

Preaching a Theocentric Gospel, Addendum

By Jay Wegter

God has an incredible plan for His glory. He created the universe and the people and angels in it in order to extend His glory.

For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and see **My glory**. I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither heard My fame nor seen **My glory**. And they will declare **My glory** among the nations. Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord. I will also take some of them for priests *and* for Levites, says the Lord. For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me, declares the Lord, so your offspring and your name will endure (Is 43:7; 45:22-25; 48:11; 52:9-10; 60:13-14, 21; 61:3, 10-11; 63:12-16; **66:18-22**).

In today's culture of 'me', selfism has taken, and now occupies, a hospitable seat in the church. The net effect is seen in the tendency is to focus much more upon all the benefits God has for us, than His plan for His own glory. The glory of His holy reign will fill the earth. But, the fact that God is extending His glory by way of a marvelous plan means that we must find our story in His story (Eph 3:8-12). The culture of self says you can add God to your life, but the gospel of God's glory describes the believing sinner as being invited into God's glory plot so that he becomes an heir of God (Rom 8:17; Eph 1:11). Psychology has taught the error that man can be his own measure and the focal point of human existence. This is absurd, for we are little creatures of dust defiled and utterly dependent upon our Creator. "By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (**Gen 3:19**; Ps 103:14). The gospel is good news, but it rubs sinners the wrong way. For it humbles our imagined importance into the dust and exposes our insignificance.

God is working His plan to extend His glory, and He is doing so by making a new humanity in Christ, 'new creatures' (2 Cor 5:17-18). God's way of doing this is truly

remarkable. He is transforming sinners by means of the cross of Christ. This way of working is considered weak and foolish by the world. But, for those who are being saved it is the wisdom of God and the power of God. “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (**1 Cor 1:18**, 24). To make a new humanity requires a second Adam, a second representative who will serve as the federal Head of His people. Christ is given by God to be this representative of sinners. “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:17-19). Weak and polluted sinners need a perfect representative because their standing before God was ‘sinned away’ by that first Adam. And we cannot achieve our own status and favor before God; to imagine it is possible is to embrace a soul-damning error.

This heresy of the perfectibility of man is a hellish gospel embraced by nearly every false religion on the face of the earth. This *perfectibility of man heresy* is practiced front and center in the sub-Christian cults, Romanism being the largest of them all. The perfectibility heresy has wormed its way into much of Evangelicalism. There remain countless ‘closet Pelagians’ who would have no problem saying that Mother Theresa *deserves* to be in heaven (even though she taught that Hinduism was one of many paths to God). Only a God-approved righteousness found in Christ can commend us to God. “Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation^b in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom 3:24-26). There is no perfect, immutable favor with God apart from the righteousness that is in Christ our Substitute. The great Protestant Reformer, Luther correctly taught that justification by faith is the supporting pillar upon which the true church stands or falls.

Justification emphasizes that the believing sinner is not the receptacle or container of that righteousness—though He walks in that righteousness and serves it, that perfect righteousness is resident only in Christ his Head. Thus, the truth concerning

this God-approved righteousness is not a peripheral issue—there is no submission to God’s righteousness without it. “For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom 10:3-4). An imputed righteousness is crucial to the entire scheme of God’s grace, and it is the basis even for all progress in the believer’s sanctification. “And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith” (Phil 3:9). If the righteousness that saves were *imparted* rather than *imputed*, we would constantly be searching and introspecting to see if our level of righteousness satisfied God and provided our acceptance with Him.

But, in the glorious gospel, God strikes a preemptive blow at our legalistic tendency to generate our own righteousness and acceptance. “Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness” (Rom 4: 4-5). For, Christ sets us free from the treadmill of human performance. Picture a galley slave rowing to the point of exhaustion, unaware that the ship is tightly anchored to the sea floor. The poor slave straining at the oar, has the illusion of making progress, but he is going nowhere. That is what it is like in attempting to gain God’s favor through law-keeping. Sinners are ignorant of the rigor of the law—that it accepts no violation, however small. They are blind to the fact that the law is not of faith (Gal 3:12). And, they are unaware that those under the law are under a curse (Gal 3:10ff.). Only once the law has ‘bankrupted’ the sinner will he abandon his false hope and cast himself solely upon Christ (Rom 7:4-7).

