

04.18.21

Revelation

Chapter 16 - Revealing that Which Angers God

The Fire of Purging Reviled (vs. 8-9)

Revelation 16:8-9: The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

Well, we've come to a chapter that describes the wrath of God and that final time in the great tribulation. Somebody was asking me this week, "Are we going to be in the tribulation?" And of course, one of the side notes that I made is that the rapture is not even mentioned in the Book of Revelation. So, kind of give up looking for that. But as you come to the Book of Revelation, what you

understand is that in particular verse 16, you see the wrath of God being poured out. The question is, who is the wrath of God for? And as 1 Thessalonians 5 says very clearly, God has not destined us for wrath, but for salvation. So, what is one reason that you know that we're not in this great tribulation? Well, because Scripture says that we're not destined for the wrath of God. And God's not angry at you. You've received His Son. So, there is an embracing of God within the passage. And we look forward to it. If in fact the coming of the Lord was something that was ominous, and we were afraid of it, then I'd be afraid of the whole thing of Revelation 2. But Scripture is very clear that we look forward to the coming of God. We can hardly wait to see Him coming because as Hebrews says, next time we see Him, He comes without reference to sin. So, this is the opposite of that. This is their sin being poured out upon them. And why is that? Well, because according to Thessalonians, they would not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. It's not that God loves to hate. It's that God hates those things that are so destructive. And as we've been going through

the things that God is angry about, we begin to understand why.

Romans 1:18 reads, and we have referenced this a number of times,

"For the wrath of God is revealed..."

Thus, the word "Revelation".

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

(Romans 1:19) because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."

In other words, what does man suppress? Well, he suppresses the knowledge of God, who God really is.

What does he distort? What does he twist? He distorts who God is. The world is saying that God is just somebody that's mean and oppressive and somebody that wants to rob you of joy, and nothing can be further from the truth. So, here He is dying on the cross for your sins, and He's the mean one. I'm trying to figure that one out? I mean, it seems to me that the world is crucifying Him. The world is

spitting on Him. The world is mocking Him. And He's saying, "Forgive them," and He's the mean guy. So, you could just see how distorted the thoughts of man are towards God. And there's clear disdain towards God and there's a disregard for everything that is right.

So, as you see the beginning of Chapter 16 and you see the wrath of God being poured out upon the earth in verse 2, it is over the loathsome and malignant things, or more specifically, the distortion and the degradation and the hurtful and the harmful and the things that are afflictive and would cause great pain. In many respects, Romans 1:24-31 really gets specific. And as He goes through, if you're saying, "Gee, I don't know what loathsome and malignant is," well, all you have to do is look at the list. I'll quote some to you. It's malice, envy, strife, deceit, slander, boastful, destructive people that are untrustworthy and unloving and uncaring and unmerciful. These are people that are incorrigible; they're disobedient. Well, do you like those things? Or do you get angry when you see somebody oppressing somebody else, hurting somebody else? So, what is God angry

about? Well, obviously, the things that are awful; the things that are terrible. So, He describes them as loathsome and malignant. That's a good description, isn't it?

Why is God angry? Well, you see the second angel in verse 3, and you realize that there is this sea of violence and death that God is angry about. Let me put it another way, that man would be willing to risk all for the acquisition of selfish endeavors, and oftentimes hurtful to other people, grieves God. Well, doesn't that grieve you? That somebody would sacrifice on the altar, their family, that they would sacrifice on the altar, their scruples, that they would sacrifice on the altar, God, for the sake of more? That's not grievous to you? That's a terrible thing. And so, you see this picture of these tumultuous waters and the pursuit of more and how it stirs up. The wicked are like the tossing sea. They just can't be quiet. You begin to realize that, well, that's something to be angry about. I mean, how many families have been separated? How many lives have been destroyed? How many people have

been hurt in man's endeavors for the acquisition of more? So, is God angry? Yes. He's angry.

