

Fundamental Belief #27: The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)

God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever! This is the truth that we will grab ahold of as we study the millennium. It is a truth that is deeper, more challenging, and more life-giving than it might sound at first hearing.

Revelation 20 makes it clear that the millennium is part of God's plan for judgment. Notice the judgment language in the following verses:

Revelation 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.

Revelation 20:9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Revelation 20:11-12 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

The millennium is about judgment. And being a judge is hard.

When I was pastoring in Idaho, I got acquainted with a church member who worked as a judge in a small town. Now that could be a challenging role. You might have to convict your neighbor or sentence your kids' classmate. All that could make public life awkward. This judge was aware of this dynamic and made a decision to not live disconnected from his community because of his role. He tried to interact in public like a real person, even if it made things awkward from time to time.

One Monday morning he was commuting to the courthouse by bus. At the bus stop he waited with one other man who looked familiar but seemed to avoid eye contact.

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Wanting to be friendly, the judge asked, “How was your weekend?” The man didn’t give the normal pleasant and superficial replay. Instead, he responded honestly, “The weekend was pretty rough.” The judge let him know he was sorry to hear that. Then he backed off and tried a different conversation starter, “Where you headed this morning?”. “The courthouse”, the man replied. The judge was aware that this could be a sensitive topic too. Instead of focusing the conversation on why he was going to the courthouse he redirected to focus on how he was getting there. He responded, “Really? Me too. I don’t often take the bus but I get free public transportation through my work so I thought I would try it out. I am curious about how you like public transportation and why you choose to take the bus.” The man looked up and said, “Your honor, you suspended my license on Friday.” Sure enough. That is why he looked familiar. He had seen him for multiple DUIs. They continued an awkward conversation until the bus arrived and then they endured an awkward ride to the courthouse where they would be seeing more of each other later that day.

Being a judge is hard! Understanding some of the difficulties of being a human judge in an earthly court can help us appreciate the great complexity of God’s role in judging sin before the universe.

It is hard just to become a judge. You don’t just go to judge school and send out your resume. The normal path is something like this: complete a pre-law degree, graduate from law school, pass the Bar Exam, become a successful attorney, then finally get elected or appointed as a judge and receive additional training.

Once a judge is appointed, the job doesn’t get easier. Here are some of the occupational challenges that are reported by judges:

- There is usually a significant pay cut in the transition from a successful attorney to a judge.
- There is a heavier load of responsibilities.
- They struggle to fall to sleep as their mind reviews decisions they have made.
- Many judges report that their case files would take 12-15 hours of reading per day if they were to read every word.
- They have daily exposure to sad situations and corrupt practices.
- They face pressure to perform favors that are not always legal.
- They usually make more enemies than friends.
- It is a challenge of maintaining an unbiased position after being trained to argue a case.
- Those in elected positions have the insecurity of reelection.
- There is a need to suppress feelings to maintain a proper judicial temperament.

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- They become isolated from previous colleagues whose cases they now preside over.
- There are concerns for the safety of themselves and their family.
- On a daily basis, they interact with people who are at the lowest moment in their life.
- They receive criticism from almost everyone.

Just try to relate these difficulties to the incredible task of judgment that God has. The challenges are similar but God judges at a different level. He is not judging a single case in a specific district. He judges every case in the universe. The scope of God's judgment is larger. The goal of his judgment is also larger. God doesn't just judge it, he ends it.

That last one would be tough. Being a judge exposes you to be judged by everyone. When Judge Gregory W. Alarcon was in the 28th year of his career he published an article entitled *Three Lessons I Wish I Knew When I First Became a Judge*. Each lesson highlights how hard the job is. Lesson #2 is Don't expect to make everyone happy - you can't. He tells how he has two quotes posted on the bench where he can see them. The first is, "You are not the target." (Laura Huxley). The second says, "What you think of me is none of my business" (Terry Cole-Whittaker.) These are the kind of reminders you need when you are a judge. Below is the first paragraph from lesson #2 of Judge Alarcon's article. What I wish to highlight is how he has adjusted his expectations and goals.

