

The Urgency of Evangelism

Introduction:

- A. Jonathan Edwards in his sermon “Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God” touched on the urgency of getting right with God. This sermon was based on Deuteronomy 32:35 which clearly uses four terms to exemplify the urgency involved in God’s judging of His people (recipients of the message). This same urgency is a part of the proclamation of the message, in our case, evangelism. The New Testament also testifies of the importance of the “now” (2 Cor 6:2) and of “today” (Heb 4:7). The following notes highlight the biblical foundation for an urgent evangelism.
- B. Ezekiel 12:21-28 shows that the urgency for following Christ can be lost. God wants the urgency maintained for His glory.
- C. Examples of an urgent witness for Christ:
1. Acts 4:19-20 (cf. Acts 5:29), *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.”*
 2. John Knox cried out, “Give me Scotland or I die!”
 3. William Booth displayed the same boldness and zeal when he wrote in King Edward VII’s registry:

Your Majesty, Some men’s ambition is art.
Some men’s ambition is fame.
Some men’s ambition is gold.
My ambition is the souls of men.
- D. The Bible teaches, “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” (Eph 6:10) The Apostle Paul who was beaten, stoned, whipped, arrested, and threatened and cursed for the name of the Lord (cf. 2 Cor 11:23-28). He bore shame and rebuke for the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor 4:8-13, 2 Cor 6:4-10). Then he exhorts Christians to follow in his steps (cf. 1 Cor 11:1).
- E. The same Holy Spirit resides in us as resided in the Apostles of old or in the great Reformers. Can we become too busy with the cares of the world? (Matt 13:22) Are we available to forsake all for our Lord? Do we allow sin to entangle us? (Heb 12:1) Are we free to do bold service for our King?
- F. Isaiah pronounced a woe on those who were busy with merrymaking in life. (Isaiah 5:11-14; Jer 15:17-18) They had forgotten the Lord their God. In fact, the prophet explains that those whose words and lifestyle exemplify no concern for God become spiritually starved. Their lives have rendered them spiritually famished and incapable of having a positive spiritual ministry in the lives of others. They have become incapable of feeding others any worthwhile spiritual food.
- G. Philemon 6 (NIV) reads, “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” Spiritual anorexia results from a lack of activity in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Whereas growth in understanding proceeds from active evangelism.
- H. Why is evangelism so important? There are many reasons for evangelism to be the first priority in the Church. And among these reasons are the **Urgencies of Evangelism**. These **Urgencies** propel the Church forward in her mission to reach the lost.

1. Jesus Christ is coming back quickly!

Millard J. Erickson wrote:

“In view of the certainty of the second coming and the finality of the judgment which will follow, it is imperative that we act in accordance with the will of God.”⁷⁵

A. B. Simpson called the church to hasten the return of Christ through world evangelism:

“And furthermore let us never forget that this movement is intimately and immediately connected with the blessed hope of our Lord’s return. Never let us forget our great missionary watchword, ‘This Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come.’”

“On the great missionary movement hangs the appointed hour of the millennial dawn, of the marriage of the Lamb, of the glory of the resurrection, of the time of the restitution of all things. In yonder heavens He waits until we have fulfilled the last condition that precedes His advent, and then how gladly He will make haste to meet us with the recompense of our service and the grander opportunities of that kingdom of glory, whose crowns and sovereignties we shall share with Him.”⁷⁶

Old Testament Scripture Regarding the Coming Day of Judgment

1. *“The Day of the Lord is near,”* Isaiah 13:6, Ezekiel 30:3, Joel 1:15, 2:1, 3:14, Obadiah 1:15, Zephaniah 1:7.
2. *“Near is the great day of the Lord, Near and coming very quickly,”* Zephaniah 1:14.
3. *“The day is near,”* Ezekiel 7:7, 30:3.
4. *“Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness,”* Malachi 3:5.
4. *“Before the Lord for He is coming; For He is coming to judge the earth.”* Psa 96:13.
5. *“The Day of the Lord is coming,”* Isaiah 13:9.
6. *“Behold, the day! It is coming,”* Ezekiel 7:10 (v. 19, *“the day of the wrath of the Lord”*).
7. *“Days are coming,”* Jeremiah 7:32, 9:25, 19:6, Amos 8:11 (Most other eschatological references to “days” in Jeremiah speak of the New Covenant in Christ, e.g. Jeremiah 16:14, 23:5, 7; 30:3, 31:27, 31, 38, 33:14).
8. *“For the Lord of Hosts will have a day,”* Isaiah 2:12.
9. *“In that Day,”* Isaiah 2:17, 20, Amos 8:9, Micah 5:10-15, Zechariah 12:3-9.

