

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: The Word of God, the Judgement of God, The Ransom of Jesus,  
Hebrews 4:12-16

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**INTRODUCTION:** Today, we'll examine the Word of God, the Judgment of God, and the Ransom of Jesus. There are three points:

1. The word of God is alive, active, sharp, penetrating, and judging.
2. Hebrews addresses the judgment of God.
3. Jesus is the ransom of sinners.

**First, THE WORD OF GOD IS ALIVE, ACTIVE, SHARP, PENETRATING, AND JUDGING.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 4:12 <sup>12</sup> *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

**EXPLANATION:** When we say the Bible is the Word of God, Jesus saves, Jesus is the only way to heaven, and without him we can do nothing...When we say these things, I certainly hope the oldest Christian here today does not yawn and say, "Tell us something we do not already know."

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. We need to say that over and over. Some of the super saints who've been in church all their lives may get bored with such a statement, but hopefully not.

Circle the verbs here. The Word of God is alive, active, sharp, penetrating, judging.

Action verb #1: The Bible is alive. It is current. It is full of life.

**ILLUSTRATION:** When I was a kid, we had a set of children's encyclopedias. We used them for school reports and other things. But, as the years passed, we could not use them because the information was outdated. It was obsolete.

Right now, there are many books on the *New York Times*' best sellers list. I looked at that list yesterday. Interestingly enough, all of those books will eventually fade away. Only a few will become classics. The overwhelming majority will fade away and be forgotten in a few years.

Action verb #2: The Bible is active.

**ILLUSTRATION:** There are lots of things which are alive but inactive. A friend of mine died in Texas last week. Before he died, he was on life support. He was alive but inactive.

**EXPLANATION:** The Bible is not only alive; it is active. The words of scripture are moving about throughout the world, in and around the conversations of people, in and around world governments, in and around people of means and people with nothing.

Action verb #3: The Bible is sharp.

**EXPLANATION:** In the day this was written, the sword was the main instrument a soldier used to defend himself and to kill the enemy. The modern day comparison is: The Bible is like a well-engineered and maintained weapon, loaded, and ready to fire. And, just as the sword provided defense, the Bible helps us defend our faith. Just as the sword was a weapon of attack, the Bible helps us attack when necessary, although I advise being wise in choosing your battles.

Action verb #4: The Bible penetrates *even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow.*

**EXPLANATION:** What does this mean? It means the Bible does surgery on us. The Bible is like a scalpel. The Bible convicts us when we do wrong. The Bible provides direction for us. Just as a skilled surgeon corrects or removes a problem, so the Bible does spiritual surgery on us. If you use the Bible to try and justify

selfish behavior, you'll be sorry you tried to do that. If you use the Bible to try and justify any sin, you'll be sorry you tried that, because the Bible will do surgery on you.

Action verb #5: The Bible judges. Yes, that's right. The Bible judges right and wrong. It seems anytime someone takes a stand on anything today, the words spoken are "judge not." I was in a discussion with a non-Christian friend about a topic, and he wanted to stick me real good. I replied, "Do you really want to know, or are you just trying to use the words of the Bible to stump me?"

Now the Bible does a lot of judging. In some cases, the Bible is unclear, but in other cases, the Bible is very clear. Again, as people who have access to the truth, we must be wise how we use it.

All of these action verbs are relative to how we view the Bible. I've spent quite a bit of time in my preaching and teaching here explaining many things to you about the Bible.

**ILLUSTRATION:** I have some random books. I'll put these on the table right here. Let's assume two people are looking through a stack of books. One of the persons has extensive knowledge of the Bible, and the other person does not. The two people go through the stack and try to figure out the purpose of each book. *Hmm, ok, this is fiction; this book is some type of medical reference book, and this is an old book. Hmm, what's this? It looks like some type of history book.*

If you were one of these two people, and you were raised to believe the Bible is God's Word to people and you grew up to accept that truth on your own, then you would have a different view from the person who knew nothing about the Bible.