"Lesson Two: Don't expect to make everyone happy - you can't. When I was a new judge, I truly believed that, if I put on a black robe, explained my rulings thoroughly, listened to both sides and then, after thoughtful consideration, delivered a reasoned opinion, that even the losing side would consider me a thoughtful judge, a good judge, or at least not that bad a judge... The lesson I have learned is that judges must develop and perpetually maintain a thick skin. **And trying to make everyone happy is a completely unrealistic goal and should be replaced with the goal of trying to make the best ruling possible."**¹

The best a judge can do is make the right judgment, not make everyone ok with it. Just do right and stop trying to be liked. This is the best practice if you are a human judge. But it is not good enough if you are God. Follow this thought carefully because it illustrates the incredible puzzle of judgment on sin and the incredible heart of God. If you don't intend to be their friends, if you don't care if they like you, and if you don't need to win their trust, then correct judgment is good enough. But if you intend to have loving relationships with them for eternity, if you intend to receive their worship and for that worship to be genuine, and if you want their

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trust, then correct judgment is not enough. You also need trust. You need those who see your judgments to be ok with them. You need to somehow pull off what Judge Alarcon calls a “completely unrealistic goal” of trying to make everyone happy. It is appropriate for a judge to say, “What you think of me is none of my business”. But God will not adopt that motto. The security of eternity is impacted by what we think of him. God cannot enjoy a perfect eternity with people who doubt the justice of his judgment. Do you feel some appreciation for the messy predicament that God must navigate?

There was a time when there was a perfect universe, and yet sin arose out of that. God doesn't want this repeated. Sin originated with doubtful questions of God's character. When Lucifer wanted to be like the most high, he was doubting that God had his best interest in mind by being the only sovereign over the universe. He believed God was withholding a good thing from him. He brought sin to the earth with the same logic. He reasoned that the fruit of the tree would give special knowledge. Again, the suggestion was that God was withholding a good thing. If you completely trust the character of God, you will not fall for that temptation. So long as there exists any distrust in God's character, sin is possible. If God correctly judges but people are not ok with it, then sin never really ends. If God wants to end sin, he can't just judge it. He must ensure that all those who spend eternity with him trust his judgments completely. In judgment, God is not just going through formalities. He is not just letting off some anger. He is pursuing the only resolution for a sinless eternity. God will not only remove sin but he will remove the possibility of it.

The Bible promises that God will bring an end to sin. Fundamental Belief #27 is entitled *The Millennium and The End of Sin*. It will end! He will end sin by answering all the questions that started it. If he makes the right judgment but we hate him for it forever, then sin has not come to an end. Somehow God must be both right and liked. Through the process of the millennium, we get a glimpse into how God will accomplish this, humanly speaking, “completely unrealistic goal”.

If there were bus stops in heaven and you met God at one of them. You would not avoid eye contact for the way he judged a friend of yours. You will thank him for **judging sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

Imagine the victory an earthly judge would experience if they ended crime with their judgment of it. Nobody expects that. They can judge it but not change people. God's judgment changes us. He exposes the thing that is judge and the justice with which it is judged in a way that it loses its allure forever.

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ²And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand

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years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

The first thing we learn about the millennium is that Satan is bound. He will be destroyed at the end of the 1000 years (v.10), but at the beginning he is simply bound. The word translated “bottomless pit” is the Greek word ἄβυσσος (abussos). It is the same word used in the Greek Septuagint in Genesis 1:2 when darkness was “over the face of the deep”. It makes sense that the earth is formless and void because the second coming of Christ will dramatically reform it (2 Peter 3:7,10). Satan is alone, with nobody to deceive.

Verse 2 is where we first get the idea of the millennium, 1000 years. This is the length of time Satan is to be bound. Here is an overview of where everyone will be for the 1000 years.

