The souls of many believers are pestered by atheistic doubts and corruptions. Venturing on Christ is the solution. This continual venturing and renewing our faith is how we strengthen our faith for the dark hours of temptation which lie ahead (pp. 102-113).

**The natural man is insensitive to his spiritual deadness and bondage. It will be an unspeakable horror on the last day when he discovers his absence of faith.** The glorious things of God are hidden from the world, and can only be revealed by a work of God. When Jesus indicated that the poor received the gospel, this was actually an argument for Christ’s Messiahship, for He revealed to them these precious truths, while it was hidden from the wise and the prosperous (Mt 11:25-27). What a wonder it is that the eternal counsels of God have been revealed to us (1 Cor 2:9-13). The gift of faith has given us eyes of faith to behold the glorious counsels of God. Precious faith is the evidence of the glorious things of God, and that they belong to the one who believes (pp. 114-116).

#### Chapter Four: *The natural man’s bondage to the Law*

**How sobering it is, that Christ will not take as His disciple a person who does not continue in His Word. True disciples cling to Christ and continue in His Word, implying loyalty, devotion and obedience (Jn 8:31-32).** Thus, they give evidence of gospel faith. Carnal hearts do not know their wretchedness; they are not sensible to their bondage. The Law reveals the condition of the sinner’s heart. The moral law contains brilliant beams of God’s wisdom, holiness, and righteous character. The true believer is free from the rigor of the Law’s condemnation, but he is not free from the obedience to the Law. For, the Law is the safeguard of love to God and neighbor. We cannot miss the fact that ‘coveting of every kind’ (Rom 7:8), what the Law uncovered in Paul, opposes love to God and neighbor. The Law’s jurisdiction extends to thoughts, glances, words, motives and intents of the heart, therefore its rigor makes a hard yoke. The Law is very tedious and goes against our heart’s dispositions (stirring up hostility) (Rom

5:20). The Law is a yoke our fathers were unable to bear. The Law accepts no repentance, accepts no surety. The obedience must be done in our own persons. The Law requires constancy in all that it requires. The Law is not of faith (Gal 3:12). The Law is severe, any breach is considered a cause for condemnation (Heb 2:2; Jas 3:10). The Law won't lend a hand. It shuts up all in disobedience (Rom 11:32; Gal 3:23). It is solely against this backdrop of the Law's ministry of condemnation (2 Cor 3:7-9) that the gospel is good news (pp. 117-126).

**The severity of the Law is seen in that it accepts no sorrowful repentance. It has no 'work program' to manage, or work off one's moral debts.** If you wept rivers of blood from your eyes, the Law would not be moved by your remorse. The Law opens wounds, stirs up lusts, threatens damnation, but does not show us the remedy. Immortality and life are brought to light only through the gospel (2 Tim 1:10). The Law shows us the utter gravity of all sin as being against God Himself. Sin is against God's Person; it strikes at His infinite deity; it opposes who He is. You really do not know who God is unless you know what you are in your own person, outside of Christ. As Luther said, 'no one is saved who does not first damn himself' (pronounce himself deserving of eternal misery and condemnation). The Law reveals the folly of self-righteousness (Gal 4:21). As a relentless and austere 'school master' and custodian, the Law has one repetitive lesson to teach its captives, "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:19-20). The Law as a covenant brought death. Yet, unregenerate individuals are 'of Hagar' (of the Law, Galatians 4:24). Thus, our work as preachers is to beget children of the free woman (Gal 4:31) (pp. 127-133).

**The Law wounds, and plows up self-righteous hearts so as to prepare us for good news (Ps 89:15). The gospel comes alluring us instead of terrifying us with Sinai's thunder (Heb 12:18-24).** The gospel gives power, will, deed, and strength. How great is this good news: for the gospel comes granting the ability to comply with its requirements! (Ps 110:3; Eph 2:4-10). Christ was anointed to grant repentance and to heal and quench our lusts and corruptions (Is 57:17-18). The only thing more precious to God than the tears of His repentant people is the blood of His Son (Heb 9:14). The gospel makes our misery its staging area. Thus, Paul could say, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life" (1 Tim 1:15-16). The gospel promises the settling of all your debts (Col 2:14). The condition in the covenant of grace is performed by Christ for believers. Since He holds its fulfillment, it cannot be dissolved. Our liberty in Him issues from being made one with Him as His co-heirs (Rom 8:17) (pp. 134-141).

## Chapter Five: *A preparation for judgment*

**Your great business here is to make provisions for eternity.** There is immeasurable tragedy in neglecting the open door offer of grace and mercy. There is a brevity of time to be saved, therefore our message is one of urgency. Our orientation is either God-ward, or sin-ward. There are but two directions for 'sowing' in this life—*sow to the Spirit*, or *sow to the flesh* (Gal 6:7-8ff.). There is no repenting after death; no means, no admonitions, no sermons, no counsel. Your soul's destiny involves reporting in the God who made it. You will keep this appointment (Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10). At death your state will be fixed without



possibility of alteration. The wicked will be sealed in the same condition as devils. God's perfect discrimination between the final state of the believer and the reprobate is staggering: the eternal fixed-ness of the final state of the soul is sobering beyond words. While wicked men live here, there are restraints, many tokens of common grace. But, at death, the reprobate can only sin, and it is impossible for him to do anything else but rebel and blaspheme God to His face. When the wicked man dies, God so fully withdraws from the soul of that man that he is sealed in sin and blasphemy. What a near infinite contrast this is to the saints, who while they live here have many lusts and corruptions, but immediately after death their glorified souls are so fully possessed by the Spirit that they cannot sin. The saved are objects of God's favor because of the perfect mediation they experience—oh how the saints should bless God with overflowing thanks for His grace. The very definition of 'lost-ness' is that of having no mediation, and therefore no relationship with God (Lu 19:10). For the wicked, there will be eternal horror and terror in being sealed in a state of endless torment and divine wrath. The fixity of the eternal state ought to inform all of our preaching. Those of us who were found by God after so many years of our wandering and rebellion ought to sit down and bless God for lengthening our lives. Thank God that He called you when He did! For, countless individuals, even church folk are unprepared (as our author states, 'most are unprepared'). For countless souls, their unpreparedness will become abundantly clear at the end of life. So many will be sunk down into this distressing sentiment, "If I only had more time!" In view of this, one of the greatest evidences of 'spiritual sight' is to treat one's allotted time here as treasure to be stewarded, and to regard making a provision for carnal appetites to be the height of folly (pp. 146-154).

