

A Christian Worldview

Book 6

The Word, the Church, and the Ordinances

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Foreword

Thirteen primary verses, thirteen chapters, and you'll return to the historical, inerrant, and inspired voice of the Scriptures. You'll discover clarity and behold the mystery of the Church as the Bride and Body of Christ. The Baptism and Lord's Supper are the visible means our risen Lord uses to mark, identify, feed, nourish, and strengthen His people.

Written by my staff at First Baptist Church Leander, it serves us, and if you fully engage the pages, it will serve you as a historical, biblical vision of our Orthodox Christian faith and practice.

May the Spirit who inspired the Word, who gathers and leads and guides and convicts the church both of righteousness and sin, and leads us to all truth, renew your love for the Savior and encourage you in all of His ways.

May your journey through these pages spark an encouragement for your longing to be more fully all it means to belong to Christ and His Church.

I'm praying for your journey!

Pastor Tim C Moore

Introduction

This book concludes our series on The Christian Worldview. The six-book series has not been an exhaustive study. The exhaustive study comes from the Believer who seeks to be more like Jesus. The world seeks to be more like others and self. But truth comes from God alone. No one can possess the absolute truth without Jesus. He is The Way, The Truth, and The Life. There is only one way to understand and live the Christian Worldview. That way comes from the study that can only be done individually.

Do not follow the words of the authors of this study alone. It is for you to discover your life in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. As you conclude our study, it is my prayer that it has empowered you to dig deeper into the Word of God to discover the abundant life He has for every Believer who seeks Him.

Thank you for joining with us in this study, and I pray your search continues for the rest of your life, allowing God to reveal Himself to you through the power of the Holy Spirit within you. Allow no one other than The Spirit Himself to reveal Jesus to you in His true form. Studies of Man are but mirrors of the Word. Jesus is the Word! The studies of Man will sometimes bring a better understanding, but it is only through Jesus that the fullness of your life will be accomplished.

Blessings,

Dr. Rick Hertless
Executive Pastor, First Baptist Church, Leander, TX

Chapter One: The Holy Spirit

By Rick Hertless

Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

In my opinion, the Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood part of the Holy Trinity. In this chapter, we will discuss the person of the Holy Spirit. He is not an “It” as some have described Him. He is one of the three persons of the Trinity.

Jesus told His disciples time and time again that there would be a time when He would leave them. At the time of the discussion, they did not understand. But after Jesus ascended, according to the King James Version (KJV), He sent them a comforter. The New King James Version (NKJV) calls Him a helper.

The Greek word for comforter is “*paraklētos*” (Pronounced *par-ak'-lay-tos*). It means, “Advocate or Comforter.” The Holy Spirit is The Comforter. The main job of the Holy Spirit is to point to Christ. It is He who reveals the truths of Jesus to those who are willing to hear.

John 14:16:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever . . . (KJV)

John 14:26:

But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (KJV)

John 15:26:

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me . . . (KJV).

John 16:7

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you (KJV).

What is the Power of the Holy Spirit For?

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you . . .”

Ezekiel prophesied of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel 11:19 says:

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh . . .

The above prophecy was fulfilled with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Hebrews 8:10 says:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

God now gives the Believer the power to know His law by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is conviction for the world, but guidance for the Believer.

John 16:7 says:

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: “of sin, because they do not believe in Me; “of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; “of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

It can be said that the Holy Spirit reveals sin both to the Believer and the Unbeliever as well. He reveals to the Believer so that he might grow in a closer relationship to the Father. He reveals to the unbeliever as conviction to call for repentance.

So, the power of the Holy Spirit is for the Believer to walk in a sinful world to learn to overcome sin. Sin can only be overcome by the power that is written on the heart of everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

How Does the Holy Spirit Bring Us Salvation?

1 Thessalonians 1:5

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

The power of the Holy Spirit is multifaceted, but none more than the power to bring the Gospel to the lost. Believers are empowered to bring the Gospel. The courage of evangelism is given through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Acts, the Apostles, rather than cowering in the corner, were given boldness to proclaim Jesus in the city square. They came out from the shadows and spoke boldly on behalf of Christ, confounding the Pharisees who had seen them as cowards only a few days prior.

After his resurrection, Jesus ascended into Heaven, leaving His disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, a Comforter, and power. Fifty days later, the Holy Spirit fell on them, giving them the courage to speak in the name of Jesus, even unto death.

The Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever of sin, drawing him to repentance, thus giving salvation to the lost. Literally, God does

not need people to save the lost. He revealed himself to Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, and Paul on the road to Damascus. But like everything with God, He wants to use us, a blessing both to Him and us. The deep relationship Believers should have with God should be the impetus to want to share His love with everyone. Our relationship with Him should be likened to that of the relationship with your first love.

When you read the Song of Solomon, it is easy to see how He sees His beloved. He wants us to see Him the same way. He wants us to be proud of Him, unashamed to tell of His love for us, as well as our love for Him. Instead, most Christians tend to hide their relationship, more to the appearance of “keeping Him hidden in the closet.” As the world worsens, the trials will become greater. There is only one way to overcome the trials, that is through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within those who believe. Your boldness in Christ will lead others to salvation. There will be those who reject Him, but they reject Him, not you. They are choosing to live a life without Him.

Many fear sharing the Gospel because of the perceived rejection received on themselves. But as stated, the rejection is about Jesus, not you. The wrath of the listener may indeed fall on the messenger, but make no mistake, it is not about you; it is about their decision.

Do You Walk in Power?

So, what is your walk with Jesus like? Are you the overcomer or the victim? If you are the “victim,” I want you to consider something. Do you really know Jesus? I am not asking if you attend church or a prayer meeting. I am not asking if you pray daily or give your tithe. I am asking, “Do you know Jesus?” Jesus said we are overcomers.

John 16:33:

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (KJV).

Romans 12:21:

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (KJV).

1John 2:13

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father (KJV).

1John 4:4

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (KJV).

In Jesus, we are overcomers. The same disciples who ran and hid when Jesus was crucified by the Sanhedrin stood before the Sanhedrin and declared Jesus is Lord. What changed? The power of the Holy Spirit within them. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God gave them the courage to stand and proclaim the King of kings. That same Spirit “that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you . . . (Romans 8:11).” It is not for you to worry whether you will be able to give the right words to those who need to be saved. It is up to you to speak and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work. We are not the “saviors.” We must allow Jesus to be the Savior. If we speak and give the glory to Jesus, He said He will draw all men unto Himself (John 12:32).

Therefore, when you give the Gospel, give it with boldness, knowing that it is God Himself who is speaking through you to bring others to salvation.

Notes

Chapter Two: Ordinances of the Church

By Rick Hertless

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Baptism in Greek is *baptizō* (Pronounced *bap-tid'-zo*). Strong's definition is:

1. to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash oneself, bathe
3. to overwhelm

What Two Ordinances did Christ Give His Church?

Baptize

There are two types of baptism in the Bible:

1. Water – repentance for the remission of sin
2. Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It is important to understand that the word “*baptizō*” is not always equated with water when it is read in the Bible. Because of this failed translation, many have come to the conclusion that one must be water baptized to be saved. But through careful study of the Word, it is easily seen that the salvation referred to in the Bible is referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? Does it mean you must speak with tongues or roll around on the floor? No, it means you must be immersed in the Holy Spirit of God. You must be covered in the blood of Jesus and immersed in His Spirit. How is that done? Accepting Jesus as Lord of your life; Placing Him in charge; Relinquishing your control to God.