Where will everyone be for the 1000 years of Revelation 20?			
	Before	During	After
Righteous Living	Changed & with Jesus	Living in heaven, reigning and judging (4,6)	With Jesus in the Holy City (9) & Rev 21
Righteous Dead	Resurrected & with Jesus		
Wicked Living	Slain (19:21)	Dead until 1000 years are over (5)	Resurrected (5), deceived, gathered for battle (8), consumed (9)
Wicked Dead	Stay dead		
Satan		Bound (2)	Released to deceive (7)
Earth	Destroyed	Desolate, Uninhabited	Home of New Jerusalem (9) & Revelation 21

We are given a clear timeframe (1000 years) but not a clear timeline. There are three main ideas about where the millennium fits into the timeframe of the end of the world, premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. There are many variations of each view, but in general, Premillennialists believe that Jesus comes before the millennium. The second coming marks the start of the 1000 years. The final judgment and the decent of New Jerusalem to earth, will mark the end of the 1000 years. Postmillennialists believe that the second coming will be after the millennium. There will be 1000 years of peace on earth before the glorious appearing of Christ. They have an optimistic view of the future of our world. It will

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get better. As the gospel goes to the world, society will improve. Amillennialists simply believe that the 1000 years is not to be taken as a literal time period.

I am a premillennialist. Here is how I see this as the more reasonable understanding from what the Bible teaches. Look at the chapter before Revelation 20. Then look at the chapter after. It is sandwiched between the second coming and the new Jerusalem (Rev 19-21). I recognize that the book is not all chronological, but the most basic understanding of these three chapters is that they happen in sequence. But the strongest argument for a premillennial timeline is that it fits perfectly with the teachings of death, resurrections, and judgment. We will see this timing as we go through the chapter.

In the first 3 verses we are told of Satan's fate for the 1000 years. In the next three verses we learn how the righteous and the wicked spend this span of time.

Revelation 20:4-6 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

For the 1000 years, the wicked are dead and the righteous are alive. The righteous are raised at the second coming and alive during the millennium. The righteous are given the role of judging. The wicked remain dead at the second coming or are destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

Why is the millennium necessary? Why not just get on with eternity?

The United States affirms its commitment to the concept of "due process of law" in the 5th and 14th amendments. Due process is procedures that the government must follow in administering justice. Our due process includes safeguards like serving people notice of legal proceedings against them, providing fair hearings, offering the right to counsel and much more. Without due process the justice system is not just but has sad consequences like we have seen in the Salem Witch hunts and the Spanish Inquisition.

God has a due process in his judgment of earth. In my academy Bible class, I was taught about three phrases of judgment that make a lot of sense as I continue to

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read my Bible. Phase one is the investigative or pre-advent stage of judgment. Jesus say, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done." (Revelation 22:12). He does a work of judgment before he comes, otherwise he would be arbitrary in taking some and leaving others. There is a final, or third, phase of judgment that was taught to me as the executive judgment. This happens at the end of the millennium when God will execute final judgment. We read about this judgment in Revelation 20:9-10 when "fire came down from heaven and consumed them". There is another phase of judgment between these two, the review phase. It happens during the millennium, "Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed". (Revelation 20:4). That is how I learned it, investigative judgment, review judgment, executive judgment. God's judgment is made, reviewed, and then executed. God has established his due process for judgment. **God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

There is so much significance wrapped up in the idea that the righteous will judge (v4).

1 Corinthians 6:1-3 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? ²Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:28-30 You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

America remembers the ruling of Brown vs Board of Education as a victory for equality. It declared that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. It declared that the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place in our educational system. It was a victory. But it wasn't a victory until that ruling. The "Brown" in Brown verse Board of Education was an African American named Oliver Brown. His daughter was denied enrollment at a white school. The alternative segregated school offered a far inferior education. Brown was associated with an equal rights group (NAACP) that filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education. The case merged with 4 other lawsuits, each against various boards of education. They argued that the segregation in education was unconstitutional, a violation of the equal

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opportunity guaranteed in the 14th amendment. They had a strong case but when these cases were tried by three judges at a US District Court, the judges ruled in favor of the boards of education. They appealed to the standard previously established by the Supreme Court, “separate but equal”. Brown received a final judgment of the US District Court. He lost.

Why, then, do we remember Brown vs Board of Education as a victory for equal rights? Because Brown appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court reviewed the judgment of the District Court and reversed it.