The great divines in church history understood how crucial justification by faith is to fruitfulness and fellowship. God cares very much about our motives for good works as believers. Genuine believers are zealous for good works (Titus 2:14), but, that zeal issues from overflowing gratitude, and that is only possible because they are reckoning that Christ is their status, favor, and acceptance with God. This doctrine of justification also sets the entire tone for true fellowship in a local assembly. When this doctrine of ‘righteousness by faith’ is faithfully preached and confessed, the members of an assembly gather together and celebrate their common life in Christ (1 Jn 1:1-4). For, each member possesses a God-approved righteousness that has been freely granted by faith through God’s justifying work of imputation (Rom 6:23).

Now contrast this liberty to Romanism in which one's 'grace level' is a daily quotient established by devotion to the sacerdotal machinery of the institution. By this cruel mechanism, the consciences of devotees are held as with a steel cable to the institution, which binds their souls fast by threat of damnation should they ever dare to leave the mother church. Of course, leaving the Roman Catholic church is not primarily a geographical decision. To actually leave the church is to claim that all the grace that is needed in God's sight for full and free salvation is found in Christ alone. Thus, the full assurance of salvation does not depend upon the threats and false promises of the Roman Catholic institution. Cardinal Bellarmine (late 16th C. early 17th C.) proclaimed that the most dangerous doctrine of the Protestants was assurance of salvation, even though Scripture commands it (2 Pet 1:10-11). Joan of Arc was burned at the stake because she dared to profess assurance of salvation in Christ.

The outright rejection of justification by faith through grace always produces a devilish binding of the conscience. In that brutal arrangement so common in the world, religion becomes a way of managing guilt. It's not an exaggeration to say that false religion is in the guilt-management business. There really is nothing new under the sun. In the first century, the unbelieving Jews were consummate legalists—trusting in themselves, that they were righteous (Lu 18:9). Out of that false gospel came a relentless persecution the early church. They took the Mosaic Covenant and turned it into a yoke of slavery, a ministry of condemnation, remotely removed from the gospel of grace. False religion is nothing more than man's attempt to manage the fears generated by an evil conscience. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love" (1 Jn 4:18). Sinners outside of Christ will not be able to protect themselves from God, for God is a consuming fire (Heb 10:31; 12:29).

The gospel of God bursts into this realm of religious darkness with a brilliant light that overturns all of man's instinctive ideas about true spirituality. Not the least among the unsettling truths in the true gospel is this fact: nothing in time or eternity can satisfy the conscience's demand for justice except that which satisfies God Himself. "How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14). "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). Consider for a moment how profound this concept really is, that the conscience will not rest in peace until God rests in peace toward a

man. Since the conscience is an ‘annex’ of God’s courtroom, the same absolute justice required by God’s tribunal is also required to bring true peace to the conscience. This ought to give us keen insight as to why nothing short of the death of Christ can bring peace with God and peace to a man’s conscience (Rom 5:1-2).

Just as Adam hid from God in the Garden, so also the natural man ‘hides’ from God—but not in a physical forest, but in false philosophy. “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (Eph 4:17-19).

In this passage the apostle Paul reveals much about this evil *hiding place*, as denounces it as a foolish way of reasoning and living. This present author is designating this sinful thought form targeted by Paul as, ‘Gentile cosmology’, for Paul is forbidding thinking and living as the Gentiles do. Now, since this was before the age of modern science, and since the pagan worldview was ubiquitous back then, men were quite open and unabashed about their worship of physical idols. But nowadays, the idolatry inherent in Gentile cosmology hides behind the lab coat of the scientist. This cosmology normalizes sin, desacralizes the sacred, and naturalizes the image of God in man. Today’s Gentile cosmology gives the cosmos credit for making itself and for making man. But, God regards this heretical belief to be just as idolatrous as falling down, and prostrating oneself before an idol of brass or stone.

One of the common responses given by the lost when believers evangelize today is: “My confidence about the nature of reality rests upon science.” In our apologetic methodology it’s quite revealing to ask the unbeliever, “Is prime reality solely matter and motion?” “Can you explain why science does not research truth—why is it that truth cannot be placed under a microscope?” Science is not the purview or domain of truth, for truth is related to self-evident transcendentals such as: morality, meaning, purpose, love, beauty, law, justice, dignity, logic, order, etc. How ironic that today one can be a valued scientist, and yet still subscribe to the personhood theory (i.e. the idea that the mind defines one’s sexual identity, and not the body, even though the sex of every creature these scientists study is identified by its biological gender). This is astounding that a scientist can rip apart the body-soul binary, tear apart the male-female binary, and still do “good science.” By contrast it takes a love of God’s truth in order to comprehend the origin, fruits, and destiny of Gentile cosmology. Romans

chapters one and two describe each of these: that is how Gentile cosmology originated, what its fruits are, and its ultimate destiny. This pagan cosmology undergirds the present moral revolution we are experiencing in the Western world. Gentile cosmology grants tacit permission to pursue an idolatrous level of autonomy from God. This is closely related to the unbeliever's epistemology, or method of knowing—and, it is closely associated with the common assertion that there are no absolutes, thus a common refrain from the unbeliever is, 'we cannot know anything for certain'.

