Sermon Series: Things to Come
Sermon Title: The Coming Judgment

Text: Revelation 20:7-15 -- And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Opening: For the first three weeks of the **2012 NFL season**, replacement referees took the place on the playing field of the regular refs. The team owners had LOCKED OUT the regular refs because they could not agree on a new contract. The consequence of using college referees to JUDGE pro games was predictable. They missed calls, took too long to make the right calls, called too many penalties, and in the process made coaches, players, and fans furious. The anger came to a head in the third week of the season. An angry **Bill Belichick, coach of the New England Patriots**, grabbed one of the replacement refs and was fined $50,000 by the league. And on **Monday Night Football** the game between **the Green Bay Packers and Seattle Seahawks** was decided by a call on the last play of the game that was **so clearly wrong** THAT IT SEEMED the whole country was talking about it the next day. The media pointed out that because of the missed call, **$150,000,000** changed hands in Las Vegas. Confidence in the credibility of the game had been marred. Players didn't know what to expect on the field and worried about injuries. Newspapers routinely used the word "OUTRAGE" to describe the reaction from millions of fans. **ESPN** declared, "***Let's cut to the chase—the replacement officials have lost control of the game***." Even a **National Public Radio blog** chimed in: "***It's the talk of the nation today as***

fans beg for the league and its regular officials to settle their differences so that the 'REAL' refs can come back." All because the rules of NFL football were not being correctly applied by the JUDGES ON THE FIELD. Apparently, despite decades of **ethical relativism which teaches that there are no absolutes**, we still long for absolute justice and fairness in at least one sport, pro football. *There is right and wrong, and the referee's job is to assure that right prevails*.
Now listen: If we care that much about judges in sports giving order and fairness to our games, **how much more should we realize the importance of having A SUPREME JUDGE who makes the correct call every time without fail when it comes to the motives and actions of people in this world**?

This morning, we're going to look at the judgments of God following the millennial kingdom and the rebellion led by Satan that comes right at the end of it. Scripture reminds us that **God is the Judge of the whole earth and that in executing His judgment, He always does what is righteous and just** (**See Genesis 18:25**). In other words, He never makes the wrong call. Join me as we discover what the Bible says regarding the coming judgment of wayward human beings at the consummation of all things.

There Will Be Three Final Judgments. Each will happen prior to the eternal state of the new heavens and the new earth.

- **The judgment of Satan and the fallen angels – Revelation 20:7-10 – And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.** Having been released from the Abyss, Satan will gather a large number of people who oppose Jesus' rule over their lives. These will be unsaved people born to those who still have non-glorified bodies during the thousand-year reign of our Lord. Outwardly, they will submit to the principles of the Messiah's kingdom because they fear the 'rod of iron.' We're not told why God allows Satan to be released, but in any case, it will give a FINAL OBJECT LESSON concerning the **depravity of man**. Their rebellion can't be blamed on **poverty, the lack of knowledge, or an unfair judicial system**. The source of their problem will be their own sinful hearts that reject the lordship of Christ over their lives. **It will be a short-lived rebellion and completely**

unsuccessful. At the end of it, Satan will join the antichrist and the false prophet to be tormented forever in the Lake of Fire. He will also be accompanied by fallen angels about whom the Bible says, "**these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day** (**Jude 6**)." That day will finally have arrived!

- **The destruction by fire of the present heavens and earth. Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.** Remember that the passing away of the PRESENT UNIVERSE was anticipated by our Lord in **Matthew 24:35 -- Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.** Peter also made mention of the fate of the universe in **2 Peter 3:7 -- But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." Why does God take this action?** Because of the presence of sin in the universe. Nothing unholy can ever enter into the eternal state! In their place God will create a new heaven and a new earth which we will learn much more about next week.
- **The judgment of the unsaved – Revelation 20:11-15 – Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is *the book of life*. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.** Because of what it says in **verse 11**, many call this the Great White Throne judgment. All unsaved people for all time will be resurrected and stand before the Lord Jesus to be judged (**John 5:28-29 -- Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when ALL who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment**). The Apostle John refers to those who have done evil as the DEAD. When they appear before the Lord **TWO BOOKS** will be opened. The **Book of Life** which only has the names of those who have been purchased by the shed blood of Christ from slavery to sin and death to become slaves of righteousness (**See Revelation 21:27**). The second book is often referred to as the **Book of Works**. It will be used to prove that everyone who is condemned to an eternity in hell/the lake of fire is getting what he or she deserves (…**for the wages of sin is death – Romans 6:23**). **Where will Christians be**

during this judgment? We will be in the presence of the Lord (Jude 24 -- To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy). The unsaved who have rejected Jesus' authority over their lives and refused to follow Him as Savior and Lord will be cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. (Review: Three judgments: (**1**) the judgment of Satan and his demons; (**2**) the judgment of the cursed heaven and earth; and (**3**) the judgment of the unsaved.)

The Final Outcome of Unbelievers.