New Testament Scripture Regarding the Second Coming

1. *“(Behold,) I am coming quickly,”* Rev 3:11, 22:12, 20.
2. *“For yet a little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay,”* Heb 10:37 (cf. Hab 2:3).
3. *“A little while, and you will no longer behold me; and again a little while, and you will see Me.”* John 16:16.
4. *“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night,”* 1 Thess 5:2
5. *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,”* 2 Pet 3:10.
6. *“Behold, I am coming like a thief,”* Rev 16:15.
7. *“I will come like a thief,”* Rev 3:3
8. *“Behold, the Judge is standing right at the door,”* Jms 5:9.
9. *“Recognize that He is near, right at the door,”* Matt 24:33, Mark 13:29.
10. *“For the time is near,”* Rev 1:3, 22:10.
11. *“The Lord is near,”* Philippians 4:5.
12. *“The kingdom of God is near,”* Luke 21:31.
13. *“Knowing the time ... for now salvation is nearer to us,”* Rom 13:11.
14. *“It is the last hour,”* 1 John 2:18.
15. *“The day is at hand,”* Rom 13:12.
16. *“The kingdom of heaven is at hand,”* Matt 10:7.
17. *“The coming of the Lord is at hand,”* James 5:8.
18. *“The end of all things is at hand,”* 1 Pet 4:7.

⁷⁵Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 1204.

⁷⁶A. B. Simpson, *Annual Report of the Missionary Crusade* (1892), 62-63.

19. “The things which must shortly take place,” Rev 1:1, 22:6.
20. “For the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will,” Matt 24:44.
21. “For the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect,” Luke 12:40.
22. “The master will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,” Matt 24:50, Luke 12:46.
23. “But as to the day and hour no one knows,” Matt 24:36, Mark 13:32.
24. “For you do not know which day the Lord is coming,” Matt 24:42.
25. “Be on the alert,” Matt 24:42, 25:13.
26. “Be ready,” Matt 24:44, Luke 12:40.

The Return of Christ as Motivation

1. Motivation to faith, Luke 18:8
2. Motivation to persevere, Heb 10:36-37
3. Motivation for holiness of life, 2 Pet 3:11-12
4. Motivation to live for Christ, Matt 24:46-51, 25:13, 24-30.
5. Motivation to live zealous for good deeds, Titus 2:11-14
6. Motivation to preach, II Timothy 4:1-2
7. Motivation to hasten the return of Jesus through evangelism, Matt 24:14, Mark 13:10 > 2 Pet 3:11-12

Not surprisingly, there are nay-sayers on this point—they teach that only biblicists and literalists believe in the hastening the return of Christ through evangelism.⁷⁷ But it must be stated that this is what the Bible teaches, and furthermore these verses sparked the urgency of evangelism during the Great Century of Protestant Missions.

8. Motivation to persevere in evangelism, Matt 10:23.

Commitment: “Lord, May I Always Live Remembering Your Soon Return.”

2. The Lost Are Really Lost!

To restate this in other words, individuals who are not born-again believers in Jesus Christ are spiritually dead (lifeless), heading for an eternal hell, and in desperate need of the Savior!

“But God, I know that they are not committed Christians, but they seem like decent people!”

