

THE LION, THE LAMB, AND THE POINT OF NO RETURN

THERE'S A LOT OF DEBATE THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY OVER WHAT THE CHURCH IS AND WHAT IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE, AND OUR GENERATION IS NO EXCEPTION. I BELIEVE ONE OF THE PASSAGES THAT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO LOOK INTO WHEN WE'RE GRAPPLING WITH THIS, ESPECIALLY IN CONTEXT TO EPHESIANS 3, IS REVELATION CHAPTER 5.

I. REVELATION

- A. The Book of Revelation centers and focuses on the final, age ending tribulation. The maranatha message ultimately is intended to prepare us for that day.
- B. In [Revelation 4](#), John is taken up to heaven and has an encounter in the throne room of God. In God's hand is a scroll with seven seals on it.
 - 1) the taking of the scroll and the tearing of those seals is what initiates the event that we call the Great Tribulation or the time of Jacob's Trouble or the end of all things
- C. [Revelation 5:3](#) no one is worthy to take the scroll.
 - 1) John begins to feel the deep pain that no one can actually execute the judgments of God on the earth because no one is worthy to execute them
 - 2) a voice tells John to stop weeping. "[Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah.](#)" He turns and expects to see a lion, and he sees a lamb standing as though slain
- D. Every leadership book says something about why you should start with the end in mind, because if you begin with a no real direction of where you're going, you're going to build something that doesn't actually connect to the end game. This is why we're looking at the end game of what the church is intended to look like.
 - 1) when you see the church both at the beginning and at the end, meaning the church at the first coming of Jesus and the church at the second coming of Jesus, you begin to see some very clear, hallmark distinctions emerge in those two portraits
 - 2) on the other hand, if we look at the church in the middle of that, but don't really have a consciousness of what the early church or the end of the age church will look like, we can create something that is a total counterfeit and doesn't even resemble the church of the beginning or the church of the end
- E. Part of the debate in the reformation over the definition of the church was the issue of the priesthood of all believers. Meaning we don't need a pope; we don't need someone in Rome dictating to us who we are in Christ; we don't need him to mediate. We have a mediator and His name is Jesus. We are all priests. We are all able to access God. But that didn't translate into

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the structural elements of the church.

- 1) one of the examples of that is communion, or the table of the Lord. Communion is not something where you walk up to the front of a building and take a wafer from someone; the Passover meal is the table of the Lord
- 2) this is not to say that all of that is illegitimate or evil; it is simply to say that we cannot define the church now without a consciousness of the view of the church at the beginning and the church at the end

II. JONATHAN EDWARDS “THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST”

- A. We cannot define the church without defining who owns it, purchased it, and created it. [Ephesians 5](#) tells us that Jesus bought the church with His blood. It is His.
 - 1) one of the great errors of our generation is battling over the definition of the church without actually knowing who Jesus is
 - a) many of us know Him as the tender, gentle, suffering Savior, but we’re not ready for someone who, in one moment, will execute a judgment and a fourth of the earth will die ([Revelation 6](#))
 - b) it doesn’t matter if you understand the events of the book of Revelation if you don’t know and trust and are not being conformed into the image of the One who is executing the judgments
- B. In his sermon, Jonathan Edwards is trying to get his audience to understand what he calls “the diverse excellences of Jesus’ person” who is both a lion and a lamb. ([Revelation 5:5-6](#))
- C. “The conjunction of the excellencies in Christ is, in our manner of conceiving them, very diverse from one another.” He who bled to save the nations is also going to come back covered in the blood of the nations as He treads them in the winepress.
- D. “The conjunction of such diverse excellences in anyone else would be seen to be utterly incompatible in the same person.” His nature and His character is so diverse that if it were in anyone else we would say it’s incompatible, or a contradiction.
 - 1) you can’t have that level of tenderness and gentleness and mercy and compassion, and also have that level of wrath and fury and vengeance and anger
 - 2) “God never suspends one attribute to exercise another.” – A.W. Tozer God, when He executes judgment, is not choosing to not be merciful in Himself. He’s merciful always. Anything that He ever does is the most merciful thing that could be done in that moment
 - 3) we follow and have been bought with the blood of a Man who is so radically diverse in His nature and character that our minds and our hearts cannot comprehend it and will not comprehend it until the age to come
- E. “His diverse excellences are exercised towards men who we find to be impossible to be exercised towards.” Jesus, in His diverse excellencies, shows those diverse excellences to people whom He really shouldn’t show them to.

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- 1) you and I deserve nothing but the full cup of the wrath of God, yet He shows us loving kindness
- F. “There does meet in Jesus infinite highness and infinite condescension. Their due meet in Jesus infinite justice and infinite grace.”
- 1) typically, people who are thirsty for justice are not very gracious people, and typically, for people who are very grace loving there’s something about justice that rubs them the wrong way
 - 2) people who think they want justice will be offended by it when it comes, and people who think they love grace will be offended by the grace that Jesus will show
- G. “Their due meet in Jesus infinite glory and lowest humility. In the person of Jesus do meet together infinite majesty and transcendent meekness. There meets in the person of Jesus, the deepest reverence towards God and equality with God. There are joined in the person of Jesus infinite worthiness of good and the greatest patience under the sufferings of evil. In the person of Jesus are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience with supreme dominion over heaven and earth.”
- 1) He is totally submitted and obedient, yet He has all authority and dominion over everything. He still talks in terms of obedience ([John 5:19](#))
- H. “In the person of Christ are joined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation.” ([Luke 22:42](#)) This is basically what pop culture church is today. Someone says, “God’s like this,” and someone says, “Yeah, but.” And then we think we’re cool because we found something that’s different than the other guy. The issue is diverse excellences.
- 1) splitting over things that are both true is illegitimate. It is right and fitting to say that He is both of these things. If you’re denying His sovereignty or His godhood, this is separating the wheat from the tares
 - 2) I believe that good biblical theology about the nature of God is to affirm everything you read. Don’t do “yeah but” theology. When we say, “Come Lord. Maranatha,” we’re saying, “Lord, come as You are to be all that You are”
 - 3) say, “Come Lord. Maranatha,” we’re saying, “Lord, come as You are to be all that You are”
- I. In our next session, we will dive into this issue of the judgements of God being executed by this diverse Man and how they are executed by and through the church in a maranatha posture. The summary is, at the end of the age, Jesus takes the scroll from the hand of the Father and begins to loose its judgments because the saints say, “We are conscious of who You are and what You are about to do, and we say yes and amen. Do it.” That expression is called prayer.
- 1) when we say maranatha, what we’re saying is, “Jesus, take the scroll from the hand of the Father and loose the seals on that scroll. We know what Your judgements will bring, but yes and amen. We want it because this is the only way for the restoration of all things. There must be a dark night before the sun rises in the morning and we are ready to go into the darkest part of that night. Lord, maranatha, let’s do this.” You can’t pray like that if you don’t know Him
 - 2) it doesn’t matter if you have good eschatology, ecclesiology, or any other good ology if you don’t know Jesus as He is