Mark 1:4 – John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Mark 1:8 – I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

An ordinance is a command or a decree. It is something that one has to make a decision to follow. Therefore, water baptism is an ordinance of the Church. However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given automatically when one accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior of one's life. Water baptism is an outward expression of salvation, a testimony to the world that one has accepted Christ. However, baptism of the Holy Spirit is a free gift that is given to every Believer in order to walk the blameless life of Christianity.

Perhaps you question the word "blameless." We are blameless only because of the blood sacrifice of Jesus. When Christ is accepted as Lord, God sees us as blameless. He no longer sees the sin that stains us and separates us from His presence. He sees us white as snow, blameless to stand before Him. That is why we can go to Him freely and fellowship with Him. In fact, when we accept His Son, Jesus, we are filled with His Spirit.

Notice in Mark 1:4, the Scripture says that water baptism comes as a witness of repentance. The forgiveness of sin does not come through water baptism; it comes through repentance of sin. In other words, it is a decision of the heart, not a physical decision. It is not a "works" decision other than the work of belief in Jesus.

John 6:28-29:

Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Notice, the work is done through belief, not through a physical act of works; it is of the heart.

So, why is it necessary to be baptized? It is necessary as a witness to the saving grace of Jesus. It is a witness to declare that one is not ashamed of Jesus as Lord.

The Lord’s Supper

The Bread

The Lord’s supper is an act of remembrance for what has been accomplished for the Believer. The bread is the reminder that the fleshly body has been broken and redeemed through the sacrifice of Jesus. The broken body is a symbol that we no longer live in the flesh. The flesh can be defeated, but the blood covers all. The fleshly body, though maimed, will be restored after the resurrection. I believe it is a witness to the fact that we will live in eternity whole, not disfigured by the many calamities that might attack the body here on Earth.

Isaiah 52:14 says, “. . . So His visage was marred more than any man,

And His form more than the sons of men . . .” This is the prophecy of Jesus’ death on the cross. It says that He could not even be recognized as a man. Nevertheless, after the resurrection, He stood before the Disciples whole.

The Wine

The wine represents the blood that was poured out as a sacrifice for all mankind. However, the proviso is that the sacrifice must be accepted. The sacrifice was made for everyone, but it is only through acceptance that one gets the benefit of eternal life. But it is not through “lip service.” It is a matter of the heart. Thus, it brings us back to belief in Jesus Christ.

The wine is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit . . .”

1 Corinthians 11:28-29 says:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.

Paul says that we must be sure that we are walking in Christ before we take the Lord’s Supper. That includes repentance of sin before taking it. Once again, it is a matter of the heart. God wants our

focus to be on Him. It is His desire for us to be in communication with Him and allow Him to guide our steps daily. His walk is not to be taken lightly.

Why Did Christ Give These Ordinances?

As a Witness

Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We are to be witnesses of Christ as we walk on this Earth. The power of the Holy Spirit is sent so that we are emboldened to proclaim the Word of God. We are to be a witness to the New Covenant of Jesus. The New Promise of eternal life in Christ. We are empowered by the Spirit as a witness, and the Lord’s Supper is given as a reminder of that Covenant.

As Remembrance

Mark 14:22-25 says:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My

body.” Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. “Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Unfortunately, people’s memories are short. We must be reminded many times, even of things that matter most.

Throughout the Bible, we are reminded countless times to “love our brother.” Why? Because we have short memories. We allow the things of the world to get in the way of our relationships, both with man and God.

The Lord’s Supper is that “memory jogger.” Jesus said, “As often as you do it . . .” In other words, we should continuously take the Lord’s Supper. Many do it weekly, some monthly, some quarterly, and I dare say, some even daily. Acts 20:7 says, “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread . . .” This was not simply a meal; this was a service that they had to have the Lord’s Supper and be edified with the Word of God. This is also verification for coming together for Sunday worship, but that is a topic for another time.

God wants to have an ongoing relationship with His children. He sent His Son to die on the Cross as a way to once again have communion with us. His desire is to fellowship with His children. He has given us the opportunity to do so by the blood sacrifice of

Jesus on the cross. His shedding of blood was the one-time sacrifice needed for all Mankind to be able to be in eternity with Him. All that is necessary to share in His eternity is acceptance of His sacrifice, constantly remembering what has been done for all who believe in the name of Jesus.

Notes

Chapter Three: What is Baptism?

By Rick Hertless

Colossians 2:11-15:

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

What is the purpose of Baptism?

Baptism is a symbol of death to self, death to the flesh. Previously, we have discussed that water baptism is not salvation. What then is the purpose of being baptized? Baptism is the proclamation of salvation. In Mathew 3:14, “And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’” But Jesus

answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.” It is important to understand that Jesus was not being baptized to be cleansed of sin. Jesus was sinless. He was being baptized to fulfill righteousness.

Remember what was discussed in the previous chapter: John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, not a baptism of salvation. Water baptism is an act of righteousness, an act of obedience, and a witness to the world. Jesus was fulfilling an act of witness to the world that He followed God. Therefore, His call for Believers to be water baptized is the same, an act of righteousness and obedience.

The example of Jesus being baptized is the greatest argument that can be made against the salvation of baptism. Jesus did not need to be saved; He needed to declare a sign that proclaims the righteousness of Believers through His blood sacrifice.

Buried With Him In Baptism

Colossians 2:11-12 says, “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of

the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism . . .”

God told Abraham in Genesis 17:10-11:

“This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; “and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.”

This was an outward testimony that Abraham and his descendants would remember the promise made to them by God. But with the resurrection of Jesus, the promise was written on the hearts of those who believe. Jeremiah 31:33 says, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

God’s New Covenant with Believers is that the law is written on our hearts. Because of the realization of His love and sacrifice for us, we will want to trust and obey His Word. Colossians 2:11-12 ensures the knowledge that we are circumcised of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. Water Baptism is the expression of our circumcision and a testimony of our love for Christ.

Romans 2:28-29 says:

For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *he is* a Jew who *is one*

inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

God's Word continually reminds us that we are saved by His grace, not of works (Ephesians 2:9). There is nothing needed for salvation except Jesus. He is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Nothing is needed for salvation except the blood sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. To believe otherwise negates the sacrifice made for us. If baptism is salvation, why not prayer six times a day or fasting once a week? There are no works that God sees as righteousness save one. John 6:29 says, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." It is only our trust in God that brings salvation. It is only through belief in His Son that we are saved.

Who is to be Baptized?

Acts 2:37-38 says:

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Notice once again, the pathway to salvation is repentance. After repentance comes baptism. Repentance is circumcision of the heart. It is the act that saves. The remission of sin means that we are no longer imprisoned by sin. We have an advocate. We also have the power to walk away from sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. That does not mean you will no longer be tempted. The Devil's plan is to neutralize Believers as a witness. But through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can confess those sins and continue our sanctification in Christ.

Sanctification is the process by which we walk towards holiness. Through the Holy Spirit, we are being purified daily. He helps us know what we are to do as Christians, what pleases and displeases God. Much of this is given through the Word, but God created us. He knows that true sanctification comes through successes and failures.