Part of the due process in our country includes the right to appeal. When a final decision is made by a lower court a higher court can be appealed to review the decision. Judges don't want their judgments appealed. If a judge's ruling is overturned their ego is hurt and if it happens often enough their reputation is damaged. But if a judge is secure in his judgment, he doesn't stress about the appeal process. In fact, an appeal is affirming when the appeal court agrees with your judgment. The only reason that someone would want to have their judgment appealed is if they knew that it was just.

In the millennium God appeals his own judgment. He would only do this if he was secure in the justice of his judgment. He does not appeal to a higher court because there is no higher court. He appeals to the redeemed. He opens the books to them and gives them 1000 years to function as a court of appeals. What a move! He judges correctly, then appeals his judgment. He wants to ensure that nobody spends eternity thinking God judged wrong. You can trust God. **God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

This transparency is so needed because our entire human existence has been under the influence of a devil who has operated as a master deceiver to misrepresent the character of God. (Revelation 12:7-12; Genesis 3:1-7; Job 1:6-12). There has been a lot of lies and God has planned a good amount of time to shine light on them and let the truth be seen. We all have the question that Abraham asked of God, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” (Genesis 18:25). God exposes himself and his judgments.

John 3:20-21 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

The wicked are not alive until the end of the 1000 years (v5,8,9). There are two resurrections, the resurrection of life, at the beginning of the 1000 years, and the

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resurrection of death, at the end (John 5:29). Those in the 1st resurrection don't face the 2nd death. (6,14,15; 2:11).

At the end of the millennium some things happen that appear frightening, but they are such good news. These verses describe that final phase of judgment. God will execute final and just destruction of the wicked. (v9,15)

Revelation 20:7-10

⁷And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and 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. ⁹And 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^[b] and consumed them, ¹⁰and 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.

He is just in administering mercy and he is merciful in administering justice.

My family owns a board game called Pandemic. If you find the cure to all the viruses, you win. If the viruses infect too much of the world, you lose. One key strategy to winning the game is eradication. Even with a cure, if the virus exists, it can spread. But if you eradicate it, it never comes back. God's justice system has provided both the cure and the eradication of sin. The cross is the cure. The judgment process of the millennium is the eradication. The God who has provided the cure for sin will be faithful to eradicate it. The only way to eradicate sin is to ensure that the living trust him at a level that sin will never arise in them and that the wicked are eternally eliminated. If they live on forever, there is no eradication. If it is possible to arise in the mind of the saved because of some lingering question of God's character, sin is not eradicated. **God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

When you are on the inside of the walls of the New Jerusalem and you look out and watch the fire come down from heaven and consume the righteous, what emotions do you imagine you will feel? My first thought is that there will be pain, pity, and horror. But with an understanding of the due process of the millennium, I dare say that we will worship God at the sight of the fire. We will feel joy, relief, and satisfaction. Not in some twisted way. But because we will fully trust the justice of that fire. We will not see it as the torture of sinners but the eradication of sin.

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The most prominent argument against premillennialism is that it necessitates that sin and death continue beyond the second coming of Jesus. Which it does. Sin and death continue for 1000 years past the second coming, but with no active evil because the wicked will be dead. The argument goes like this. If Christ comes before the millennium, then that means that there is still sin and death during the millennium because sin and death are not destroyed until the end of the millennium. But Jesus is victorious over death at his coming so this cannot be. To have sin and death hang around for 1000 years after the coming of Christ would suggest that God is weak. I have read this argument described as the, “fatal weakness of premillennialism”ⁱⁱⁱ and the “decisive blow against it”.

