

When The Corn Is Shelled Down

Revival Institutes

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Well, this evening, friends, we're going to be in the book of Revelation. The word revelation in the Greek means to take the cover off and that's what we're going to do tonight as we take a look at the great white throne and the judge of all the earth who sits there as he takes the cover off of every mother's son who stands at that last judgment, and as he reviews their life and determines their final state, whether it be heaven or hell.

When I was a younger man, I visited the Isle of Patmos in Greece, and a Greek monk led me to a door of a cave that had above it a drawing of an open Bible and a dove, and he said that tradition had it that this was the very cave where the Apostle John received the book of Revelation from Christ Jesus. Apparently, John at the time was a very aged man, and he would lay his head on a ledge in the cave of the apocalypse, and as he received these heavenly visions, he would relate them to his scribes who were by his side, and they would write them down. At least, that's what tradition says on the island of Patmos. Well, tonight, we're going to take a good look at the last judgment, and the title of my message this evening is, "When The Corn Is Shelled Down." For those of you who grew up on a farm or near one, you know that shelling corn is the act of the removal of the kernels from the cob. This is not to be confused with shucking, which is the removing of the husk off the ear of the corn, corn husks, or the outside green leaves on a cob of corn that we usually just peel off and discard. First, corn is shucked, then it is shelled.

Hebrews 9:27 declares, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." And Solomon, in all his wisdom and folly, ends his book of Ecclesiastes with a warning, "For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." This means there is a coming day and it's fast approaching where all mankind will stand before God and give an account of themselves. So we have this imagery of the corn that I'm using with my text today. A man's life while on earth is green, like the green leaves on a cob of corn but a day is coming, like Hebrews says, and it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment. First, the green leaves are pulled off in death, that's the shucking. Then comes the shelling when we face the judgment and our lives are exposed and reviewed. Thus, to tell my message this evening "When The Corn Is Shelled Down," listen friends, this is a grave and serious message. You'd better pay attention to it because it's a solemn warning. Today in our churches, we get mainly jokes and amusing stories but in former days old-time preachers preached sermons that were solemn warnings to the unconverted, so sit up straight and get the wax out of your ears because tonight I'm preaching an undiluted gospel. Like we say in the South, "I'm gonna give you the oil straight from the can." But first, let me pray.

O great and terrible God, you are a God of majesty and authority. You're a God of power. Your throne is a high and holy place. Your name, your very name is holy. There's no God like thee in heaven or on this earth. Your word is true and you're true to your word. You're a God of mercy. You're a God of justice and you keep a record book, for you are a God that requires that which has passed, and a day is coming when you will open up the books on your created males and females, everyone, every one of us here tonight, and you will shell the corn down. I pray that your Spirit will come this evening and disturb folks, open our eyes and lead us, Lord, lead us, I pray tonight during this message, to the very verge of eternity. Pull the curtains back, Lord, reveal yourself and if someone here is resting upon a rotten false foundation of an empty religious profession, I pray you make your word like a hammer and you bust that thing up, just smash it to pieces; point them out with your finger of conviction by your Spirit and concern. And I pray in your mercy and grace that you will open hearts. Only you open hearts. And I pray these things in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.

Well, I can't find a passage in my Bible, friends, that is more alarming than the one we will read tonight. It's a summation of mankind in a final dissolution of all things on earth. If you can read this passage of scripture without dread and trepidation, you're a bigger man than I am. I think you stand in a minority. When asked who will be saved, Jesus answered that few are saved. If you were to have a roll call of every human on earth at this hour, it makes no difference if they're Oriental or Indian, Englishman or American, European or African, rich or poor, all that matters is just two things in regard to eternity, two things: who are the saved and who are the lost. The majority of mankind are lost and they'll stay lost. Many of them have the religions to make them happy and give them satisfaction but at the final judgment, clinging to a religion won't do you any good. The world's full of lost religious people from every religion and every denomination. It breaks my heart to say this, friends. I get choked up even trying to preach a message like this but many a proud Baptist deacon has died, opened his eyes in hell and screams right now in that chamber of horrors. Many ministers who knew their theology are in hell right now because they didn't know the God of the Bible. You may think you're on a firm foundation as you listen to my voice, but as I'm speaking, God may speak to you personally. You may hear his voice. His voice may pull off the garment of your self-righteousness and show you how corrupt and sinful you really are, that if the people around you here could really get an inside look into your life they'd be so horrified by what they saw they'd run right out the building. But when the corn is shelled down, you're just a bare exposed cob ready for the fire.

Well, that's enough of my introduction, let's get to the message that God has put on my heart for you. I pray that you hear it, friends. A message is no good unless you've got ears to hear. I pray you'll have ears to hear. If you will, turn in your Bibles to the book of Revelation. We will be in chapter 20. We'll be in verses 11 through 15. It's a familiar passage of scripture, but listen, don't allow your familiarity with it to prevent you from being disturbed by it.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Let me pause here to say, friends, that great white throne signifies the holiness of a thrice holy God. He is holy and man is sinful. God declares, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And we have sitting on that great white throne, a judge, the judge of all the earth, and shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Every person will stand before that throne and face that judge, the trouble is, even the earth and the heaven flee from his face in a final dissolution. If these elements cannot stand before him, how can a weak little worm like you face that terrible judge and survive? Your blood will drain out of your face. Your knees will go to knocking like old Belshazzar at his feast. You'll stand there squirming like you've got the heebie-jeebies. God himself will take a good look at you with those eyes of fire and you will see your life under his glowing, glaring light and be under his intense scrutiny. The corn will be shelled down, that's for sure.