It should be noted that the failures of others do not ensure your own failure. God wants us to follow His lead and trust Him in what He has called us to do. In other words, you may be called to do something that has been perceived by others to be impossible. But with God, all things are possible. Part of the sanctification process enables Believers to trust more in what they are called to do. If God has called you to it, do not be afraid to do it.

This brings us to a topic we have discussed before. “How do I know God is the one who is talking?” God’s tasks will always line up with the Word. He will never call you to do anything contrary to His Word. A bit of an extreme example might be, if you believe God is calling you to murder someone, it is not God. Maybe extreme, but you get the point. The best way to know God better is to read His Word. All His Word! Then you can rest assured that you are walking where He wants you to walk.

That is the reason we know that we are to be baptized. God has told us in His Word that we should be baptized as a sign of righteousness. It is not our righteousness. Our righteousness only comes through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. It is a sign of righteousness, as we have discovered that Jesus himself did. It is a sign that our righteousness only comes through Jesus.

Colossians 2:12-15:

. . . buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

We are raised with Him, alive because of His sacrifice on the Cross. Principalities and powers were disarmed, and we were raised blameless with Him. Baptism is the symbol of death, burial, and resurrection. The Law was nailed to the Cross, not so it can be forgotten, but so it will be written on our hearts for eternity.

Notes

Chapter Four: What is the Lord's Supper?

By Robert Lederman

The Lord's Supper

Mark 14:22-26

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

25 "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Who could ever think he is holy enough to take the Lord's Supper? I remember before I became a believer of Christ, I thought this was a lot of baloney. I did not know anyone who was "good" enough to take the Lord's supper.

In my mind, people who took it were just playing "pretend" church, so why would I want to do this also, but the more I knew the Lord, the more I understood it.

I had questions. What does it all mean? What was the point of the Lord's supper? Well, let's keep this simple, as this could be a very long chapter and would make a great sermon that, my guess is, many need to hear more than once.

So, let's talk about the "Bread", what does it mean? The bread is the body of Christ,

What Does the Bread Represent?

Matthew 26:26 says, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'." What does this mean? Let's dig a little deeper. Who was at the Lord's first supper? All the disciples?

The disciples were all present, and Jesus knew he would be betrayed, so why does the Lord's supper matter? Many attend the Lord's supper and have no heart for the Lord; they just take it and walk off like it's just a meal and a drink, or a ritual. Again, why is "the bread" important?

The bread is the bread of life, Jesus called himself this in John 6:35, "And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'"

Jesus is The Bread. You see that Jesus is the spiritual food we need, and to be with him is to have everlasting life; he is the “Bread of Life”. Let’s look at this another way: you, like me, were lost and looking to fill a void; we were “hungry” for something and filled it with many things, but not Christ. By eating the bread, which is Jesus, are we forgiven of our sins? “If” we truly accept him as our Lord and Savior, the answer is, “Yes.”

The other day, Pastor Tim was talking about the Lord’s prayer. How many people know it, but just repeat the words without ever really listening to them?

Matthew 6:9-13 says:

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

¹¹Give us this day our daily bread.

¹²And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

¹³And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and
the glory forever.

Amen.

These words are the bread of life. We should know them, and we should have a deeper meaning than just repeating them and acting as if we live them.

What Does the Wine Represent?

Matthew 26:27-28

²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

1 Corinthians 11:25 says:

²⁵In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

Why did Jesus give thanks for the cup and ask us to drink from it? I remember hearing people tell me that they don't worship a blood god. I thought that it sounded a little weird that people would say that. It dawned on me that they didn't know Jesus and what he did for us.

You see, this is a new covenant between God and Man. Jesus is God in the flesh and has the authority to establish this new covenant and seal it with His blood. The Old Covenant, if you remember, was also sealed with blood sacrifices. The Old

Covenant of animal sacrifice is no longer required or needed, as Jesus has fulfilled the sacrifice with His blood.

Doing this in “remembrance of me” is straightforward. Jesus is asking that the blood He shed was not forsaken but done to remind us of the sacrifice He made for us. It is an agreement between God and mankind. Think of it as a new path for salvation and a relationship that reconnects us to God. It is a proclamation of the New Covenant.

With what Jesus did on the cross, we have the New Covenant with God Himself, but many act like this never happened. Why?

- No inner transformation of sin in their lives
- No letting the sin be removed from them, they like the sin
- No will of GOD in their hearts or letting the Word live in them
- No relationship with GOD, they like the world they live in

Are you a true child of God or just pretending to be of God when you take the Lord’s supper?

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

¹⁶The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

¹⁷For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

David Guzik of Calvary Chapel, Santa Barbara writes:

Paul's point may seem obscure to us, but it was plain to someone in that ancient culture. Just as the Christian practice of communion speaks of unity and fellowship with Jesus, so these pagan banquets, given in the honor of idols, spoke of unity with demons who took advantage of misdirected worship. To eat at a pagan temple banquet was to have fellowship at **the altar** of idols.

- Enduring Word Bible Commentary -

I read this and agreed. Many have idols of demons they worship instead of communion with Christ, why? Sin. Sin controls our lives if we are not careful. You can take the Lord's supper and still be of the world. But there is a warning against it. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 tells us to be sure we are worthy of partaking in the Lord's Supper. How are we worthy? Through repentance of sin; walking in purity through the recognition that we confess our sins daily to God through our relationship with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 8:1-6 says:

Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge ^lpuffs up, but love edifies.

²And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

³But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

⁴Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one.

⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

⁶yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

1 Corinthians 9:1-7:

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

²If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the ^[a]seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³My defense to those who examine me is this:

⁴Do we have no ^[b]right to eat and drink?

⁵Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

⁶Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working?

⁷Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

To put this where you can understand clearly, when you take the Lord's supper, be in the mind of understanding what Christ did for us, it's simple –

John 3:16-17 says, ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish

but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Notes

Chapter Five: Did Christ Remain in the Tomb After His Crucifixion?

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

BLUF

As usual, I will begin at the beginning. I will start with the bottom line up front (BLUF) for this lesson. The BLUF for the question, “Did Christ Remain in the Tomb after His Crucifixion?” is undoubtedly “No!” When the unlikely witnesses, according to Jewish custom and the suitability of eyewitnesses, Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary” had gone to the tomb to anoint the body of the crucified Lord with spices, they found only an empty grave. The former tax collector turned disciple describes this scene:

Matthew 28:1-6, 8:

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is

going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.”

... They hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.

The two women did as they were told and hurried away to tell what they had seen. Clearly, there was no body in the tomb; the Messiah had defeated death. Christ indeed had not remained in the tomb after His crucifixion, and the Holy Spirit had used women, whose testimony would not even be accepted in court, to announce the resurrection of the Savior of the world to His Disciples.

Christ Has Risen

In Luke’s Gospel, the highly educated Gentile physician, who accompanied Paul in Asia and Macedonia, also recounts the events following the crucifixion of Jesus. He tells of the visit of “certain other women” going to the tomb with spices to prepare the body of their Lord. Upon arrival, they discovered the stone rolled away and an empty tomb with two men in shining garments standing by them. The men then asked the women, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? **He is not here, but is risen!**”

(Luke 24:5-6) (*Emphasis mine*). Again, testimony was given to the truth of the miracle: Jesus had risen.