But when we understand the due process of judgment, we can see just the opposite. The fact that sin and death are not completely destroyed until the end of the millennium speaks of God’s love. He is so committed to eternal love relationships with us that he chooses to not eternally destroy sin and death until after we are given the chance to review his judgment. We are not going to overturn any judgment of God. We will find it just. But if we knew that the sentencing of judgment was already carried out while we were reviewing, we would know that the review was for show. God is waiting to issue final judgment until we have seen that the judgment is just. The very argument against premillennialism exposes one of the greatest points premillennialism reveals about the character of God. Premillennialists agree with postmillennialists and the Bible in that the “last enemy to be destroyed will be death” (1 Corinthians 15:22-26). But we see the glory of God’s character in his timing of that destruction. It is not weakness that allows sin and death to continue past the second coming but love. For Christ shows his power over death in giving victory over death to the righteous at the second coming. But he holds off on eradication until he can be trusted to do so. It is in the New Jerusalem, not during the millennium, that it can be said, “and death shall be no more” (Revelation 21:4).

God has the power to destroy sin instantly at any stage of history. He has always had love reasons why he has chosen to let it linger for a time. When the weeds grow with the wheat Jesus teaches not to pull the weeds lest some of the wheat also be pulled (Matthew 13:24-30). God will only be able to wipe every tear in the New Jerusalem because he waited to destroy sin and death until the end of the millennium. **God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

At the end of the millennium, we will be able to move on, to let go. We will be able to let go of our baggage for this broken world because we will have complete trust in God’s justice. To let go we must have something to hold on to. When we trust justice, it enables us to let go of injustice. The opposite is true as well. When we

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don't trust justice, we hold onto the injustice. When we didn't think a sibling got punished enough by mom and dad, we felt a need to carry out the remainder of the sufficient punishment. We carry it. We resent. Because we don't trust justice. Our ability to let go of injustices is proportionate to our trust in God's justice. Are you carrying around injustices that were done to you? Are you struggling to let go of those ways you were done wrong? Trust God's justice and you can let go of that injustice. We can begin this trusting process now and grow into it for 1000 years.

The truth sets us free. There is so much freedom in the truth of the millennium. The promise of perfect justice heals the damage that injustice has caused us. You can rest your injustices in his justice. I know that you have spent years accumulating your burdens and years trying to lay them down. So, I don't expect that this one sermon can fix it all. But I believe that this truth offers you freedom.

Life is plagued with injustice. And we carry the scares. There are many coping mechanisms. Some help. Some hurt. I can say with confidence that I know the best coping mechanisms for the damage of injustice. It is called faith! How do you cope with injustice? Have faith in the perfect justice of God!

Listen, he is keeping record. Remember those books that will be opened? He is keeping record, so you don't have to! Because he keeps record you can let go. Faith in his justice then allows us to let go of injustice now.

I am lingering on this concept because it is so relevant. With just a little bit of self-reflection you can admit that much of the pain you carry right now comes from an injustice you have experienced. These things legitimately wound us. And the pain is intensified with the realization that we probably won't get justice. At least, not in this life. I have understood God's claim that "vengeance is mine" to mean that he will get back at people for their wrongs so that I don't have to. It is so much bigger than that. His justice will resolve the mess. His justice will remove the scars. His justice will make the wrong right. His justice will be displayed with a level of transparency that builds complete trust and undoes the emotional trauma.

His justice heals what injustice hurts. Every injustice of your childhood will be healed. It was not fair that you had no father figure. The abuse was wrong. It wasn't right that your friend betrayed you. It was cruel the way your teacher picked on you. The injustice in your childhood caused serious damage. You can let go of your injustice when you hold on to the promise of God's justice.

His justice heals what injustice hurts. It was an injustice that you were given fewer opportunities because of your gender, ethnicity, or beliefs. It wasn't fair that the joys of your senior year in high school were overshadowed by the way that special

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person broke your heart. It is so wrong when a child dies before a parent. It can be cruel to care for a spouse as they slowly lose their hold on life. Your parents divorce set you back and shook your foundation. The pain of your own divorce was punctuated with one injustice after another. It is not fair. The accident robbed you of years in which you could not perform like you knew you are capable of. You can let go of your injustice when you hold on to the promise of God's justice.

We're not done listing out our injustices because we're still holding on to them. Parenting, there's nothing fair about it. It calls us to extreme selflessness without recognizing us for it. No, it wasn't fair that your child was born with a disability and that a perfectly healthy baby was born to parents that didn't want her. It isn't fair what happened to your money in the market crash. The time when that person would not stop until he destroyed your reputation was so wrong. You can let go of your injustice when you hold on to the promise of God's justice.