The Lostness of Man without Christ

1. Helpless/Hopeless, Rom 5:6, Eph 2:12
Notice the progression in translating the phrase in Rom 5:6, “For while we were still helpless” [ἔτι γὰρ Χριστὸς ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν]:
French Geneva (1535-1560), “Car du temps que nous estions encore desnuez de toute force”
Trans “For from the time that we were still denuded of all strength”
English Geneva (1599), “For Christ, when we were yet of no strength”
English KJV (1611/1769), “For when we were yet without strength”
French Martin (1699), “Car lorsque nous étions encore privés de toute force”
Trans “For when we were still deprived of all strength”
French Ostervald (1744), “Car, lorsque nous étions encore sans force”
Trans “For, when we were still without strength”
English ASV (1901), “For while we were yet weak”
English NASB (1977), “For while we were still helpless”
2. Sinners, Rom 5:8
3. Enemies of God, Rom 5:10
4. Under the empire of the flesh/sin, Rom 3:9, 7:5
Consider the language in Deut 31:29, “[for corruptly] you will act corruptly [!Wt&iv.T; txö/h;yKf]”
5. Sons of disobedience, Eph 2:2

⁷⁷“Evangelism is not a mechanism to hasten the return of Christ, as some suggest” (David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 420).

6. By nature children of wrath, Eph 2:3
7. Spiritually dead, Eph 2:1, 5, Col 2:13
8. Enemies of God, Rom 5:10
9. Can do no good in the eyes of God, Rom 3:12
10. "For the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it." Matt 7:13

God's Judgment of Sinners

Introduction:

"Just as in the past, the question of the future states of the wicked has created a considerable amount of controversy in our day. The doctrine of an everlasting punishment appears to some to be outmoded or sub-Christian view."⁷⁸

A. The Reality of Judgment:

1. A God who sees all sin, Job 34:21-22, Psa 69:5, Prov 24:12, Jer 16:17 (cf. Psa 119:168):
 - a. God looks at the heart, I Sam. 16:7, 1 Chr 28:9
 - b. God tests the sons of men, Psa 11:4-5
 - c. "God will judge the secrets of men," Rom 2:16
2. God's reaction to sin:
 - a. God is grieved because of sin, Gen 6:6, Psa 7:11, Eph 4:30 (e.g. Jer 6:7)
 - b. God is angered because of sin, Rom 1:18, 32, 1 Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:21, Eph 5:6, Col 3:6, Rev 21:8, 27 (cf. Psa 90:11, 137:9)
3. God's judgment of sin:
 - a. "God the judge of all." Heb 12:23
 - b. God judges according to His Word, Psa 149:9, John 12:48, Rev 19:13->15->21 (cf. Rom 2:12)
 - c. God will judge wickedness, Psa 58:10-11, 76:8-9, 94:2, 23, 96:13; Ezek 18:4, 20, 22:31, "their ways I have brought upon their heads;" Hos 13:7-8; Rom 14:10-12; 2 Pet 3:7; Jude 14-15; Rev 20:11-15
 - d. Some aspects of God's judgments:
 - 1) Temporal judgments of God, Psa 78:33, Prov 11:31, 13:6, e.g. Lev 10:1-2, 2 Kg 5:26-27
 - 2) Eternal judgment of God, Matt 13:40, 24:51, Rom 6:23, 14:10, Gal 5:21, Heb 9:27, Rev 21:8
4. Reasons for/Results of God's judgment:

Introduction:

"Fill their faces with dishonor,
 "That they may seek Thy name, O Lord.
 "Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever;
 "And let them be humiliated and perish,
 "That they may know that Thou alone, whose name is the Lord,
 "Art the most high over all the earth,"
 Psa 83:17-18

- a. That people may know that the Lord is God, Psa 83:17-18:
 - 1) "Thus you will know that I am the Lord God." Ezek 23:49, 24:24, 25:5, 17
 - 2) "And they will know that I am the Lord." Ezek 25:11 (found 45 times in Ezekiel!)
 - a) Judgment magnifies and sanctifies God's name, Ezek 38:16
 - b) "For the Lord who judges her is strong," Rev 18:8
 - c) "That the nations may know Me," Ezek 38:16 (cf. Ezek 38:23)
 - d) To get man's attention, Job 36:15

⁷⁸Erickson, 1234-35; on the last sentence, Erickson references Nels Ferré, *The Christian Understanding of God* (New York: Harper, 1951), 233-34.