When their Messiah had been arrested, the disciples fled; they were afraid. He was crucified; they were in despair. His grave was empty; they were in disbelief. But now, His resurrection has been proclaimed. The women were full of joy, but the disciples were skeptical. “And their words [the women’s] seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened (Brackets added) (Luke 24:11-12).”

Later that day, Jesus appeared to His disciples, but they were afraid. Then, the Savior asked why they were troubled and feared that He was a spirit. So, He showed them the scars in His hands and feet and told them to touch to see that He was flesh, but they still did not believe. Jesus ate with them.

Then He said to them:

“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached

in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' (Luke 24:44-47).”

How often do we fall into this trap? We have a setback and allow doubt to enter our minds. We don't see what the Lord is doing because we are blinded by doubt. God is showing us His will, but we don't see it. It is right there in front of us; we might even see it and touch it, but we still do not really recognize what He has put right before us. Just as Christ used the Scripture to illuminate who He was, we need to stay in His word and in prayer to illuminate our path. As King David wrote: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).” And his heir, King Solomon, wrote: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).” Likewise, James, the half-brother of Jesus, tells us:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5-6)

The Third Day

In Luke's account of the resurrection, the two men who spoke to the women visiting the tomb also quoted the Messiah “. . . The Son

of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and **the third day rise again.**' (Luke 24:7) (*Emphasis mine*)” Indeed, on the third day, Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, as well as His own; He had conquered the grave and rose again. A major difference between Christ and the founders of the world’s religions is that His grave is empty, while the bodies of Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Mohamed, Joseph Smith, Bahauallah, James Spring White, Sun Myung Moon, and others are still rotting in their graves.

Paul confirmed:

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3-4).

However, the men who had Jesus crucified could not allow the truth to be discovered. They devised a crafty tale to refute the eyewitness accounts of those who saw the empty tomb and the risen Christ in the flesh.

Matthew 28:11-15:

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city. They told the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priests gathered together with the leaders and agreed on a plan. They gave the soldiers a large amount of money and told them to say that Jesus’ disciples had come at night and had stolen his body while they were sleeping. They added, “If the governor hears about it, we’ll

take care of it, and you'll have nothing to worry about." The soldiers took the money and did as they were told. Their story has been spread among the Jewish people to this day.

So, the men who had seen to His death needed to cover up His resurrection lest they lose power. They actually paid the soldiers guarding the tomb "a large amount of money" to say that the disciples of Jesus had stolen His body while they were sleeping. Nonetheless, this does not change the fact that on the third day, Jesus conquered the grave and rose again to life.

Conclusion

Christ did not remain in the tomb; He arose on the third day just as He said He would. His death, burial, and resurrection encompass our path to salvation. When we come to Christ by faith, our flesh must die: "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24)." Our old self is buried: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death. . . (Romans 6:4a)". But just as Christ did not stay in the grave, we rise again in the newness of life, a new creation in Christ Jesus: "that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4b)."

Notes

Chapter Six: Where is Christ Now?

By Rob Lederman

Hebrews 1:3

. . . who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . .

Many want to know where Christ is today. Why doesn't he do something about all this mess we see every day? Why doesn't he stop loved ones from dying or death of small children? Let's talk about where he is and what he is doing.

The Intercessor

Romans 8:34

³⁴Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Jesus is "The Intercessor", when you read this, what does it mean to you? Let's look at the Scripture from Romans 8:33-39. It's important that you see the wording to understand what he is doing today for us and how he is really working for us if we choose to let him.

Romans 8:33-39

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

With Jesus going to the cross, we are considered not guilty of sin if we believe what he did for us. Who shall I fear when we have Christ?

Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

We cannot be separated from Christ, or could we? How would we be if we trusted and believed in him? He saved us, yet we have a hard time letting the world go.

Many call themselves "saved and confess trust in Christ," but pretend to believe in Him. Scripture calls this out.

Titus 1:16

¹⁶They profess to know God, but in works they deny *Him*, being ^[a]abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

No matter what happens in our lives, none of what we are going through in this present time can separate us from the love of God. He has made us conquerors of the world.

There are many more Scriptures on pretenders. But instead, strive to be only who Christ made you, as he is “The Intercessor.” He advocates for the Believer before God. He is the sacrifice that covers the sin of true Christians.

Sanctification

Hebrews 10:12

¹²But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God . . .

When we look at Hebrews 10:12, we must remember that Christ's death perfects the sanctified, those who follow Christ. What does that mean? Hebrews 10:11 says, "And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."

Before Christ's appearing, every priest would wait at the altar and bring sacrifices, such as animals, birds, etc., whatever a person could afford. The priest would stay at the altar for long periods of time, and the people were required to bring their sacrifice to the altar.

These sacrifices would not take away their sins, so they would cast the sins into a goat or what we know as a "scapegoat". In the Hebrew language, this was called Azazel (pronounced "az-aw-zale'") per the Torah (the first five books of the Bible).

Leviticus 16:8

8 Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat.

Leviticus 16:10

10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

You see, Jesus took the final sacrifice; He is at the right hand of God as we talked about previously. He sits and waits for the Father to send Him to get His bride. He is waiting to defeat the enemies that will, once and for all, fall at his feet. His enemies will be His footstool!! This is exciting to know what is coming! All people will have a total submission to Christ when he rules as King of this earth one day. Of course, this means Jesus will now be the judge and jury. He will make the final call on all, those who believe and those who don't. Will I be judged as a believer in Christ? Oh yes:

Romans 14:10-12

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written:

“As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.”

So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

The Author

Let's finish with Hebrews 12:2

Hebrews 12:2

²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before

Him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of
God.

As always, the ultimate example is Jesus Christ. We should keep our eyes on Jesus like the song calls out, because He is both the author and perfect example of the faith we should have.

He is the final author because He fulfilled God's promise to send a Messiah, going all the way back in Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”

The foundation for the redemption of the world is through His ministry, His death, and resurrection. Jesus is also the perfecter in every way. Why would you not let him into your heart? Do you have a heart issue? A sin issue? What is holding you back from letting his love into your heart

Christ fulfilled the task that God called Him to, obeying to the point of death, enduring through many sufferings. He defeated death because of his love for the world, and he ascended to the throne to

be at the right hand of God. We are awaiting his full coronation.
One day it will come. Will your lamp be fully lit or burned out?

Matthew 25:1 – 13

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

“And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’

Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

He is coming, and he sits and waits for his Father's blessings. Are you ready?

Notes

Chapter Seven: Will Christ Come Again?

By Glenn Beard

John 14:1-3

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (Bold emphasis mine).”

BLUF

Let us begin this lesson with the Bottom Line Up Front, the BLUF.

The BLUF for the question, “Will Christ Come Again?” is

“Unequivocally, Yes! Christ will come again!” The Messiah himself has told us that not only would He come again, but that He has prepared a place for those who believe in His Father and in Him.

We know God cannot lie, “. . . in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began (Titus1:2).” Jesus is God, “I and My Father are one (John 10:30).” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. . . (John 14:9).”

Therefore, because our Savior has told us that He would return to receive us, we can have complete confidence that Jesus Christ will

come again and come to take us home. However, He will not take everyone. When Jesus returns, He will only take those who believe in who He is and have acknowledged Him as Lord on this earth. “. . . so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation (Hebrews 9:28).”