Well, let's pick up our narrative, friends, in verse 12.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Well, let me pause here to say what are these books that are mentioned. Some are biographical in nature, some are law books, some are record-keeping books. God will open the pages of your biography and take his time reviewing every day of your life from your birth to your death. It's a time of intense review where the corn are shelled down as spoken of in our earlier text from Ecclesiastes, "For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

Well, let's look at this little more, friends, in verse 13.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Well, let me pause here, friends, to say that sentence that reads "they were judged every man according to their works" really reads in the Greek "they were judged and sentenced every man according to their deeds." If man is on probation while here on earth, he goes to trial. At the last judgment, that judge behind that great white throne has all the time in the world to carefully review each case as the evidence is presented. Cases will be reviewed, judgments handed down, and sentences carried out, for the sentencing of the law must be carried out upon all guilty lawbreakers. Oh, oh friends, how the corn will be shelled down on that day. It's a heavenly courtroom scene and if I may so speak, the

angels are the bailiffs in charge of the books, the devil is the prosecution with evidence of sins committed for he is the accuser of the brethren, and God himself is the righteous judge. If you think your little profession of faith to some mere intellectual assent to some Bible verse or Bible truth is gonna save you then, you're dead wrong. If you're not born from above and washed in the blood you'll bust hell wide open when you die even if you're the chairman of the deacons. Listen to the chilling words verse 15,

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Every single person facing that judge will feel the intense heat of that lake of fire crackling and flashing at their backside on that day, with all its threats of hell and damnation. Fire! Fire! Fire! Oh, how the hypocrite will holler and scream as seen in Isaiah, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

This is the day of reckoning, friends. This is the day when the chickens come home to roost. All those crooked politicians who covered up their dirty deeds in life will be exposed on that day. Husbands who kept their cheating adulteries secret from their wives, will be exposed on that day for my Bible speaks of an infallible detective who goes around and hunts down sin for God's word declares, "Be sure your sins will find you out." Every action, every deed done, every thought, every word spoken along with the motives behind them will be brought to light and examined so as to be held up against the strictness and severity of God's unbending law, and all will be found guilty of breaking God's law, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And if you stand there, friend, in your own merits, you will fail that test. You must stand there in the merits of another, the Lord Jesus Christ, where his blood is on my soul.

The best way to describe this scene to you, friends, is with the following story. Bear with me while I share it to you and you'll be glad I did. There was a man traveling through the city of St. Louis and it was a Sunday and he was a Christian. So he parked his car at a downtown church and went inside to worship. Once inside, he realized he was the only white person in an all-black church, so he took his seat on the back row. Up on the platform was the elderly pastor who was speaking on his subject that morning and his subject was heaven. He began his sermon by saying, "Some folks call heaven paradise. Other folks call it Abraham's bosom. But I like to think of heaven this way, here is Jesus, just returned from his earthly ministry and old Gabriel greets him, 'Hello, Jesus. Sure is good to see you, Jesus. We sure missed you up here, Jesus. Welcome home, Jesus. But wait, who's that with you? Is that that thief? That thief from the cross? Oh, no, sir. We can't have no thieves up here. He's not welcome here.' Then Jesus replied, 'Never you mind, Gabriel. Never you mind.' Then Jesus reached his arm around the thief and said, 'Never you mind, Gabriel. He's with me.'" That story sums up the whole deal better than any I've heard, friends, "He's with me." Can Jesus say, you, young lady, "She's with me"? Can Jesus say of you, young man, "He's with me"? Listen to me, Bible church member,

can Jesus say, you, "He's with me"? Or will he only say, "Depart from me, I never knew you"?

I can imagine myself among that crowd on that day. There I stand as my name is called out of the roll call of life. And an angel comes over, grabs my arm, and escorts me over to that throne of judgment as I face my God. And I'm as nervous as a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. I feel God doesn't even have to open those books on me, because I know I'm already guilty. I've broken his law time and time again. But he reviews it anyhow, and I stand there and squirm as I can feel the heat of that lake fire behind me. I can feel the heat of those white hot flames as they rise and fall on my back, as they crackle and flash in that burning lake of fire. And I'm so upset and agitated. I'm as nervous as a firecracker on the Fourth of July. My knees are knocking, my hands are trembling, my forehead sweating as I come under that judge's intense scrutiny. And as the evidence is dragged out, all my collective sins are dragged out before me. The old devil is laughing at me. He's pointing at me. He's laughing. He's got his hands on his belly. He's mocking me. He's licking his chops over me. But wait. But wait. I have an advocate in that courtroom. He rises from behind his throne and regally he walks over to me and then he wraps his arm around me as he turns us to address that large assembly, and he announces in a clear voice that sounds as refreshing as a clear mountain stream and Jesus, Jesus, with his arm around me calls out in a loud voice, "He's with me!" I shout, I praise God, his blood is on my soul. Why, there's a shout in the courtroom of hallelujahs as the angels go to singing. They escort me over to my welcoming committee of friends and loved ones and I enter glory to be with my God forever and ever.

Dear friend, if God's Spirit has brought conviction to you and has shown you that you are lost and in need of a Savior for sin, I've got good news for you. The gospel is for the hungry. The gospel is for the weary. The gospel is for the thirsty. You've got to feel your need of a Savior for sin. Let me ask you, friend, are you hungry for God? Are you sick and tired of your sins? Are you thirsty for Christ? Then come to him and believe on him and on Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." Salvation is not by religion, friend, it's not by a good reputation or good works, it's not even by being a church member. You must come to Jesus, you must come to him and repent and believe on him. Don't delay. Listen, friend, oh please listen to this gospel call.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say,
Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take
the water of life freely.