- e) The fear of God, Psa 64:9
- f) Consideration of God's work, Psa 64:9
- g) That people may turn from sin, Ezek 16:41-43
- h) That people may come to salvation, Job 33:13-22, 29-30
- i) Declaring the works of God, Psa 64:9

Conclusion:

“But God will shoot at them with an arrow;
 “Suddenly they will be wounded.
 “So they will make him stumble;
 “Their own tongue is against them;
 “All who see it will shake the head.
 “Then all men will fear,
 “And will declare the work of God,
 “And will consider what He has done.
 “The righteous will see it and be glad in the Lord, and will take refuge in Him;
 “And all the upright in heart will glory” (Psa 64:7-10).

B. The Reality of Hell as the Everlasting Conscious Punishment of Unsaved Man:⁷⁹

Introduction:

“The truth of hell is that eternal punishment is a vital doctrine. It cannot, it must not, be ignored or abandoned. We must have the courage to preach it from the pulpits, in Bible schools and seminaries, and to a lost world. Vernon Grounds is correct, ‘It is impossible to exaggerate the seriousness and urgency that the doctrine of hell imparts to life here and now.’”⁸⁰

1. Temporal Descriptions of Hell:
 - a. “Second death,” Rev 20:14, 21:8
 - b. “Eternal destruction,” 2 Thess 1:9
 - c. “Eternal judgment,” Heb 6:2
 - d. “Eternal punishment,” Matt 25:46
 - e. “Eternal fire,” Matt 18:8, 25:41, Jude 7
 - f. “Unquenchable fire,” Matt 3:11, Mark 9:43, Luke 3:17
 - g. “Black darkness has been reserved forever,” Jude 13
 - h. “Tormented day and night forever and ever,” Rev 20:10
 - i. “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night,” Rev 14:11
 - j. “Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched,” Isa 66:24, Mark 9:48
2. Physical Descriptions of Hell:
 - a. Regarding Fire (cf. Isa 30:30-33):
 - 1) “Upon the wicked He will rain snares [or: coals of fire]; fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup,” Psa 11:6

⁷⁹J.I. Packer in *Evangelical Affirmations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 123-24 states that many protestant theologians and cultists have adopted an ‘annihilationism or conditionalism’ view of God’s Judgment. Cited are some prominent evangelical theologians. In his favorable response to Packer, John Ankerberg (139-41) proposes seven excellent affirmations with regard to universalism and the denial of an eternal hell. These are: “(1) Jesus Christ is the principle figure responsible for the doctrine of eternal punishment. The denial of eternal punishment is tantamount to the denial of the deity of our Lord and Savior. (2) Rejection of hell is a denial of biblical authority which opens the door to additional revisionist and syncretistic tendencies in other areas. (3) The problem is not a scriptural issue but an emotional issue, contaminated by secularist and humanistic thinking. (4) To reject eternal punishment and accept other ways of salvation is to affirm that the cross of Christ was unnecessary. (5) To affirm universalism is the denial of the church’s mission to preach the gospel and warn men to escape God’s wrath and eternal punishment (2 Cor 5:11; Luke. 3:7, 9, 17, 18). (6) The doctrine of eternal punishment is the watershed between evangelical and non-evangelical thought. (7) Universalism logically repudiates the doctrine of justification by faith.”

⁸⁰John Ankerberg and John Weldon, “Response to J.I. Packer” *Ibid.*, 147.