If you go on down, He's not only talking about the fact that man pursues the wrong thing, and that's hurtful to him and so many other people. It not only talks about the fact that there are awful, terrible, horrific things that man will pursue, and of course the worst of them being to go after pleasures more than God, as 2 Timothy 3 so aptly puts it, "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." How hurtful is that? That's like leaving your wife and saying, "I have things I'd rather do but love you." And how terrible that is. So, the destructiveness of that, it's no wonder He describes them as awful and malignant. It's no wonder you see the description of hurtful things that are happening because somebody is going after the acquisition of more. But in the next one, He deals with this picture of rivers. And I believe that the whole thing, the whole scenario of rivers is that rivers were meant to be something that would provide life. They were meant to be something that provides prosperity and happiness and joy. And so, it's a place of life-giving source. And yet, man

has twisted and distorted it to be a place in which he not only controls, but a place in which he poisons. And the very thing that people are looking for is some sort of life and man is poisoning the waters. And God says, "You've turned a life-giving source into blood." And so, the indictment within the passage is such in which He begins to explain that. And you realize that you're not only seeing awful things that God hates and hurtful things that God hates, but hateful things that God hates.

Because within the passage, if you look within the passage, what is it? The blood of the saints and the prophets that are being poured out like the river. In other words, the very thing that God had called the prophets and the saints to not only display the waters of life and to give life to man, but man is killing them. Man's destroying the very thing that came. The whole purpose of a prophet is to give you the words of life. The whole purpose of a saint is to live the words of life, and for you to see this. And the world is hateful towards it. They want to kill them. They want to snuff them out. They want to destroy life. And so, the indictment in every one of these cases is

God revealing those hostile forces against His love. God has given us all these wonderful things on the earth, and man has clearly distorted them.

As we now come to verse 8 and 9, we see this bowl being poured out upon, interestingly enough, the sun. And this is interesting for many reasons. One is, of course, that man down through the ages has worshipped the sun. Of course, the god of Egypt was Ra, which was the god of the sun. And not unusual, of course, Baal in many cases was referred to as the sun god. So, the point is that even today, just to remind you, man worships the sun. I mean, he perceives it as a source of his energy, and he perceives it as a source of his well-being. And in many respects, in everything that God has created, what is the purpose of the creation? Well, if you understand Psalm 19, that God has created these things that would glorify Him, that would point to Him. I mean, the point of Romans 1 is that, look, God has made it evident to you that He's a God of love. So, you look at sun and you go, "That was so loving of God to give me something that shines and I don't have to grope in the dark, and something that gives me

warmth and something that grows stuff." I mean, that's how wonderful God is and how gracious it is. And man goes, "I'm going to worship it," and "Forget about God. It wasn't His graciousness." And then man, on top of this, tries to say he can control it, which he has no ability to do. But he elevates himself to that esteem. And so, in his endeavors to worship and in his endeavors to control, it becomes the source of glory in and of itself. Well, creation was never meant to do that. The heavens declare the glory of **God**, the firmament shows forth His handiwork. So, it was never meant to be glorified in itself. And this is why Paul writes in Romans 1, "You've loved the creation rather than the Creator. Blessed be He! He's the One you should have been thanking for these things." But of course, man has a way. So, he protects nature. He worships nature. He prays to nature. He sings about nature. It's all about how wonderful nature is. And you know, when things go bad, "Well, Mother Nature is upset at us," or something like this. But it has nothing to do with the reality of God's goodness and His grace and His mercy. And as the rain falls from the heavens, it's really an act of God's grace. I mean, the whole argument of

Matthew 5, towards the end, He says, "You need to be kind to people that aren't nice to you." And you go, "Why?" He goes, "Because the Heavenly Father lets the sun shine on those who curse them and those who bless them. The Heavenly Father lets the rain fall on people that curse them and people who bless them. So, you need to be kind to people that are mean to you, so you can be like your Dad." There's an interesting picture at the end of Matthew 5. So, the point of the passage is that He is a gracious God and every good and every perfect gift comes from Him. But we refuse to acknowledge Him. Well, because of our sin, creation has been set in a tailspin because creation doesn't agree with man. Creation agrees with God. It was made by Him. Creation doesn't deny that reality. All things were made by Him and for Him, according to Colossians. So, it's very clear why it was made.

I'll try not to go into too many rabbit trails on this, but if you look with me in Romans 8, Paul says an interesting thing in verse 18, if you'll drop on down with me.

(Romans 8:18) "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed..."

There you have the word "revelation" again.

"... to us.

(Romans 8:19) For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

(Romans 8:20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope..."

Let's put it another way. All of creation can hardly wait for the sons of God to be revealed. Because their whole purpose of being created was to rejoice in the sons of God; to rejoice in the plans of God.

So, it says this in verse 21,

(Romans 8:21) "that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

(Romans 8:22) For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."

You think that includes the sun? Yeah.

