



LESSON TEN - ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Of all the doctrines of the Bible, this doctrine is without question one of the plainest. Yet the truth of judgment, punishment, accounting for one's sins is not only ignored, but declared by Satan to be a lie. The beginning of the gospel message is in the story of creation. It is here that God reveals that sin brings death. God said to Adam:

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, LEST YE DIE. (Genesis 3:3)

And Satan's lie to this commandment is recorded in verse 4 -- "ye shall not surely die." The sad part is that Eve believed Satan rather than God. Why? Because she was tempted - she wanted to eat of the fruit. Cicero once remarked, "A man prefers to believe what one prefers to be true."

The Fact of Sin is one of the revelations that there is a God

The doctrine of eternal judgment is fought by Satan and those deceived by him including liberals, and many Christian cults. Even Catholicism has perverted the doctrine of judgment by offering "purgatory" as a means of escaping the true judgments of God. Other cults use reincarnation, or some other form of eastern teaching - the end result all of which is intended to leave man's atonement in the hands of man. The accountability is to self or human kind - it avoids accountability to God. Yet judgment for sin is one of the proofs that God exist.

I once witnessed to a Buddhist or perhaps he was a Hindu, but I asked this question -- "Suppose that you were raised without any Bible, or any knowledge of the Ten Commandments, or of Jesus. Your parents never taught you for example that lying or stealing were wrong. Yet you still acknowledge that lying is wrong. But what makes it wrong? If there is no Bible, no Ten Commandments, no civil law, or no parental law - nothing in this world that tells you lying is wrong, yet every person in every country, regardless of religious believe or no belief feels and knows that lying is wrong. But what difference would it make if there is no God? If there is no accountability to any person, parent, law or court - yet you still have this understanding that something is wrong with lying. Why? It is because there is a God and a soul inside of you that automatically awakens when one lies. The spirit of God tells your soul it is wrong even if you never heard of God, or read a Bible, or heard of the Ten Commandments - and it will be judgment against you."

From there it is logical to reason that if there is such a thing as sin (whether one wants to use that term or not), the very fact that there is a conscience that is pricked when someone does certain wrongs, is proof that there is an accountability to someone or something. It cannot be escaped. There needs to be no Bible or gospel to reveal that every man has a sinful nature. And if there is sin, then there has to be a God, and there must be accountability. Otherwise, what is the source of the conscience that acknowledges wrong doing?

Why Do Men Not Believe Truth?

Eternal judgment is part and parcel with the full revelation of truth which includes the revelation of God, of sin, and of the gospel (atonement for sin). Each is dependent on the other. False doctrine and false religions will always try to minimize one aspect or another, because it will diminish the rest. If one minimizes eternal judgment, it minimizes sin, which is really what such doctrines of "purgatory" of the Catholics or the "soul sleep" doctrine of



the Jehovah's Witnesses do. From there it is easy to see how the very understanding of the true nature of God is perverted. With the Catholics, the trinity doctrine destroys the very power of the gospel by relegating the atonement to a "second person" in the Godhead, when God declared, "and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:21-22) With the Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus is not seen as the true God to whom one is accountable but also the one who paid the atonement. This is the most powerful truth of the gospel, that it was impossible for man (any man) to be our savior. And that included Jesus as a man. Jesus the man, became the lamb, but it was Jesus, as God, who became the savior. The man died as the atonement for the curse of sin was placed upon the sacrificial lamb, but it was God himself who became the resurrection and life. Jesus the man did not want to die; he said so in the garden - "if it is possible let this cup pass from me". It was God who wanted to die and who couldn't. The only way for God to become our savior, then was to be manifested in flesh, which is the story of the incarnation.

But why do men reject truth, and the doctrine of judgment? "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11) Men do not come to the truth, because as the scripture has said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproof." (John 3:19-20)

Reproof is one of the early parts of the judgment process. Men think by avoiding reproof, they can avoid judgment altogether. But not so. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." (1 Timothy 5:24)

Who and What Shall Be Judged?

The Bible speaks of judgment for the following:

- Young men (Ecclesiastes 11:9)
- Every work whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14)
- Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause (Matthew 5:22)
- Angels reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2:4)
- Unjust reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2:9)
- Every idle word that men shall speak (Matthew 12:36)

The second one, "every work" catches all man kind. How true for the Bible teaches, that "all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God." It is indeed the grace of God as shown through the glorious gospel that gives any man, woman, or child any hope for escape.

The Two Judgment Days

The Judgment for Saints

The Bible teaches that there are there are differences in judgment for the saints and the sinner. All men appear at the last one known as the "white throne judgment", but before the white throne judgment, the judgment of the saints takes place. This judgment is for the church only. Some have felt that the "Judgment Seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) might allude exclusively to this judgment. By reading the text, it doesn't appear clear that this judgment is for the saints only, but after the rapture of the church, there does appear to be a time that the saints shall have their own day of reckoning apart from the rest of the world.

Paul tells of a day when the saints shall be judged. The basis for judgment here will *not be sin, but rather for works*. Some Christians teach that "works", any works, is of no consequence for the Christian. This is certainly not true. The works referred to in Paul's gospel teachings that do not



contribute to salvation are the "works of the law" or the "works of the flesh", neither of which have any redeeming value. But there is a place where Christian works matters, and that will be the day when the Saints shall be "judged" for their works as a basis for the "rewards" they will receive in eternity.

Sin shall not be an issue at this day. Neither shall eternal life be one of the rewards - for it is the "gift". But there are rewards for service, and it is said our "works shall be made manifest" (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). The judgment of works reveal whether is is "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble". From these works develop our rewards, and should our works not measure up, it does not mean that we will not be saved (v.15), but he will suffer loss (in rewards). Paul wrote, "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Corinthians 3:8). He says that he has a reward for his ministry (1 Corinthians 9:17). Jesus said that there is a "prophets reward and a righteous man's reward" (Matthew 10:41)

The White Throne Judgment

In Revelation 20: 11-15, we read of a final judgment day at a White Throne. This judgment will take place at the end of the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth. At that time there will be books that will be opened, one of which is the "Book of Life". All men will be judged for their "works", and these works refer to the deeds of sin or righteousness that one has done in this life. I note that in Matthew 25 a man's "good works" are also recorded in judgment, but there is no good work that can outweigh even one sin recorded in the books of works. For this reason, there is the second book -- the "Book of Life" which will be referred to. In order for a person's name to be written in that book, there must be an entry made on the basis of obedience to God's will for their dispensation of life, regardless of and apart from his works of sin or righteousness. Neither sin or righteousness have a basis for a person's name to be in the "Book of

Life". Abrahams name will be there because of faith, as will all others whose name is found there. For Christians, it can only be made by faith and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and having been "born again". You see, the only thing recorded in the Book of Life is your name, nothing more. For that book, nothing else matters. Not one sin, nor one work good or bad, will have any merit for that record.

Following the judgment will come the everlasting life or everlasting punishment spoken of in Matthew 25:46. For the sinner it shall mean being cast into the "lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). For the saved, it shall be an eternal life of glory. I once made an observation that if a man made a choice between heaven and hell, he surely would chose heaven. But if a man made a choice between heaven and the world, it is only the saved that would chose heaven. That is why only the saved will be there, because that would have been their choice if all three were given to them.