Isn't it ironic that the unbeliever's method of knowing, which he trusts so implicitly, will not allow him to find God? When you explain to him that according to Scripture, he needs God in order to find God, he is incredulous, for he trusts his mind completely. Concerning God's witness of Himself, the following illustration comes to mind. Imagine a pasture in the countryside surrounded by a fence. As you walk along the country road, you see on the top of each fencepost a live turtle. It would only take one fencepost for you to conclude that the turtle didn't get there on its own, it took someone to put the turtle up there. In terms of God's inescapable witness in the creation, this world is filled with 'turtles on fenceposts'. As it says in Roman's chapter one, God made it evident to them and evident in them (Rom 1:18-20).

God's witness of Himself in creation and in conscience is not only manifested by a discernable law of right and wrong, but also by an inescapable sense of deity.

Solomon describes that sense of deity in the following way in Ecclesiastes: God has put eternity in their hearts. "He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end" (Eccl 3:11). But, original sin has curved man's focus inward upon himself. We could call this an apostate *arc of abomination*, for man's worship of self is a reflection of Lucifer's own apostasy from God.

This illumines just how far Adam fell. In fact, the doctrine of God's sovereign grace is best communicated against the backdrop of man's spiritual deadness and bondage to darkness and manmade religion. What is astounding is that the unregenerate sinner in his blindness has a strong affinity for a cosmology that insulates him from his Creator. Thus, in his preference for Gentile cosmology, he *normalizes* abnormal behavior, desacralizes the sacred, naturalizes the supernatural, disenchant the glorious, and sees no problem in advocating the perverse. Since this pagan cosmology begins with an autonomous cosmos (self-originating, and not upheld by our Creator), we should not be surprised that the prevailing philosophy today conceives of

an autonomous universe which houses autonomous men (not dependent upon God). The inconsistencies in this atheistic theory are pronounced, for if man is totally determined by nature, how can he transcend that determinism? How can he find a neutral spot in the universe from which to objectively interpret himself and the cosmos?

This love of darkness which defines the human condition truly highlights the miracle of grace (Eph 2:1-3). Consider the magnitude of power which must be exerted to bend the arc of a man's life from being curved around self to being curved around Christ (Eph 1:19-21). So, Paul is making his point in Ephesians 4:17-19 that there is a very logical connection between a pagan, or Gentile cosmology and immoral behavior. A non-teleological man (uncreated, without divine causation and moral purpose, as per Gentile cosmology), finds it much easier to justify his own wickedness. Of course, this is all energized by the powers of darkness who operate under the same self-deception that they as well are autonomous from God, rather than utterly dependent upon Him.

Think about it for a moment, people may boast that they were educated at USC, UCLA, Stanford, or Cal Berkeley, but how withering a thought that along with their discipline of study they also learned how to more thoroughly hide from God in Gentile cosmology. This defiant cosmology normalizes the abnormal by assuming that the ignorance of God, and alienation from Him is completely normal (Rom 1:28-31). When Jesus said that He "has come to seek and to save that which is lost," He was stating, by using the word "lost," that the sinner does not possess a *normal relationship* with his Creator (a relationship for which every man and woman was created). The natural man is described by Christ as 'lost', for this reason: the whole purpose of man is to know, worship, serve, and enjoy his Creator. Since he does not possess the very relationship for which he was created, he is indeed lost.

If we are going to be effective at evangelism, we must diagnose and treat the sinner's condition with surgical precision (see Is 64:6; Jer 17:9). Make no mistake, every unbeliever has a massive controversy with God. We can express it in this way: the unbeliever has no idea Whom he is actually dealing with. He resents the fact that his sins are so serious in God's sight that they call for his eternal damnation. "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to each person according to his deeds" (Rom 2:5-6). And, the natural man is scandalized by the proposition that the only possible means for his sins to be forgiven is by the bloody death of God's own Son. In the sinner's natural love of self, he opts for a 'vest

pocket god', a mascot deity, whom he can *beg off* with a few good works—as if the wrath of God Almighty against sin could be quenched by one's moral effort. You might as well attempt to extinguish the sun with a firehose. Such is the stubbornness and ingratitude of man's nature that he will not receive the water of life freely (Rev 22:17). His idolatrous heart will not permit him to pay God the most reasonable 'rent' of adoration and gratitude. Therefore, it should not surprise us that he spurns the gift of God's mercy (Rom 2:4).