Now, another interesting tie is in Ecclesiastes, of course you'll see this repeated over and over again, there's a phrase that's used, and from my understanding, at least in the first 10 chapters, probably over 30 times this phrase is used, "under the sun." And the reason why that phrase is used in the Book of Ecclesiastes is that it's a picture of man making decisions without God, just "under the sun." And he perceives life as just being under the sun. In other words, you take God out of the picture, nothing makes sense. And that's one of the purposes of the Book of Ecclesiastes. What makes sense? Let's take God out of the picture, and let's just live under the sun and see what makes sense. Well, that phrase repeated over and over again is making reference to the endeavors of man and the pursuits of man and the things that he goes after and the life that he lives and just his manners and everything that happens to him under the sun without God. The text

that we're going to be looking at here in Revelation is, God is turning to the sun and He's saying, "What do you say about that?" And the sun is saying, "I'm not happy about it." And you say, "Well, wait a minute. I thought it's the angel that's pouring out." No, you didn't read it. The angel is pouring out upon the sun. And the sun is reacting. If you look at the passage, if you go back with me to Revelation 16,

(Revelation 16:8) "The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun..."

Now, some of your texts may not be accurate here, but NAS does it accurately.

"... and it was given to it..."

"It" is the sun. So, it's not referring to, "and it was given to the angel to do something." It was given to "it," to the sun.

The text reads,

"... and it was given to it to scorch men with fire."

Burn men with fire. Why? Well, because they've worshiped the creation rather than the Creator; because

they perceived this as the source of life and growth and prosperity; that man's pursuits under the sun have been leaving God out of the picture and the creation doesn't like that. That's probably the best way to put it. Despite what you're going to see within the passage, despite nature's displeasure and its corrective measures, man is still going to rebel. And that's what's so interesting about the passage.

So, it reads this way,

"The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch (*kaumatizō*) men with fire.

(Rev 16:9) Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues..."

This is very interesting. What is it emphasizing? Who has the power? God does. Well, they wouldn't acknowledge that God has the power to bless them with the sun, but they will acknowledge God who brings the hurt from the sun. So, all of a sudden, we have God. All of a sudden, hey, God exists. How do we know? Because they're blaspheming, because they're cursing Him.

And the phrase at the end,

"... and they did not repent (change their way of thinking) so as to give Him glory."

Now, this is a very interesting passage and very appropriate for all of us because in many respects, it is a barometer about our faith. And if you understand what's happening here, you can also understand the reality of whether or not you are a believer or you aren't.

If you go with me to Jeremiah 6, just to go through some of the passages. You know, the perception is, "If God would just be nice to people, then bad people would change. Bad people are basically good people that just had a bad day; woke up on the wrong side of the bed."

But when we read through Scripture, we understand that when the wicked are shown leniency and patience, they literally see it as a license to sin more.

One of the passages, and you could just maybe write it off to the side, is Psalm 51:21. God says, "I kept silent about your sin. Then you thought I was just like you. You thought it was okay to sin." So, they perceived it as a

sense of license, and they actually become more belligerent and more aggressive in their sin.

In fact, Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, because justice is slow, he says, the wicked, their hearts are given over to do evil continually. And so, there's a sense of their hearts are given fully to do evil. In other words, you give a guy a break. He does something wrong. You give him a break, and he goes, "I got away with that." And so, you're going, "Okay, so being nice isn't working."

And you read in 2 Peter 3:3-4, God is patient and He's showing long-suffering about His coming. And what are they doing? They're mocking Him. They're going, "Oh, where is His coming? He's not going to come." And Peter goes, "You don't get it. He's just being patient with you." But what is man doing? He's laughing at God, "He's a wimp. He can't follow through on what He said He was going to do."

And according to Isaiah 26:10, when grace is shown, the wicked do not learn righteousness. He continues to deal unjustly in the realm of graciousness, and he doesn't

perceive God's majesty. He won't see the grace of God. He won't see the kindness of God. He refuses to do it.

In Jeremiah 6, if you'll drop on down with me, Jeremiah is dealing with a people that are obstinate and rebellious, and the statement is in verse 27, as he's calling Babylon to come down, and Babylon's going to come in with their fierce warriors and really a reflection of the people that God is sending them to because they've been aggressively cruel and hostile.

His description of them in verse 23 is,

(Jeremiah 6:23) "They seize bow and spear; They are cruel and have no mercy; Their voice roars like the sea, And they ride on horses, Arrayed as a man for the battle..."