- 2) "A Place for burning," Matt 13:30
 - 3) "Burned up with fire," Rev 18:8 (cf. Rev 18:9)
 - 4) "Fire," Matt 3:10, 7:19, 13:40, Luke 3:9, John 15:6, Heb 10:27, 2 Pet 3:7
 - 5) "Fiery hell," Matt 5:22; 18:9
 - 6) "Furnace of fire," Matt 13:42, 50
 - 7) "Eternal fire," Matt 18:8, 25:41, Jude 7
 - 8) "Unquenchable fire," Matt 3:12, Mark 9:43, Luke 3:17
 - 9) "Where the fire is not quenched," Mark 9:44, 46, 48
 - 10) "Lake of fire," Rev 20:14, 14, 15
 - 11) "Lake of fire that burns with brimstone," Rev 19:20
 - 12) "Lake that burns with fire and brimstone," Rev 21:8
 - 13) "Lake of fire and brimstone," Rev 20:10
 - 14) "Tormented with fire and brimstone," Rev 14:10
 - 15) "And he cried out, 'I am in agony in this flame,'" Luke 16:24
- b. Other Descriptions:
- 1) "Hell," Matt 5:29, 30, 10:28, 23:33, Mark 9:43, 45, 47, Luke 12:5, James 3:6, 2 Pet 2:4
 - 2) "Destruction," Matt 7:13, Rom 9:22, Phil 3:19, 1 Thess 5:3, Heb 10:39, 2 Pet 2:12, 3:7, Rev 17:8, 11
 - 3) "Sheol," Isa 5:14
 - 4) "Weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt 8:12, 13:42, 50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30
 - 5) "Torment," Luke 16:23
 - 6) "Tribulation and distress," Rom 2:9
 - 7) "Abyss," Luke 8:31, Rev 20:1, 3
 - 8) "Pits of darkness," 2 Pet 2:4
 - 9) "black darkness," Jude 13
 - 10) "Outer darkness," Matt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30
 - 11) "Depths of the earth," Psa 63:9
 - 12) Complete Separation from God, Matt 25:12, 41
3. There is no way to leave hell, Luke 16:26

C. The Reality of a Literal Hell for All Unsaved Persons:⁸¹

1. In many of the above occurrences of a designation for hell, the context refers directly to people (as opposed to a simile in a parable, e.g. Matt 13:30):
 - a. The case of Lazarus, and his consciousness of the burning pain, Luke 16:23-24
 - b. Various grammatical designations of people:
 - 1) "You", Matt 5:29, 30, 18:8, 9
 - 2) "Him", Matt 22:13, 24:51
 - 3) "These", Matt 25:46, Rev 19:20
 - 4) "Them", Matt 13:42
 - 5) "Anyone", Rev 20:15
 - 6) "Whoever," Matt 5:22
 - 7) "For whom," Jude 13
 - 8) "For every soul who does evil," Rom 2:9
 - 9) "Many are those who enter by it," Matt 7:13

⁸¹It may help to understand that the Roman Catholic church believes in a figurative hell, consisting primarily of separation from God: "To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called 'hell.' ... The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1994], 269, 270 [§1033 and §1035]).