Likewise, if you were the person who knew nothing about it, then you would treat it as merely an old book in a stack of old books.

**APPLICATION:** We will be dealing more and more with people who know very little about the Bible. Hey, next time when you vote, try to find out what your favorite candidate knows about the Bible and whether he or she respects it. Quit voting for the same party because your grandpa told you it was the best party.

Now, for those who know about the Bible, the way you approach it determines how you handle it. I've talked a lot about this. It's called hermeneutics. Now for the believer, here's how this stack of books should be handled:

Here's a book of fiction...

Here's a medical reference book...

Here's an old book...

Ah, here's a Bible. It's alive, it's active, it penetrates to the soul, and it judges. It's different from the other books.

## **Second, HEBREWS ADDRESSES THE JUDGEMENT OF GOD.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 4:13 <sup>13</sup> *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.*

Wednesday night during my talk about the omniscience of God, I read this verse. I guess most speakers would apologize for using the same text two services in a row. However, it's not a coincidence. I chose my Sunday morning direction and my Wednesday evening direction a long time ago.

**SCRIPTURE PARAPHRASE:** Psalm 7 says God is a righteous judge. He'll bring justice one day, and it will be irrefutable, because he's seen it all. There has been no uncovered evidence.

At the judgement, who will be our attorney? Look at Verse 14.

**SCRIPTURE:** Hebrews 4:14-16 <sup>14</sup> *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—*

yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

### **Third, JESUS IS THE RANSOM FOR SINNERS.**

Imagine a heavenly court. God is the judge. A person is called to the witness stand and judged. No one will be able to look at the judge and say "judge not."

- This will not be a mock trial. It will be real.
- There will no kangaroo court.
- There will be no recess.
- There will be no deferred adjudication.
- There will be no mistrial, no retrial.
- Nothing will be thrown out of court.

For believers in Jesus Christ, there will be as our advocate and high priest, and he will stand as our mediator.

**SCRIPTURE:** I Timothy 2:5-6 <sup>5</sup> *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people.*

**EXPLANATION:** As our high priest, Jesus pleads our case before God, the righteous judge. And, because Jesus paid the price for our sins, he's able to plead our case in a way no one else is able to. And, the judge pronouncement is: not guilty.

The reason he can plead our case so well is because he's been tempted in every way we've been tempted, yet he did not sin. And, he paid the penalty for our sin.

We sing a song here called *In Christ Alone*.

*Till on that cross as Jesus died  
The wrath of God was satisfied*

*For every sin on Him was laid  
Here in the death of Christ I live*

I read this news report from 2013: A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) committee desired to add "In Christ Alone" to the denomination's new hymnal, *Glory to God*, set to be released this fall. But, it first requested permission to avoid theological controversy by altering the modern hymn's lyrics from "Till on that cross as Jesus died/the wrath of God was satisfied" to "Till on that cross as Jesus died/the love of God was magnified."

However, authors Keith Getty and Stuart Townend rejected the proposal. So, the committee voted to bar the hymn.

**TRUTH:** The truth of the Gospel is God took out his wrath on Jesus as he hung on the cross, and God was satisfied.

Jesus was the ransom of sinners. You see, sin holds us captive and the only way to be set free is for someone to pay our ransom.

**CONCLUSION:** [Call Terry to lead invitation hymn.]

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 20:28<sup>28</sup> *...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Now Hebrews said Jesus was a ransom for all people. Matthew and Mark record it as "a ransom for many." What does this mean? I believe it means all people are invited to be saved, but not all will be saved.

And, for those who refuse to repent and follow Jesus, then when their deeds are laid bare before God, they will have no advocate – no mediator – no high priest.

You don't have to be one of those people.

You have to repent of sin and follow Jesus.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Thanks to Judy Andrews and Nancy Claire Smith for their editing assistance.

Sincerely, Paul Gunn  
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