He says, "You're in trouble." And you see that scorching wind coming. In fact, at the beginning of Jeremiah, they're actually described as a pot that's boiling over, and that's poured out. There's a picture of Babylon coming, their warriors. You can almost see the horses, like pouring out water, as they're coming down on the place, and they come to attack.

It says in verse 27,

(Jeremiah 6:27) "I have made you..."

It seems to be referring to Babylon and the pain and the suffering that's coming with them.

"I have made you an assayer and a tester among My people..."

That means to say, "I've raised you up to inspect the metals, to see what's valuable and what isn't, to reveal the trier of that which is legitimate."

"I have made you an assayer and a tester among My people, at you may know and assay their way."

(Jeremiah 6:28) All of them are stubbornly rebellious..."

They're rejecting and turning away rebelliously from God.

"... Going about as a talebearer..."

Misinforming people about who God is and slandering and hurting others and tearing down other people, gossiping; all kinds of things.

"... They are bronze and iron..."

Which is an interesting picture of a strong metal, but not precious and not valuable. And more specifically, usually made specifically for war. So, the picture is that they've decided to go the realm of dishonor in an ignoble way and journey rather than something that could benefit and something that would be glorious and something that would be noble and something that would be valuable.

"... They are bronze and iron; They, all of them, are corrupt."

Not only are they ignoble in their metal, but they're cutting machines and their whole purpose is to destroy and to hurt people. They're impure, they're harsh, they're oppressive, they're unyielding. And it's an interesting description of them.

"... They, all of them, are corrupt.

(Jeremiah 6:29) The bellows blow fiercely..."

The picture is God's coming to refine them. Do you think it's working? Let's read.

“The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; In vain the refining goes on,
But the wicked are not separated.”

The impurities don't seem to go.

(Jeremiah 6:30) "They call them rejected silver..."

Because it won't purify. You say, "Well, let's get a little bit hotter." They're not purifying. Difficulties and problems and hardships and pain and suffering comes into our life, but it's for a reason. God is not being cruel. He's purifying us. The very things that we've been doing in our lives has been destructive towards other people. But the rebellious acts of our foolish heart, and "foolish" is probably the key word in this. Because as you go through the Book of Proverbs, the very thing that describes a fool is that he's incorrigible. He can't be taught. It doesn't matter what you do, how many times you say it.

Proverbs 7:22 reads this way, that the fool is led only by his impulses. He's unable to see where his path is leading, and it actually refers to him as a dumb ox. The reason why it refers to him as a dumb ox is this harlot is calling him on the streets, and the picture in Proverbs is he's just going

like an ox to the slaughter. He's not even thinking about where the path is leading him. All he can think of is, "I have an impulse, and I need to fulfill my impulse." And that's all he can think about.

Proverbs 12:15 reads,

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes..."

It also says at the beginning of Proverbs 12:1, the one thing that the fool hates. Want to know what it is?

Correction. He hates correction.

So, Proverbs 14:16 says that he becomes arrogant and careless.

Proverbs 17:10 says don't waste your breath. He's not going to learn anything. It goes on to say, you could beat him with 100 blows, but you'll barely get his attention.

Proverbs 18:2 says he doesn't want to understand. He only wants to reveal his own mind. He's not concerned about others.

Then, Proverbs 26:11 says a fool will repeat his folly like a dog returns to his vomit. It's happened over and over again. All of the garbage is right in front of him. He'll still

repeat it over again. In fact, he seems to embrace the vomit itself. He knows what the results are. Been there, done that time and time again. It doesn't seem to make any difference. He's incorrigible.

Proverbs 27:22, good luck. You're not going to pound it out of him. So, what you have is a hardened heart. You go, "How hardened is it?" Look, the last resort is, you turn up the heat. You bring in the hardship and the pain, and maybe they'll melt. But the dross won't leave. It's so embraced and it's rejected silver.

Hebrews 3:7-8 says the Spirit is calling today. If you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. But there are those that will harden their heart. So, it's an interesting picture of those that just, it doesn't matter what. And God really in His wrath is displaying a mercy in the sense of giving them this opportunity. Look, the bottom line is they already had the two witnesses in Revelation 11 that were in the middle, and the whole world was watching them, and they were calling down signs all over the place, and they were calling out and saying, "Repent." An angel in the midheaven has declared the glorious gospel of God in

the midst of the tribulation. We read about that. But they've rejected every single act of grace. 144,000 on the hill, in the middle, singing the goodness of God. They're calling unto you, but they've rejected that. What's left? Hardship, pain, suffering. Will they change? No. And what Scripture is revealing is that the hardened heart though he goes through pain and suffering for their sins, would never release them because it's become so much a part of them.