The Righteous and Unrighteous

On this earth, all of mankind is divided into two groups; we are separated because some of us have a relationship with Jesus Christ and know God: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3).” The righteous acknowledge Christ as Lord and accept Him as Savior voluntarily while they still have a choice. The other group, the unrighteous choose to believe the lies of the evil one and do not believe in Him: “. . . but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).” Until Christ’s return and while we are alive in this world, the two groups will be together. However, a day is coming when Christ will separate these groups.

When He returns, the Messiah will separate the sheep from the goats: “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will

separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32).” The angels will separate the righteous from the unrighteous (Matthew 13:49). At the end of Jesus’s teaching of the “Sermon on the Mount,” He gave a description of what it will be like when He returns and nations are judged:

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me... And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me...’

‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

- Matthew 25:31-46 -

In That Day

After Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica, false doctrine had been spread among the Thessalonians. Paul wrote his second letter to remove the seeds of doubt and encourage them with truth. He tells them that he is writing to explain to them that God will repay those who have troubled them (Chapter 1, Verses 4-6). He continued:

. . . and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 -

Paul assured the Thessalonians that their suffering would be repaid, and that those responsible for causing them problems would be punished for their wrongdoing and sent away from the presence of the Lord. "In that day," Christ will come again, and they will be glorified.

His Appearing

Even while he suffered, Paul demonstrated grace to his fellow believers. While in prison, he penned his second letter to Timothy. Paul, an older and more mature Christian, had been discipling Timothy. In his second letter, Paul continues to encourage Timothy, calling him “a beloved son (2 Timothy 1:2)” and tells him that he prays for him. Paul tells Timothy of the perils of the last days, but then Paul tells him that all Scripture is inspired by God and is given so “that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16).” But Paul doesn’t stop there; he continues to encourage and challenge Timothy, telling him: “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom (2 Timothy 4:1).” He explains to Timothy what he must do to prepare for “His appearing,” and that he can be confident that Christ will return.

Conclusion

Yes, Christ will come again. The first time Jesus came meekly “. . . to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45b)” and “. . . that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17b).” However,

when Christ comes again, He will come back in power: there will be no doubt. He will not return in meekness; Christ will return in glory. He is preparing a place for those who serve Him. Christ is coming again to take them to the place He has prepared.

Will you be ready? You can be. When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, they told him, “. . . Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved . . . (Acts 16:30).” Paul also wrote in his letter to the church in Rome, “. . . that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).” He doesn’t say, “You might be saved.” He says, “You will be saved.” So, be prepared when Christ returns; make sure you go with the righteous in the time of His appearing.

Notes

Chapter Eight: What Happens to Men When They Die?

By Rob Lederman

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Present With the Lord

What happens to us when we die? The Scripture calls out the following:

Paul sums up the Christian faith walk in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8:

For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

The word “*for*” connects with Paul’s thoughts from the other chapters, which end with him telling believers to walk by faith and hoping that non-believers would also hear the word, believing that what they cannot see is more real than what they can see on earth. It is because what can be seen on earth is temporary, or as I like to say, touchy, feely, and is per scripture passing away, while what can’t be seen, what is to come, will last forever.

This means that our bodies, while here on earth, will pass away, but the resurrection bodies we are promised will be immortal.

John 20:29

²⁹Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

I really like the verse above that calls this out – “We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

We are a temple that represents God Himself, as called out:

1 Corinthians 3:16:

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God
and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

2 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?
For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will dwell in them
And walk among *them*.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.”

I remember when I was a young man, and people would ask me where you go when you die. I really had no clue as to what happens to you once you die, that's it. There is no more life. You are in the ground, and that's it.

There was no point in worrying about the “church,” as it had no meaning to me anyway. My idea of church was the building, as the people were fake anyway. When you die, you die, done.

Well, let me tell you it is not like that at all. Life and death are realities that happen, and God knows the day and hour that we will be called. Have you ever heard someone say, “It is a matter of life and death?” It is!! We have the ability not to worry about either one with Christ. But we must ask, is it really that simple? Are our own

lives and deaths all that matter? Now, we must ask about the everlasting interest of souls.

The question is of infinite importance to all, but there are some whose cases are more than we can ever imagine. We must gird our loins and ask if we have the right frame of mind. What frame of mind? The frame of mind that declares that we know Jesus as Lord and Savior; the frame of mind that states we are guided by Him and not just “playing church” as a way to fool others.

The Church of Corinth started pretty well, but somewhere along the way, the people lost their vision of what Paul was talking about. You see, they were facing issues like divisions, immorality, and misuse of spiritual gifts, not thinking about the Lord, and if they were ready for what awaits them and all of us, death.

Paul states that the physical body here on earth is an earthly tent. When we think of an earthly tent, we think of one that is quick to set up and tear down; temporary. Paul was a tent maker by trade; thus, it would have been natural for him to use the tent as a way to express his thoughts. A tent is not seen as permanent. It is something that is here today but will be gone tomorrow.

Paul compared our earthly tent (our earthly body) with what awaits us in heaven, in the life to come: a building from God, a house not made with hands; eternal in the heavens. How exciting that this is

for us!! Leave the old behind and know that we have a place for us with no more suffering and many other things for us to sing praises also!!

Christ is Gain

Philippians 1:21-23

²¹ For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²² But if I live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better.

Let's take a close look at this verse. Paul knew that death was not the end for the Christian. It is merely a step up to glory, a gain for the Christian believer. Paul's death, at the time, would be a gain in two senses. First, his death for the cause of Christ would glorify Jesus, and that was "gain." Second, to be in the immediate presence of the Lord was a gain for Paul and for us.

The idea that Paul could consider death a present gain argues against the idea of the soul sleeping or being in some sort of slumber. This teaching is false, and states that the believing dead are held in some sort of suspended animation while the soul is still here on earth until the resurrection occurs. Paul's understanding that his death might be considered "gain" also argues against the

idea of “purgatory,” which says that the believing dead must be purified or cleansed through suffering before coming into the presence of God. How crazy is that? You have to do the works of the world first to get into heaven.

Conclusion

In closing, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).”** Paul knew that death was not a defeat to the believer in Christ. It is merely a graduation to glory, an all-inclusive gain for the Christian believer. Paul stated that his death for the cause of Christ would glorify Jesus, as it would be for us also, and that it was a gain we should also want and need, as Paul called out.

Second, to be in the immediate presence of the Lord was gain for Paul and one day for us. Death is not the end, like I once thought, but the beginning of a new life with Christ, to spread the gospel with Christ!

Spread the word now and know that without a doubt, if you are in Christ, you will be forever more with Christ in Life and in Death.

Notes

Chapter Nine: Will the Bodies of the Dead be Raised to Life Again?

By Glenn Beard

Acts 24:14-15

But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

BLUF

The Bottom Line Up Front, or the BLUF, for this lesson will answer the question: “Will the bodies of the dead be raised to life again?”

We can answer this question with a simple, “Yes.” We know we can answer this question affirmatively because God’s word tells us that they will.

Looking forward to a new age, the Holy Spirit inspired the prophet Isaiah to prophesy: “Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead (Isaiah 26:19).”

Likewise, Paul shared in his second letter to the church at Corinth: “Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead (2 Corinthians 1:9).” God is able to do all things, including raising again the bodies of the dead to life again, and He will do so when the time is come.