- c. A designation of people condemned to hell according to the sin(s) which they commit:
 - 1) Those breaking the 1st and 2nd commandments:
 - a) “Idolaters,” 1 Cor 6:9; Rev 21:8, and those who practice “idolatry,” Gal 5:20
 - b) “Sorcerers,” Rev 21:8, and those who practice “sorcery,” Gal 5:20
 - c) “Unbelievers,” Luke 12:45
 - d) Those who are, “cowardly, unbelieving,” Rev 21:8
 - 2) Those breaking the 6th Commandment, “You shall not murder”:
 - a) “Murderers,” Rev 21:8
 - b) “Whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’” Matt 5:22
 - 3) Those breaking the 7th Commandment, “You shall not commit adultery”:
 - a) “Fornicators,” 1 Cor 6:9, “immoral persons,” Rev 21:8, and those who practice “immorality,” Gal 5:19
 - b) “Adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals,” 1 Cor 6:9
 - c) Those who practice “immorality, impurity, sensuality” Gal 5:19
 - d) “Abominable,” Rev 21:8—probably referring to all the abominations of the Canaanites prior to God spitting them out of the land
 - 4) Those breaking the 8th Commandment, “You shall not steal”:
 - a) “Thieves,” 1 Cor 6:10 (i.e.
 - b) “Swindlers,” 1 Cor 6:10
 - 5) Those breaking the 9th Commandment, “You shall not bear false witness”:
 - a) “All liars,” Rev 21:8
 - 6) Those breaking the 10th Commandment, “You shall not covet”:
 - a) “Covetous,” 1 Cor 6:10, and those who commit “envying,” Gal 5:21
 - 7) Other sins:
 - a) “All stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,” Matt 13:41
 - b) “Drunkards, revilers,” 1 Cor 6:10; those who commit “drunkenness, carousing,” Gal 5:20
 - c) Those who commit, “enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,” Gal 5:20
 - d. A designation according to a spiritual state or label:
 - 1) “The sons of the kingdom,” Matt 8:12
 - 2) “The worthless slave,” Matt 25:30
 - 3) “Sons of disobedience,” Eph 5:6
 - 4) “Children of wrath,” Eph 2:3
 - e. Designation according to their name, Rev 20:15, “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”
2. The designation is so clearly associated to literal people that body parts are mentioned:
 - a. “The eye,” Matt 5:29, 30, 18:9
 - b. “The hand and the foot,” Matt 18:8
 - c. “Whole body,” Matt 5:29, 30
 - d. “Cut him to pieces,” Matt 24:51, 12:46 (assuming a physical body)
 3. People are alive in hell:
 - a. “These were thrown alive into the lake of fire,” Rev 19:10
 - b. “Where the worm does not die,” Mark 9:44, 46, 48
 4. People remain conscious in hell:
 - a. “Their torment goes up forever and ever,” Rev 14:11
 - b. “Tormented day and night forever and ever,” Rev 20:10
 - c. “They have no rest day and night,” Rev 14:11
 - d. “Weeping and gnashing of teeth,” Matt 8:12 13:42, 50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30

5. In all these contexts the mentioning of hell by Jesus or John is used as a deterrent to evil behavior and an encouragement to good behavior. The use of fiction, where hell not a reality, to change behavior is inconsistent with the truth admonitions and claims of the Bible. For in the Bible the end never justifies the means when sin or deceit are the means. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), not God or Jesus. Thus, the Bible clearly teaches the everlasting conscious punishment of the unsaved in hell.

These Realities as Motivation

1. The reality of hell as motivation, Proverbs 24:11-12⁸²
2. The lostness of man as motivation, 1 Cor 9:19, 22-23 (e.g. Acts 18:9-11; Rom 9:1-3; Jude 22-23):
 - a. The lost have no hope if they do not hear, Rom 2:12, 10:14-15
 - b. The lost need to call on God while He is near, Isa 55:6 (cf. Psa 32:6)

“Even if we produce Christians who live as full brothers with men of other races, but do not burn with desire that those others may have eternal life, their ‘quality’ is certainly in doubt.”⁸³
3. God’s judgment actually prepares people for the Gospel, Psa 58:11

Commitment: “Lord, May My Heart Burn with Desperation for Lost Souls.”

3. The Christian is Accountable for the Lost Whom He Should Reach!

Accountability in the Old Testament

1. Cain’s rhetorical question: “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” Gen 4:9
2. “*Rebuke your brother frankly so you will not share in his guilt.*” Lev 19:17 (NIV)
3. Ezekiel 3:16-21, 33:1-20:
 - a. Accountability towards the sinner: To tell him that God’s Word says, “*You shall surely die!*” Ezek 3:18, 33:8
 - b. Accountability towards the righteous: To warn him, Ezek 3:20-21
 - c. Result of not declaring or warning—bloodguiltiness: “*his blood I will require at your hand,*” Ezek 3:18, 20, 33:8 (cf. Prov 28:17)
 - d. Is this applicable to every believer? Yes. Is God fair in this? Yes, Ezek 33:17-20

⁸²Mark D. Liederbach, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in his “Ethical Evaluation of Modern Motivations for Evangelism” (Valley Forge, PA: Evangelical Theological Society, 2005, 2), wrote, “The idea that believers should practice evangelism because unbelievers will go to hell if they do not tell the good news ... [is] utilitarianism. ... Clearly, however, the motivational tool employed is concern for the consequences of failing to join the ‘harvest team’” (*ibid.*, 2-3).