Psalms 107, if you turn there with me. We often read Psalm 107 and you almost have to chuckle because you see the repetitiveness of God being gracious and man finally going, "Okay, I'm sorry." And then something else happens, "Okay, okay, I'm sorry." But there's something else I want you to see within this, and that's this, that in every single case in Psalm 107, man is saying, "I'm sorry." And that's a key.

John says in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just." Now, we're not faithful and just in being righteous. But He's faithful and just in being righteous to forgive us. And it's His kindness that, and this is not giving

you license to sin or me, but no matter how many times we sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive you. What He's asking you to do is admit it. Now, John says, "If you say you have no sin, you're lying." Okay, so you're not being truthful. But if you'll confess your sins, He'll forgive those.

This particular chapter, to me, as it reads, the psalmist is saying in this, "I never want you to forget the lovingkindness of God. Just never forget that He's always approachable in the midst of the tribulation. You could cry out to Him. You can cry in the midst of the tribulation. Cry out to Him. When the sun is pouring its scorching heat upon you and the heat is turned up, "Help!" That's all you have to do. Acknowledge His goodness." It doesn't matter how great the pain is, man will refuse to acknowledge the goodness of God. They refuse.

So, I like the way it reads; it starts off with basically man looking for utopia and thinking that he's going to find it by wandering away from God. And then he finally comes to this moment of uh-oh. And then he cries out to God.

So, it reads this way,

(Psalm 107:4) "They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region; They did not find a way to an inhabited city."

That's an interesting way of putting, "They couldn't find that place that they were longing to find." There was no way to find that wonderful city.

(Psalm 107:5) "They were hungry and thirsty..."

The heat gets turned up, right?

"They were hungry and thirsty; Their soul fainted within them."

They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region. It's interesting how we go into desert regions to try to find water, when God is right here.

But anyway, it says in verse 6,

(Psalm 107:6) "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble..."

Now, watch the phrase,

"... He delivered them out of their distresses."

I mean, that's such a touching phrase.

He not only delivered them out of their stresses, but if you look in verse 9,

(Psalm 107:9) “For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.”

I mean, if I were God, I'd go, "I'm going to give you just enough drops to keep you living. So, you can maybe think about this a little bit more, you know?" And God is just satisfying them not only with water, but with good things.

In Psalm 107:10, as you go on down through 15, it starts off,

(Psalm 107:10) “There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death...”

And the reason why they're in the shadow of death and then their misery and then their depression is because of wrong turns, the things that they've done that were wrong, because they rebelled against the words of God. I mean, why is it that people are not happy? They're just not doing what God says. If you do what God says... Read Psalm 1. Happy is the man who what? And if these words are on your heart and your mind day and night, you

meditate on it, you're doing what He says; you'll be like a tree firmly planted by the water, you'll bear fruit in the season, whatever you do will prosper. So, why are you unhappy and depressed? You didn't do what God said. So, at this point, God can sit there going, "Nah, nah, nah, nah, you know, it serves you right, you got what you deserved. You didn't do what I told you to do, and that's why you're in trouble." God doesn't say you have to get your whole life perfect. He just says, "Cry unto Me, and say, 'Help.' I'll come and rescue you."

So, the passage reads this way,

"There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death, Prisoners in misery and chains,

(Psalm 107:11) Because they had rebelled against the words of God And spurned the counsel of the Most High.

(Psalm 107:12) Therefore He humbled their heart with labor; They stumbled and there was none to help."

What did they do?

(Psalm 107:13) "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble..."

And what did He do?

"... He saved them out of their distresses.

(Psalm 107:14) He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death And broke their bands apart."

And wow, the wonders of God! It's like you call Him and He sets you free from the chains that you put on yourself.

What about fools? Well, I like Psalm 107:17 because it actually starts off with the word "fools".

(Psalm 107:17) "Fools, because of their rebellious way, And because of their iniquities, were afflicted."

You did just the opposite of what God said.

(Psalm 107:18) "Their soul abhorred all kinds of food, And they drew near to the gates of death."

What he's basically saying is you got so miserable you couldn't eat. Have you ever been that miserable, you didn't even have a taste for food?