The Resurrection of the Dead

In the book of Acts, Luke recounts the trial of Paul before Antonius Felix, the sixth Roman procurator (governor) of Judea after Pontius Pilate, who presided over the trial of Jesus and ordered His crucifixion. More than forty Jews had vowed to ambush Paul and kill him, but Paul’s nephew heard about the plot and informed Paul. Paul shared the information with the Roman garrison commander Claudius Lysais; the Roman commander ordered nearly 500 Roman soldiers, horsemen, and spearmen to escort Paul to Caesaria in order for him to stand trial before Felix for Paul’s safety.

Lysais sent a letter to Felix explaining the situation, and the Judean governor agreed to hear Paul when his accusers arrived (Acts 23). The high priest and elders arrived to present evidence against Paul.

The Jewish leaders attempted to flatter Felix to sway his opinion and made false accusations against Paul and Lysais. Paul mounted his defense, denying their allegations and testifying that his accusers could not prove their charges against him (Acts 24). Paul continued by explaining that he worships and believes according to their laws and explains why he has hope in God in Acts 24:14-15

But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

Paul continues his defense:

Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me, while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, “Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day (Acts 24:20-21).”

Paul was in Caesaria defending himself against false accusations from the High Priest and other Jewish leaders. He had confidence in the Gospel; he had confidence in the resurrection of the dead.

Felix knew of the “Way” and called Paul to testify of Christ to him and his Jewish wife, Drusilla. “Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you’ (Acts 24:25).” There is no evidence that Felix ever found that “convenient time” and surrendered to Christ. He, likely, never had that hope in the resurrection that Paul had.

We Will Hear His Voice

One day, all will be resurrected from the dead. The dead will “hear his voice and come forth.” Some will come forth “to the resurrection of life,” and some “to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29).” Jesus is the Good Shepherd; His children are His sheep. In the tenth chapter of John, the Savior assures us:

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

- John 10:27-28) -

When we hear His voice and follow Him, we have a guarantee. We are good, not because of what we have done, but because of what He has done for us by imputing His righteousness upon us. When the time for the resurrection of the dead arrives, we can know with which group we will be included.

John 5:28-29:

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Those who hear his voice and answer while still alive can have confidence in their destiny; “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me (Revelation 3:20).” They will be with the bodies who are raised “to the resurrection of life;” those who deny Him while still on this earth will be among the bodies who are raised “to the resurrection of condemnation.”

The Judgment

In the last chapter of the book of Daniel, the prophet foretells the end times. He reveals "... And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation . . . (v1)." When the judgment comes, those whose names are "found written in the book" will be delivered. Daniel continued, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2)." The coming judgment will be when mankind is separated to everlasting life or to everlasting contempt.

As Paul was addressing the Greek Areopagus, he enlightened the men of Athens about the unknown god, the One True God, the Creator of the universe. He explained to them that he who seeks Him could find Him, and continued to clarify:

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

- Acts 17:30-31 -

Ultimately, all will be judged. How you respond when you hear His voice will determine which group of bodies raised from the dead you will accompany. Be prepared for the judgment.

Conclusion

God's word clearly tells us that the bodies of the dead will be raised again to life. Some will be raised to spend eternity with our Creator on the new earth. However, those who have denied the Messiah on this earth will be raised ". . . to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29)." It is up to you which group of raised bodies with which you will be. The Holy Spirit tells us through Peter's second letter, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)."

Anyone can join the group that is raised ". . . to the resurrection of life. . . (John 5:29)." In Romans 10:13, Paul quotes Joel saying, "For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved'." Before this passage, in the ninth verse, Paul explains, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Don't be like Felix and wait for a more convenient time. Make sure you are included with the bodies of the dead that are resurrected to life.

Notes

Chapter Ten: What Will Happen to the Wicked on the Day of Judgment?

By Glenn Beard

Revelation 20:12-15

I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books.

Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works.

Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

BLUF

Presenting the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) is a way to introduce the topic of a briefing or lesson and to establish the conclusion in the beginning, thus preparing the listener or reader for the more detailed information to be provided. The BLUF for this lesson cannot be answered as many have been with a “yes” or “no.” The BLUF for this lesson, “What Will Happen to the Wicked on the Day of Judgment?” is: They will be cast into the lake of fire and spend

eternity in torment away from God. Luke shared these words from our Savior:

“But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. . . .”

-Luke 13:27-28-

On the day of judgment, we will be separated as the sheep from the goats.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

-Matthew 25:31-33-

Jesus is discussing His return, often called the Second Coming. He tells what will happen to those who do not follow him. Later, in the 46th verse of Matthew 25, our Messiah articulates what will happen to them:

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment . . .”

The Lord Executes Judgment

When speaking of Jesus, most people today like to refer to Him as a loving man who is tolerant and wouldn't send anyone to hell.

They misinterpret Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that you be not judged." Clearly, failing to recognize that this prohibition refers to hypocritical judging, they fail to continue with the admonition that Jesus relays in this passage; they skip the rest of the lesson. Most chose to stop at the first verse; they don't read on or simply choose not to recognize that Jesus continued to teach, "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:5)."

The world today loves the Baby Jesus in the manger and the Jesus who healed the sick and loved sinners. However, like the crowds that left shortly after the Savior fed the five thousand (John 6), most in the world today run away when the concept of personal responsibility and judgment is considered. Nevertheless, our God is a righteous God; He cannot look upon evil (Habakkuk 1:13).

Therefore, judgment is inescapable; all must be judged, and the wicked must be punished. Only death can pay for the sin of the wicked. In Psalm 9, David tells of the punishment that has befallen the nations that chose to defy God. The King of Israel continues to

prophesy about judgment to be executed on the nations and the wicked by the Lord when they forget Him.

The Lord is known by the judgment He executes; The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Meditation. *Selah*

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

- Psalm 9:16-17 -

The Lord will execute judgment; His holiness demands that all wickedness (sin) be punished. Those who deny that Jesus is the Christ are liars; they do not have the Father and are destined to suffer the judgment of Psalm 9. However, those who acknowledge the Son have the Father and the promise of eternal life (1 John 2:22-25).

Fear God

Luke 12:5

“But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”

How do any of us avoid the judgment that condemns the wicked to hell? In the passage referred to as the “Song of Mary,” the mother of our incarnate Lord tells us that God’s mercy is on those who fear Him (Luke 1:50), and it is only by the Lord’s mercy that we can

avoid judgment. Likewise, in Proverbs 19:23, the wise King Solomon tells us that the fear of the Lord leads to life. Psalm 145:18-20 tells us:

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The Lord preserves all who love Him.

In the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, God's Word tells us to fear Him, to have an unequivocal reverence towards Him. In fearing Him, we must put our trust in Him and believe that He sent His son to die for us. Those who do not fear Him and put their trust in Jesus Christ as Lord are headed for eternal punishment. So, we must fear God, giving all reverence to Him and believe, as His Spirit has shown us, that Jesus Christ is His Son; He has risen from the dead, and in His death and resurrection we can have our name written the Book of Life.