After his section “Twisted Form of Motivation” Liederbach had a section, “Dangerous Results”: “The subtle and most insidious nature of this utilitarian motivation is the implication that instead of a sinner being guilty of their own damnation, it is the lazy Christian’s fault. ... Each encounter with a lost person becomes one in which the eternal destiny of their soul depends upon the believer’s actions. One wonders if the good news at this point is really good because it offers someone else an opportunity to know their Creator or because telling it assuages the potential guilt of failing to do so” (*ibid.*, 3).

Liederbach ascribed to Dietrich Bonhoeffer his theological foundation for placing the worship of God, the who, before obedience, the how (*ibid.*, 1). In his concluding point, Liederbach wrote, “Christians must understand that the purpose of the Great Commission is directly linked to the very nature and fabric of the universe and was the reason it was created in the first place—to spread the worship of God to the ends of the earth and magnify the glory of God in all places and times!” (*ibid.*, 10). “The utilitarian assessment is exactly right—the lost will perish without Christ. But the energy to seek and to save them does not primarily rest in the fact that they are lost, but that their lostness robs God of the glory He alone is due. ... We are commanded to evangelize because evangelism’s primary function is to promote the glory of God and the worship of the King of the universe! ... By commanding us, God is instructing us on how to have the fullest and best life now!” (*ibid.*, 11).

⁸³Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 45.

Accountability in the New Testament

1. Accountability in the teaching of Jesus:
 - a. Accountability to obedience, Matt 24:46-51, 25:21, 23, 26-30, 31-46
 - b. Accountability to bear fruit, John 15:6
 - c. Accountability for every word, Matt 12:36
 - d. Accountability for a brother, Matt 18:15, Luke 17:3
 - e. Accountability to following Christ in fishing for men, Matt 4:19; Mark 1:17
 - f. Accountability to take men alive, Luke 5:10
2. Accountability in the writings of Paul:
 - a. Accountability for evangelism before God:
 - 1) Acts 20:26-27, Paul says to the Ephesian elders, *“Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For **I did not shrink** from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”*
 - 2) 1 Cor 9:16-17, *“For if I preach the gospel [evangelize], I have nothing to boast of, for **I am under compulsion** [ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι ἐπίκειται]; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel [evangelize]. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a **stewardship** entrusted to me.”* (cf. 1 Cor 10:31-33, 11:1)
 - 3) 2 Cor 5:9-11, *“Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore **knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men**, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.”*
 - b. Accountability to the unsaved for their salvation:
 - 1) Rom 1:14-16, *“**I am under obligation** [ὀφειλέτης; lit “indebted”] both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. Thus for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel [evangelize with] to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes.”*
 - 2) 1 Cor 9:19, *“For though I am free from all men, **I have made myself a slave to all** [δουλόω; to be made a slave], so that I may win more”*
 Gk, Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω
 Lit trans, “For being free from all, unto all I myself am become enslaved, in order that more I may win”
 - 3) 1 Cor 9:22-23, *“To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; **I have become all things to all men**, so that I may by all [means] save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”*
 Gk of v 9b, τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα (τὰ) πάντα ἵνα πάντως τιναὶ σῶσω
 Lit trans of v 9b, “Unto all I do everything in order that by everything (I do) I may save some.”
 - 4) 1 Cor 10:33-11:1, *“Just as **I also please all men in all things**, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”*
 Gk of v 10:33, καθὼς καὶ γὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἵνα σωθῶσιν
 Lit trans of 10:33, “Just as I myself please all in all, not seeking my own benefit, but that of the many, in order that they might be saved”

3. Other areas of accountability:
 - a. Accountability for a weaker brother, 1 Cor 8:10
 - b. The special accountability of the leader, James 3:1

Summary of the Christian's accountability

The Christian is not accountable for the person's response to God's Word, rather he is responsible to faithfully declare God's Word.