(Psalm 107:19) "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses."

I mean, man goes out in the midst of his pursuits in the next paragraph, and he goes and pursues his wealth, and he goes to the oceans, and he goes to the seas, and he tries to make his money, and he leaves God out of his life and out of the picture, and he finds himself in a tumultuous sea that's about to take his life. What do you think he does? Let's read it.

(Psalm 107:23) “Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters;

(Psalm 107:24) They have seen the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.

(Psalm 107:25) For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,
Which lifted up the waves of the sea.

(Psalm 107:26) They rose up to the heavens, they went
down to the depths; Their soul melted away in their
misery.

(Psalm 107:27) They reeled and staggered like a drunken
man, And were at their wits' end.

(Psalm 107:28) Then they cried to the LORD in their
trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses.”

And they were glad because everything was calm again.

(Psalm 107:31) "Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness..."

What do you think the psalmist is talking about when he's talking about lovingkindness? You call to Him and He'll answer you, and He'll save you. All you have to do is say, "help".

So, Psalm 107 reads this way, you want to be wise? It's like an instant wise pill. You can be "Mr. dumb ox" all your life and then just cry to the Lord, and instantly, you'll become wise.

Because it says,

(Psalm 107:43) "Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things, And consider the lovingkindnesses of the LORD."

God is pouring heat to save us. How you respond to the heat will literally dictate whether or not you're a believer. Because really, if you think about it, it's the suffering that brings us to Him. It's not the easy times; it's not the wonderful times of life. It's the times of difficulty. We realize that there's nobody there, there's nobody to help

us, nobody that cares; everything around us is overwhelming. Even if somebody wanted to help us, they couldn't because it's too great or too powerful. It's those moments that we turn to God and we go, "Help." And He saves us. But if you're going through all of that and you won't cry, "help," but you'll curse God; instead of asking for help, you blame Him even though you've rejected His very existence. Now, you blame Him for this moment. Then, is there any hope?

There's a passage, if you look with me, in 1 Peter. And I just like the way it's put in 1 Peter 1.

The way it starts off is this,

(1 Peter 1:3) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Now, He's establishing something. God is really good, isn't He? Yeah, because, I mean, look at all He's given us. Now, watch what He does. It's very interesting.

(1 Peter 1:4) "to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

(1 Peter 1:5) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(1 Peter 1:6) In this you greatly rejoice..."

What are you greatly rejoicing over? "Oh, He's got so many great things for us, lasting things. God is doing lasting work in my life." Okay, keep that thought.

"... even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

(1 Peter 1:7) so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

(1 Peter 1:8) and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

(1 Peter 1:9) obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

If you're going through trials and difficulties and problems and you're cursing God, can you be saved? If the heat is turned up in your life and those trials begin to come, and you're not rejoicing, is that salvation? Consider it all joy when you encounter these various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith is producing an endurance, and you can allow this endurance to have its perfect result, making you perfect, complete, lacking in nothing.

Therefore, as James will go on to say, be happy about that. Now, when you're going through the testing, when you're going through the trials, are you thanking God or are you cursing God? It's the definition between a believer and an unbeliever.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You, test us to see if there is any wicked way within us. Lord, anybody can say that You're wonderful or declare life being wonderful if things are going well. But it's when the heat is turned up that reveals the genuineness of the

heart. And on this time of earth, You tell us it's time now for believers to go through their testing. The fire is turned up for us. But if it's this hot now, what will be the outcome in those final days when the heat has really turned up and You will reveal why it is so strange that hardship has to come upon people because man is so stubborn. He hates You, and he rejects You, and he blames You for everything rather than embracing Your kindness and Your salvation that was ever made ready, never ceased to be proclaimed. Yet why would we turn another way? We understand that You would be angry at this. You are angry because we would not believe that You love us, that You would not save us, that You do not care for us. You are angry over the fact that we would embrace destruction over You.

The heartache of God is really shared as Paul will write that we oftentimes grieve the Spirit of God who desires to seal us until the day of redemption. Difficult times are going to come in your life, but brothers, it's not because God hates you. He's saving you. And the very things that He's taken out of your life that draw us, the impurities

that are destructive in your life, embrace His kindness in doing this. For who the Lord loves, He disciplines, and He scourges every son. If you're without discipline, you're not legitimate. You're not children of God. He's working in your lives. Call unto Him and He'll rescue you. Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. You call and pray as Jesus is ready for you.