The Great White Throne Judgement

Revelation 20:11-15

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And

another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

John tells us in the book of Revelation that the dead will be judged. All will stand before God on His great white throne to be judged, each according to his works, and that all whose names are not written in the Book of Life, the wicked, will be cast into the lake of fire, hell. They will be sent to a place intended for the devil and his fallen angels, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the fire is not quenched, and the worm does not die. They will experience eternal separation from the grace and blessings of God. This place will be unbearable, yet it will be eternal.

However, there is hope, “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).’” In the Revelation to John, Jesus declared, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Revelation 3:5).” If we are not ashamed to acknowledge our Lord before men while we are on this earth, our Savior will confess us before His Father and ensure that our names are not taken from the Book. Everyone whose name is recorded in the Book of Life will

abide in a new heaven and a new earth where, “. . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).”

Conclusion

On the Day of Judgment, everyone will stand before Jehovah on His great white throne to be judged according to his or her deeds. At that time, the wicked, those who have chosen to deny the Son of God as Lord and refused to believe that God raised Him from the dead, will be cast into the lake of fire. However, you can approach that time with confidence. If you repent, surrender to the Lordship of the Messiah, and claim the blood sacrifice He made for you, now while you are still on this earth, you can be saved and know that your name is recorded in the Book of Life.

Notes

Chapter Eleven – What Is Hell?

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

BLUF

Beginning a lesson with the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) allows the writer or briefer to establish the premise of the lesson or briefing from the beginning. Once the BLUF is introduced, the readers or briefing audience members will be able to pursue the intellectual goals, or spiritual goals when considering Biblical lessons, of the covered material. For this lesson, the BLUF is somewhat concerning. This lesson asks the question, “What is Hell?” Simplifying the BLUF, we can say hell is a place created for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41); it is a place of eternal punishment where all who go there will be away “. . .from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2Thessalonians 1:9).” As you will see in the rest of this lesson, hell is an endless and horrible place meant for the devil and the angels that followed him in rebellion. However, it is likewise the place where the men and women who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior, while on this earth, and accept His blood sacrifice for their sins, will spend eternity.

Everlasting Punishment

Matthew 25:46

And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Some religions, such as Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, and Advent Christian Churches, believe in the concept of annihilationism. They hold to the belief that souls who die without the salvation of Christ will be destroyed or annihilated after death. They sometimes use Matthew 10:28, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," to justify the belief. Concluding that destroying the soul in hell indicates the annihilation of the soul. However, as with all scripture, we can use straightforward and plain text to help clarify seemingly confusing or unclear verses. As our Savior clearly tells us in Matthew 25 that those who did not do His will are sent "...away to everlasting punishment." Everlasting punishment cannot be executed if the souls are annihilated.

Since the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, attest to the never-ending punishment lost souls will suffer, along with the devil and his angels, we can be confident that the punishment is everlasting.

The prophets expressed it, and Jesus confirmed this in His teachings.

Their Worm Does Not Die

Mark 9:43-48

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where “Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where “Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— where “Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

In Mark’s Gospel, the Holy Spirit inspired Mark to tell of the teaching of Jesus on how important it is to remove temptations from our lives. The Lord tells His disciples that it is better for us to cut off a hand or a foot, or pluck out an eye, if one of these causes us to sin. For it is better to enter the kingdom of God disabled, lame, or blind than it is to enter hell physically whole. Our Savior also gives more descriptive images of hell. He tells of a place

where “their worm does not die, and the fire is never quenched.” Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 66. Isaiah is prophesying about the new heavens and the new earth that the Lord will create; he shares:

“. . .All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

“And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

- Isaiah 66:23-24 -

So those who are vanquished to spend eternity in hell will suffer. Their suffering will come from the fire that is never quenched, and they will never again “. . . know the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thessalonians 1:9).” Along with the eternal fire, the damned will suffer greatly. Whether the worm mentioned is actually maggots, as the Greek text suggests, or just a metaphor for the horrible suffering, we can be certain that hell is not a place where anyone would want to spend eternity.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

In the sixteenth chapter of the first writing of Luke, the well-educated Gentile Doctor and companion of Paul, conveys the account of a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus who lay at the gate of the rich man, hoping for crumbs of food. They both died; Lazarus was taken up into the arms of Abraham, but the rich man was cast into the torment of Hades. The rich man saw Lazarus with Abraham and begged Abraham to send Lazarus to touch a drop of water to his tongue. However, Abraham told the rich man that there was a gulf between them that could not be crossed either way. So, the rich man begged that Lazarus be sent to the rich man's brothers to warn them, but Abraham proclaimed: "... 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead (Luke 16:19-31).'" Clearly, the Messiah was teaching the horrors and the finality of hell while explaining how to avoid it.

The Devil and His Angels

Matthew 25:41

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Hell is a horrible place; it is eternal and unescapable. God did not create it for man; He made it for the devil and the angels who rebelled against the Throne of God. The priest and prophet Ezekiel, who served during the darkest days of Judah's history when God's chosen people were in captivity in Babylon, tells why the devil was sentenced to an eternal punishment in a dreadful place created for him and the others who rebelled with him (Ezekiel 28). The devil thought he could be like the Most-High God, and he convinced one-third of the angels of Heaven to follow him. But the devil and his angels were brought down to spend an eternity of suffering (Isaiah 14). Now they strive to take as many with them as they can.

Conclusion

Most who believe in hell acquiesce to the horror of hell, but many do not believe it exists. God's word clearly expresses the existence of hell and its eternality. Hell was made for the devil and his angels, but the evil one appeared to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent and tempted them in their arrogance, asking, "Did God really say . . . (Genesis 3)?" Eve, followed by Adam, listened to the devil and disobeyed God. Thus, Adam introduced sin into the world, and sin separated man from his Creator. Mankind was no longer able to

commune with God. Adam doomed the whole human race; he doomed them to the place created for Satan and his minions. However, the Creator loved His creation; He killed an animal and made clothing to cover their sin. But our God did not stop there; He made a way to reestablish the relationship that was destroyed. From before creation, God had a plan. Just as the first Adam brought sin into the world, cursing it and mankind, so the second Adam, the Son of God, would come to the world and die as a perfect sacrifice for the sin of man, so that through Him, we might have life. If you turn from your sin, acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and accept His blood sacrifice for your sins, you will be saved. You will avoid the everlasting punishment and be given eternal life in the presence of our Lord.

Notes

Chapter Twelve: What Will Happen to the Righteous on the Day of Judgment?

By Rick Hertless

Matthew 25:46

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Bema Seat

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

We have been justified through our faith in God. Our faith in God is proven by our faith in His Son, Jesus. John 6:29 says, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you

believe in Him whom He sent’.” Therefore, those who believe in Jesus will be at the Bema Seat of Christ.

However, I must reiterate that the word “belief” here is totally following Christ. It is not merely “head knowledge.” It is heart knowledge. It is knowing, believing, and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That guidance will always keep one in line with Christ, because as we have discussed previously, the Holy Spirit always points to Jesus, and Jesus always points to the Father.

So, judgment for the Believer is a reckoning of his life for Christ and the awards given for what he has done. It is a commendation for the work that was accomplished in his life for Christ. The above Scripture references the “terror of the Lord.” Believers have recognized the “terror of the Lord” to those who have chosen to live apart from Him; to those who have rejected the grace of God through the sacrifice of Jesus. While Believers still have a fearful respect for God, knowing the power He has, they no longer live in terror of Him.