It is against this backdrop of human stubbornness that the gospel appears frequently in Scripture as a command more than an offer. “Compel them to come in,” “repent,” “wash away your sins,” and “flee the wrath to come” (Lu 13:23; Mk 1:15; Acts 22:16; Mt 3:7). Like a madman who has lost his senses, who will not leave a burning house, the natural man reasons that the flames of God's wrath are but painted fire, idle threats. Therefore, he contents himself with carnal measures—the things he may do by his own capacity. He feeds his conscience on fig leaves. He sees his fellow men dying around him but, rather than bringing him to repentance, it only deepens his slavery to the evil one. “Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives” (Heb 2:14-15). Such is the heinous nature of sin, that those controlled by it do not desire to have a love relationship with the only One who alone can grant eternal life.

The reception of this gift of life is inseparable from coming under the loving rule of the Son. He who died to destroy the works of the devil died to cancel our revolt, so that He might subdue His people to Himself (1 Jn 3:8). He died to judge the very sins which profaned the name of God. Since Christ died to destroy the sins that exposed us to damnation, it should be evident that we cannot keep those sins and have heaven too. “Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life” (Rom 6:21-22). To have seen the glory of God in the face of Christ is to have beheld the glory of God's holy love—the holy love that gave His Son for His people's sins (2 Cor 4:6). That experience of beholding God's glory in Christ, via the effectual call cannot fail to produce submission to Christ.

Thus, as a practical note to preachers, when we preach the free grace of God, are we to emphasize that Christ has done it all? Certainly, in this sense, that salvation

is not a synergistic work. Salvation is the gift of God, purchased by Christ's costly payment (Jn 4:10; Rom 5:15; 6:23; 8:32; 2 Cor 9:15). Yet, the terms of gospel are *believe and repent*. We must preach in such a way that sinners know exactly what it is that they are to believe, and we are to preach in such a way that they know precisely what it is that they must repent of (Col 3:5-11).

Most believers today have relinquished this gospel mandate of evangelizing and preaching, relegating that responsibility to professional pastors. Churches are filled with harmless believers who have personally abandoned the gospel mandate, and have gladly handed it over to ministers. Do we grasp the gravity of the situation—that the world is trying to convert us much harder than we are trying to convert the world? It appears that the church at the end of the age is running a *defense* rather than an *offense*. In other words, is the church trying not to lose any more territory than it has already lost, rather than attempting to claim new territory by means of the gospel? How can this be corrected? From the testimony of obedience in your own life, can you say to your faithful Christian brother, “My friend it is time to nail your colors to the mast, it is time to live as God’s ambassador, it’s time to plead with your neighbor, ‘be reconciled to God?’ ” (2 Cor 5:19-21).

Countless individuals who profess to know God have not prepared themselves to be fishers of men, even though Christ promises that those who follow Him will be fishers of men (Mt 4:19). It is telling that so many professed believers cannot clearly and confidently answer these four questions: *Who is God? What has he done? What is he doing now? And what will he do?* In this evil age, the true believer faces only two choices regarding the visibility of his own testimony; either come out of hiding and proclaim Christ boldly as your lifestyle, or eventually be flushed out of hiding by the authorities. For, a day is coming in which your faith will be outlawed (Mt 10:32-39).

Gentile cosmology as a belief system now dominates the Western world. Laws defending erotic freedom issue from it. Its complete advance is only held back by Christianity. Our nation is now on the verge of making Gentile cosmology mandatory; making it the state religion. The political machine, the academy, and the media collectively comprise the engine of ‘conversion’ which promotes this pagan worldview with evangelistic zeal. Culture, politics, and law are each involved in propelling the moral revolution forward. But, discerning the nefarious intent of this Gentile cosmology would be far easier if its slogan were: “we are for filth and corruption.” But, the progressives have disguised their redefinition tactics and sinister goals with buzz-words such as: *inclusion, unity, equality, non-discrimination, tolerance, fairness, social*

justice, choice, and authenticity. These buzz words are designed to pair the ideology of atheistic cosmology with values such as caring and compassion. Through His prophet, Isaiah, the Lord pronounces ‘woes’ on those who redefine good and evil. “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! (Is 5:20).