- **THE DESTINATION -- HELL. Hell is the place of judgment. It is a place to be avoided at all costs according to our Lord (Matthew 5:27-30 -- "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right-hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell). Who created Hell? Was it Satan? Is it his place to rule for eternity over unbelievers?** It may surprise you to learn that God created Hell to be the final prison for everyone who stands cursed before Him in their sin and rebellion **(Matthew 25:41 -- "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels).**
- **THE DESCRIPTION OF HELL.**
  - **A place of weeping and the gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30 -- In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth).** This refers to a grinding of the teeth together due to pain. If you have ever hit your thumb with a hammer hard enough to make you wince, you probably did this. That's what Hell will be like for every unbeliever only to a much greater degree. **It will be a place of eternal agony.**
  - **A place of enforced separation from God's presence** on the day of judgment, Jesus will say to everyone who rejected His offer of salvation, **"I never knew you. Depart from Me" (Matthew 7:23).** To be in Hell will be to be separated from the Lord's presence forever. Think about it. The unbeliever will never again experience love, grace, mercy, kindness – all the attributes of God -- because He will not be around to offer them.
  - **A place of weeping, death and torment –** Do you remember in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, how the rich man described his existence in Hell? He called it **A PLACE OF TORMENT (Luke 16:28).** The same word is used to describe **THE**

TORTURE that believers experienced at the hands of unbelievers for refusing to renounce faith in Christ in **Hebrews 11:35.**

- **A place of darkness (Matthew 22:12-13 – (**to the man who had no right to be at the wedding supper of the lamb**) He said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness).** Imagine a place where there is no light anywhere. You cannot see your hand in front of your face, let alone anything else**. That's what hell is like.**
- **A place of loneliness (See Luke 16:26).** It is the opposite of heaven where people will enjoy rich fellowship with the Lord and those who follow Him. In Hell, people will be left by themselves to suffer and consider the foolish of their ways on earth.
- **A place of varying punishments (Matthew 11:22 -- But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you)".** It seems there will be degrees of suffering in Hell based on what people did with the revelation God gave to them in this life.

- **THE DURATION OF HELL. The lake of fire into which hell will be cast (Revelation 20:14) is eternal. Matthew 25:46** tells us that just as the righteous live forever in heaven, the wicked will live forever in Hell**. Some people believe in what's called ANNIHILATIONISM. This is the idea that unbelievers will be judged and then cease to exist or only suffer for a period of time and then cease to exist.** This view contradicts the teaching of Scripture, however, and is based on human logic. **"How could God want someone to suffer for eternity?"** It just doesn't seem to line up with the concept that God is loving, kind and good. The thing to remember is this: The Bible tells us that the unbeliever is in the condition of death (**Ephesians 2:1**). This never means the cessation of being, but separation from God.

Why must this final judgment take place?

- **To reveal the immensity of the evil that is found in sin and rebellion to God.** As fallen human beings, we see sin very differently than God does. We call it a mistake or not that big a deal. Here are a few of the words in both testaments that give us a much more heinous understanding of sin: (1) Evil – contrary to God's will; (2) an offense -- deserving punishment; (3) wicked; (4) iniquity (twisted); (5) transgression (breaking

the law); (6) depraved; and (7) unrighteous. WHEN WE CONSIDER OUR SIN IN THIS LIGHT, WE START TO UNDERSTAND JUST HOW EVIL WE CAN BE.

- **To reveal the magnitude of the holiness and justice of God. Colossians 3:25 -- For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. God treats all sinners the same.** HE IS HOLY AND JUST (**Romans 3:26 -- so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus**). That's why Jesus had to come and die for us. It was the only way for us to pass from eternal death to eternal life. The penalty for sin had to be paid to satisfy God's justice and holiness.

The Bible says this in Hebrews 9:27 -- … it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment. Have you made the decision to follow Christ as Savior and Lord?

Conclusion: The arrest of a 94-year-old man living for so many decades on a quiet street in **Oak Ridge, Tennessee** was a wakeup call for the man's neighbors. They said they could not have imagined that he was an active collaborator in one of the worst instances of the second World War. Federal prosecutors convinced the court that **Mr. Berger** was part of the SS machinery of oppression that kept concentration camp prisoners in atrocious conditions of confinement. This led not only to the injury and emaciation of many of those prisoners, but to their deaths. This man at age 94 must have imagined that he had gotten away with it, and that he would die in peace in that ranch house. But something happened that he could not have envisioned. **The SS cards identifying him, along with other prison camp guards, had been on a boat that was sunk by the Allies. These cards were discovered in 1950 but they had disintegrated. But modern technology meant that these cards could be reassembled, and thus the names and all the information on those SS cards could now be fully understood**. This led them to a 94-year-old man living in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. **Devora Fish**, the director of education for the **Tennessee Holocaust Commission**, said this: "***Every time that somebody is brought to justice, even from 50 years ago or longer, that is a message to the world because we're not going to stop until everybody is brought to justice. Even if it's something you did years ago, it will catch up to you***." The neighbors of this man did not see a Nazi war criminal. They just saw an elderly man living in the United States who had come from Germany. **But what we cannot see, God sees (Hebrews 4:13 -- Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account). And sooner or later, justice in the form of His righteous judgment will be served on all who reject Jesus as their Lord and Savior**.