A response to this accountability

"And who is adequate for these things?" 2 Cor 2:16

Accountability as Motivation

1. Accountability as motivation to action, Prov 24:11-12, Ezek 3:16-21, 33:1-20, 1 Cor 9:16-17, 27, 2 Cor 5:9-11, He. 12:28-29
2. Pleasing God as motivation, 1 Cor 9:27, 2 Cor 5:9
3. A charge given as motivation, 1 Cor 9:16-17, 2 Cor 5:18-20
4. Not receiving the grace of God in vain, 1 Cor 15:10, 2 Cor 6:1 (vs. *"fruitful labor"*, *karpos ergou*, Phil 1:22)
5. Need as motivation, Rom 10:14

Judgment as motivation

1. Rom 14:10, *"For we shall all appear before the judgment seat of God."*
2. Rom 14:12, *"So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God."*
3. 1 Cor 3:13, *"Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work."*
4. 2 Cor 5:10, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*
5. 2 Tim 4:1-2, *"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead ... preach the word; be ready in season and out of season."*
6. 1 Pet 4:17, *"For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"*

"Men! Women! You are bound to be wise in winning souls. Perhaps already souls have perished, because you have not put forth the wisdom which you might in saving them. The city is going to hell. Yes, the world is going to hell, and must go on, 'til the Church finds out what to do to win souls."⁸⁴

Commitment: "Lord, May My Heart Stir Within Me to Reach Out to Lost Souls around Me."

4. Time Is Limited and the Harvest Is White!

The Fact of Limited Time

1. Psa 39:4, *"Lord make me know my end, And what is the extent of my days, Let me know how transient I am."* (cf. Psa 90:12)
2. John 4:35, *"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are ripe for harvest."*
3. John 4:36, *"Already, he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal"*
4. John 9:4, *"We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work."*
5. *"Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name,"* Acts 22:16
6. Rom 13:11-12, *"And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."*

⁸⁴Charles G. Finney, in E.E. Shelhamer, ed. *Finney on Revival* (Minneapolis: Bethany House), 73-74.

7. 1 Cor 7:29, *“But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on both those who have wives should be as though they had none.”*
8. 2 Cor 6:2, *“Behold now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold, now is the day of salvation.”*
9. Eph 5:15-16, *“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil.”*

The Preparedness of People to Hear the Gospel

1. The harvest is plentiful, Matt 9:37-38, Luke 10:2
2. The harvest is ready, John 4:35
3. Sower and reaper rejoice together, John 4:36
4. The reaper overtakes the sower! Amos 9:13
5. Now is the acceptable time, 2 Cor 6:2
6. Some are waiting to hear, Isa 25:9; 42:4; 51:5
7. Some are anxious to hear, Acts 10:33

Limited Time as Motivation

1. Need as motivation:

- a. The ripeness of the harvest, Matt 9:37-38, John 4:35-36 (Prov 10:5)
- b. There are needs in the next town, Luke 4:43-44, 2 Cor 10:15-16
- c. The crying need for laborers, Matt 9:37-38

2. Work as motivation:

- a. *“I (we) must work the work of Him who sent Me (us),”* John 9:4
- b. Working today because God is at work today, John 5:17 (2 Pet 3:8-9)
- c. *“He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, But he who sleeps during harvest is a son who acts shamefully.”* Prov 10:5 (cf. Rom 13:11-12, Eph 5:15-16)

3. Time as motivation:

- a. Making the best use of time, Eph 5:15-16
- b. Making the most of every opportunity, Col 4:5
- c. Realizing the shortness of life and the need to be doing God’s will, Rom 13:11-12 (cf. Jos. 13:1)

4. Let’s not be slack about God’s will, Jos. 18:3

Commitment: “Lord, May My Heart Be Moved to Action in Evangelism Today.”

Interaction with the Urgencies

- A. How can these urgencies be used as motivational tools?
- B. How do these urgencies coexist with the quietness of soul mentioned in Psa 131:1-2?
- C. Urgency vs. Anxiety, Phil 4:6-7

Prayer of the Soul-Winner

“O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise” (Psa 51:15).

[By the way, notice the disappointing KJV translation of this verse—
“O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise”]