The satanically energized world system is using every possible means to reach into minds, heart, education, families, and yes, churches. Public education is aimed in such a way today that students are being taught how to be social citizens, even it means separating children from the beliefs of their parents. The traditional family is depicted as regressive, hopelessly anachronistic, and out of date by TV programs such as *The Modern Family*, which lauds and normalizes homosexuality. The state wants the role for itself that God has delegated to the family. For, the family in God’s plan is to be the center of instruction, virtue, economics, industry, absolute truth, the key unit of a just society. The family is under its most severe attack in history. Do we understand just how much the powers of darkness are driving our culture, our educational system, and our political system?

The devil is in a rage, not only because he is soon to be cast down to earth, knowing he has but a short time, but also because he hates the saints who belong to God. He sees them as hindering his wicked program. “So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17). “It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him” (Rev 13:7).

In the record of the devil’s appearance before God recorded in the book of Job, the evil one implies that he, by deceiving our first parents, and gaining their loyalty, won dominion over the earth and its residents. “The Lord said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it” (Job 1:7). But, God throws down the gauntlet before the devil by pointing out the faithfulness of His servant, Job. For here is a man who is not part of the human revolt against God. “The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil” (Job 1:8). The evil one answers by contending that God has no true worshippers, but solely those who look to Him in service and worship only do so for mercenary reasons. “Then Satan answered the LORD, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ ‘Have You not made a hedge about him and his

house and all that he has, on every side?’ ‘You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.’ ‘But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face’ “ (Job 1:9-11). Thus, in the lifting of the curtain in the book of Job, we see behind the scenes the reasons for Job’s severe testing. God will prove through Job’s integrity that Lucifer is dead wrong, and damnably in error.

Job’s bitter trials form a microcosm of the war between God and Satan, a war which is cosmic in scope. The devil cannot rest knowing that even one true believer remains on the earth. For, the devil’s contention, in challenging the validity of Job’s faith, is based upon the abominable lie he told himself; namely that God is not worthy of worship for Who He is. Thus, the existence of every true worshipper of God screams in Satan’s ears: “You are wrong! God is infinitely worthy of worship. Your decision to apostatize from God is based upon pride, self-deception, wickedness, and error.” Satan is in a rage it says in Revelation chapter twelve—he seeks through the Beast, the Antichrist, to kill as many Christ-followers as he can, lest their sheer number, by their testimony as true worshippers mock him further. “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time” (Rev 12:12).

Do we really believe that the day is coming, and perhaps soon, when those who kill us think they are doing a service for God?

These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you (Jn 16:1-4).

One of the slogans in the present pandemic shutdown is ‘self-quarantine’, ‘shelter-in-place’. Is it possible that this dictate is a move to make the church even more benign and harmless than it is already? Would you be alarmed to discover that the intent of the architects of the new world order will be to enlist churches as its apprentices in order to make the sheep fully compliant with its purposes? This is not a conspiracy theory, it’s the sinister plot revealed in the book of revelation that apostate pastors, priests, and clergymen will become unwitting agents of Satan. The effect will be to take

every bit of fight out of the sheep in order that they might support a globalist agenda. The ecumenical monstrosity that claims to be the bride of Christ will have become a voracious imposter, a sprawling false religion, fittingly designated, the great whore (Rev 17:1-6) . The religious compromise and hypocrisy I am describing will reach a point at which heaven will say, “. . . ‘Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities’ ” (Rev 18:4-5). This makes me want to ask my unsaved neighbors, “Do you understand that if you do not know Christ as Savior, and personally serve Him, you will willingly stand in line to receive the mark of the beast?”

Yes, we are praying for revival in this nation, we are praying that famines would end, we are praying that God would grant us just rulers, and yet we know this, that God has foreordained a climactic end to human history. He is orchestrating a devastating set of global and political circumstances accompanied by massive disasters which will publicly reveal for all time who His true friends are, and who His enemies are. The sheep and goats judgment will be very public (Mt 25:31-46).

The present moral and spiritual state of mankind highlights the wondrous power of God in the gospel. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16). When one considers the message of 1 John 5:19: “. . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one,” it certainly highlights the power of God in calling His own through the gospel. Yet is easy for a genuine believer to become discouraged in evangelism. We think of the juggernauts of the media, Hollywood, the academy, politics, and culture—all promoting error as if it is truth. The darkness is very thick and ubiquitous. At times we can be tempted to think: how can we hope to see a person converted to Christ against the odds of such formidable cultural shackles? The blessed answer is that the gospel is divinely powerful in the hands of the Spirit. For through the message of Christ crucified and raised for sinners, God the Holy Spirit is spiritually resurrecting elect sinners. He is mighty to save. The gospel is a fishing net of small enough mesh, that not even one elect ‘fish’ will miss being caught. We go forth with this confidence—that the results of our proclamation does not depend upon us, but upon the power and purpose of God.