**Yes, our proclamation of urgency in repentance ought to be joined by an expose of the folly of making provision for the flesh, for the doors of mercy will soon be closed.** Therefore, the utter preciousness of time ought to grip each of us, in terms of the little window we have to make provision for eternity. Like the burning wick of an oil lamp, there is a limited amount of fuel—so also your days remaining for repentance are numbered (Rev 2:21). The perception of the great worth and value of time in regard to making provision for eternity, is a mark of an enlightened conscience. The regenerated soul has cast off its apathy and from now on concerns itself with the business of preparing for eternity. The time of one's death is God's call to appear before Him—we must preach the preciousness of the soul, and the need to be ready. As the end of this life nears, the question will be, "How much did you make the state of your soul your business, your priority?" God expects His children to spend their days seeking His face, seeking peace with Him, prizing His mercy, adoring the riches of His Son. It is a high folly to squander precious time. There is great horror and terror at the prospect of death coming for those who have made no provision for their eternal souls. No wonder death is called the 'king of terrors' (Job 18:14) (pp. 155-160).

**The volume of wrath, the floodgates of it unleashed and outpoured at death is staggering.** The man reluctant to repent needs to hear what awaits him. He scorns the message of the minister, he is stout in his self-serving ways. He does not consider what it will mean to wander alone in torment, with none of his former pleasures and delights and acquaintances. The reality of this destiny frequently does not grip the unbeliever until glimpses of it make him shudder on his deathbed as he lays there ghastly, short of breath. That is the horrific portrait of a man with an awakened, tortured conscience, but tragically, his hopelessness comes too late; for in life he did not make God his portion. The clock has nearly run out for the elderly. They are nearing the end of their journey. What a dreadful thing it is to see an old wretch, an old sinner and scorner who never understood the business for which he came into the world. Instead of making preparations, he has widened the breach between himself and his Creator, making himself seven times the

child of wrath than before. Therefore, if you know God, praise Him and work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12-13). And what of those who have had some stirrings of conscience, yet because of the violence of their lusts have turned back and returned to their former lusts, and now are further from God than before (2 Pet 2:18-22). What a reminder this is of heeding the importance of opportunity when the Spirit of God is working. Pray David's prayer of being spared and recovering strength. "Hear my prayer, O Lord and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner like all my fathers. Turn Your gaze away from me, that I may smile *again* before I depart and am no more" (Ps 39:13) (pp. 161-167).

**Pastors making appeal to souls: the offer is to be proclaimed with dire urgency and availability—the things that make for eternal peace.** You are speaking to fellow sinners who are but dust, wind, and ashes. Imbue upon them that if they try God's patience beyond the day of opportunity, they will taste His wrath forever. Consider that the call to life in Christ ought to be announced right up against the gates of hell if need be, so that it is the last thing the sinner hears before he passes from this earth. Preach so that damned spirits might know that it is possible to be saved through the Son; the golden scepter is still held out to you. Oh the danger of rejecting the Holy Spirit's season for repentance. The last grains of opportunity will pass through time's hour glass at a frightening pace. No temporal terror can compare with the horror of being out of time, and yet unable to repent. Running out of time to repent will be a shock to the vast majority of folks, even to the churched. Paul warns his readers of how brief the opportunity actually is: "But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor 7:29-31). Men in great pain on earth have wished for death, but if a lost man knew the torments which await the impenitent, he would gladly live as the most miserable man on earth rather than face eternal damnation. Eternity in glory is the knowledge of God, truth, and holiness in Christ. The believer's clear thoughts of eternity have the power to repel temptation (1 Jn 3:2-3) (pp. 168-175).

*Editor's Addendum:* Only God knows how wonderful He is, thus, He has a boundless propensity to share Himself. His desire is to extend his glory. How marvelous that God is glorifying His holiness in the redemption of sinners. We are created to reflect God's moral majesty in our relationships and worship, and that can only take place if there is a clear echo of His holiness in us. Restoration to our Maker so as to live as His image is only through salvation in Christ who is the perfect image of God (Col 1:15). This massive undertaking to restore us to the perfect image of God is a recovery project that spans the ages and will fill the cosmos—it is a goal ultimately not realized fully until the glory to come. But, all of us were born into this world with Eden's lie firmly attached to our souls. How is the lie expelled from the human heart? Answer: "look and live!"—as with the brazen serpent: when by faith you see the Son of God pumping out his heart's blood onto the dusty Judean soil for the likes of you in your defilement and rebellion, the lie is purged from your heart. For the first time in your life you realize that God is accomplishing His glory and your rescue together. That realization takes place when the Holy Spirit floods your heart with light (2 Cor 4:6)—from then on you become committed to God's own commitment to glorify His holiness. Prior to the Spirit's calling, you saw God's glory and your good as a conflict of interest. But now as His child, you see that your recovery and God's glory are accomplished together in Christ. You now have a passion for God's own passion, which is His endless Glory. God's cause becomes your cause; God's passion becomes your passion.