The church is a place of injustice. We are wounded by injustice through church gossip. Most people never saw your good intentions, they just blamed you for the messy results. They didn't listen. They didn't care. They were hypocrites. You gave and it wasn't appreciated. You were hurt by the very people who were supposed to be helping you fall in love with Jesus. You can let go of your injustice when you hold on to the promise of God's justice.

It is not right what they are saying about you. The custody battle was determined by lies. If the doctor would have just caught it early, mom would still be alive and well. Oh, the injustice of famine, war and poverty. Where is the justice for the 300,000 who have died in the Ukraine War? How is there anything fair about what is happening in the Middle East right now? Can you see that injustice is the curse we live with. And it is just too heavy for some people to bear. It ruins so many. I want to tell you, because I believe it, you can let go of your injustice when you hold on to the promise of God's justice. It is God's justice that can get us to finally stop fighting, defending, replaying, and appealing. You can let go of your injustice when you hold on to the promise of God's justice.

Here is what will happen at the great white throne judgment at the end of the millennium.

Revelation 20:14-15 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.

When that happens, our trust of God will be so solid that we see the lake of fire as love. If we do not judge God's judgments completely his judgments will keep us from

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loving him. One moment he will consume the wicked outside of the wall with fire outside the walls of the New Jerusalem. The next moment, inside those walls, he is presumptuously wiping every tear from every eye of the righteous. They will not be at peace. At best they will be resentfully cooperative. He must show us that his judgment is love and it is just. We don't have a Jekyll and Hyde God. It is love when he wipes every tear precisely because it is love when he consumes with fire. If we trust God's judgments then when we hear words like "judgment", "wrath", "lake of fire", or "consumed", we will think words like "love", "beauty", "glory", "justice" and "joy". If you are not there yet, take courage in the knowledge that God has reserved 1000 years to help you get there. **God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

If you are a child or a parent in any church going family, you have experienced the church smile. It is a smile you resent. This happens when there is a harsh tone of voice in the car on the way to church that is replaced by a sweet tone in the church. It is the incongruency of seeing someone who is mean in private and nice in public. It is an unguarded harshness with the family that is masked by a church smile. I am especially susceptible to this because I stand up from and give my church smile to the entire congregation for 40 minutes. I have been guilty of not giving that same smile to my family in private settings. I am a hypocrite too. When people see that the private you and the public you don't agree, which one do you think they believe more? A smile is a good thing. But here is where it hurts. When you know that you cannot trust someone's positive public portrayal of themselves, the positive portrayal doesn't improve your view of them, it makes it worse. The more you smile, the more they feel like you are fake. The sweeter you get, the more they resent you. If you have lost trust privately you cannot recover by improving your public persona. The better you look, the more you are resented and the less you are trusted.

If God fails to judge sin perfectly and satisfy the universe of this perfection, then God could put on the greatest church smile for all eternity and never enjoy true love relationships with the redeemed. If you think that the car ride to church and the church smile are a bad combo, imagine this, God unjustly tortures and destroys your loved one, but he takes you to heaven to worship him for his goodness forever. It doesn't even have to be this extreme to be bad. Imagine God justly judges your loved one but does not provide the transparency for you to be convinced of his justice. Then you are to pose as a worshipper of God forever while holding serious unanswered questions. It wouldn't be an eternity of the church smile. If God were a hypocrite, imagine the show he could put on, glory, miracles, eloquence, pleasures... And if we doubted his justice, our resentment would grow in proportion to his positive portrayal of himself. He must have transparency to show his integrity or eternity will not be marked by love and sin will not come to an end. He shows us

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that he is consistent. He is the same person in private as public, the same God in judgment as he is in mercy. This is why it is such a glorious truth that **God will judge sin in a way that will end sin forever!**

ⁱ <https://www.advocatemagazine.com/article/2021-july/three-lessons-i-wish-i-knew-when-i-first-became-a-judge>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-you-must-believe-if-you-are-a-premillennialist/>