Notice also, the above Scripture says, “. . . we persuade men.” Because of our knowledge of the absolute terror that awaits those who reject the goodness of God, we share with them the Good News of God, which is salvation through acceptance of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Not by Works

So, who are the righteous? Matthew 25:46 says, “but the righteous into eternal life.” The righteous are those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of their life. Not by anything they have done, save one. Accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Romans 4:9-12 says:

Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

The circumcised referred to in the above Scripture is that in observance of the Law. But it was not The Law that saved Abraham; it was God’s grace declaring Him righteous because his heart was focused on God. It was faith in God that was declared to Abraham as righteousness.

The above Scripture makes it clear that faith is what saved Abraham, not the works of circumcision. So it is with water baptism; It is faith that saves, the baptism is just the expression of that faith.

As with Abraham, it is the same with Believers today. It is their faith in God that grants the grace to have eternal life. Faith in God leads people to faith in Jesus. Because they are seeking God, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide them to the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

God's salvation has always come through faith, whether in the Old or New Testaments. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). It is only through faith that one can receive eternal life.

The promise of Abraham was given to all men. Romans 4:9-12, above, makes it clear that God is looking for faith in Him, not the outward works of man for salvation. The only works God seeks are not for salvation. They are works that are done in love for Him to be judged at the Bema seat of Christ. Those works bring glory to the Father for the redemption of all who will seek and heed the voice of God.

God Loves

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Again, it is the love for God that leads them to seek the way to God. There is only one way to The Father, that is through His Son.

1 John 5:12 says, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” However, it is because of God’s love for us that He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for our sin for eternity to all who accept His gift.

God grants salvation to “whoever believes in Him.” His salvation was not set aside for only a “choice few.” His salvation was set aside for whoever would come to Him with a contrite heart, ready to serve. Though the Jews were the chosen people, they were not the only ones God intended to live with Him for eternity. Quite the contrary, the plan of God was for the Jews to show what it was like to live for a God who cared and provided for His people.

Unfortunately, they chose to live for themselves. They chose to go the way of the world and follow fleshly desires and idols made with human hands. Instead, the Jews became the example of the opposite of what God had chosen for His people. Even more

unfortunate, people have not learned from history. Many declare themselves to be Christians only to live by their own fleshly desires and idols made with human hands. God has given His Word as testimony to His grace, but it is denied by the very ones that are called by His name.

It is time for Christians to come to God in repentance and be the kind of people God has intended for them to be, people of love, understanding, integrity, and compassion. That does not mean they should become people who are easily trampled underfoot. Quite the contrary, Christians must become the people who are ready to stand for what they believe, no matter the cost.

Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:8

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

For all who believe, there is laid up a crown of righteousness. This is what the righteous get on the Day of Judgment.

Romans 14:10 says, “. . . For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” The context of Romans 14 is judgment of one’s

brother. God tells us not to judge each other on trivial matters; rather, look to Him. However, for the discussion at hand, it should be noted that we, believers, shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the Bema seat.

2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” So, on the Day of Judgment for the Christian, our works will be weighed. Christ will examine all that we, as Believers, have done. He will reward those things that are counted worthy and throw out those things that have not been done for the glory of God. But the Christian is saved for eternity. It is his works that shall be judged. But the unrighteous, those who have rejected Christ, will also be judged by their works. Unfortunately, since they have lived by the Law rather than by the grace of God in Jesus, they will be found guilty. For no one can live by the Law. Galatians 3:10-11 says:

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

The Law was not given to save; the Law was given so that man might know the heart of God. The Law was given so that we might know and understand the character of God. Thereby, knowing and understanding will lead to faith for all who are seeking. Knowing

and understanding God leads to trust in the only One who can grant eternal life with Him. Trusting God will bring one to faith in the One He sent to ensure salvation, that One is Jesus.

Notes

Chapter Thirteen: Conclusion

By Rick Hertless

Romans 1:16-17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

What is the Church?

In these past chapters, we have discussed many things that are required of those who call themselves Believers. But what, really, is the Church? These ordinances, commandments, are simply witnesses to what the Church should feel in its heart daily. These commandments are written on the hearts of Believers. They should be a part of the Believers' life on a daily basis. These commandments should not be forced or coerced; they should not be those that are guilted into obeying, nor should they be ones of duty alone. Rather, they should be those acts of love. Love for a God who has given everything. A God who wants only the best for His children. A God who wants the world to know of His compassion to all who will not come to Him.

The Church should be a sanctuary for the lost and hurting, but more than that, the Church should be hunters: ever hunting for those who are seeking the mind and heart of God.

In Paul's opening statement in Romans, he makes it clear that the Church should be one that proclaims the Gospel. He continues for the next several chapters, explaining the need for salvation. He outlines the sinfulness of man and gives the solution for salvation through the acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus.

The Church has forgotten what it is about. It seems to me that the church has become a "bless me club." In the past several years, I have seen many come into the church building on any given Sunday with the attitude of, "What do you have for me?" If there are no added benefits for their lives, they move on to the next building, where they might find the music they desire, the children's toys are better, and the stories of the pastor are less offensive.

However, the Church is much more than entertainment. The Church should be those who are seeking to gain knowledge and inspiration to go out into the world and give the Gospel.

It would seem that the Church does not realize the power of the responsibility it has for the world in which we live. If the Church's job were merely to get saved and do nothing, God would immediately bring us to Heaven upon salvation. There would be no

need to remain on the Earth any longer. But the purpose of the Church is to show the world how it is to live for a loving God who cares and provides for us. Unfortunately, Christians continue to trust the things of the world and show no difference from the way the world lives.

When Christians need money, they go to the bank or the government. When they are sick, they go to doctors first, then maybe to God when all else fails. If their relationships are failing, they go to counselors with worldly degrees rather than the counsel of brothers in Christ. If there is a dispute with their brother, they go to the courts of man. While in and of themselves, these are not necessarily bad things. But what God desires is that we go to Him first and allow Him to meet our needs according to how He chooses.

Recently, I have had a rather big financial need. It went on for months. I could have solved it by going to the bank and borrowing money. However, had I gone that route, the need would not have been solved, merely pushed down the road through monthly payments. Instead, I chose to pray to God about the need. He and I had a conversation about it many times a week. The conversation was not that of desperation, but one of “a matter of fact.” Miraculously, God answered the prayer. Not only did He answer that prayer, but met many other needs as well through a source that had long since been forgotten.

God will continually talk to us and hear us if we continue to come to Him. Church is a gathering of people who should remind us that God is alive. It is not a place to come and “kill an hour” or get entertained. The Church is not irrelevant; it is vital. Nevertheless, the Church must discover its vitality once again.

The book of Romans gives a guideline for the perfect church. Unlike the other letters Paul wrote, he had never been to Rome. Therefore, instead of revealing the shortcomings of the Church, he tells the Church how it should live for Jesus. He gives a roadmap for salvation, governance, and relationships both with God and Man.

From Faith to Faith

Paul tells us that if we are justified, we must show it by our faith in God. Romans 1:17 says, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’.” It is revealing that Paul writes that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. He says in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” We all, Believers and unbelievers alike, struggle with challenges in this world. It is how

we handle those challenges that make us different. Do we handle them in the way of the world or by trusting in God? I dare say, most handle them in the way of the world.

The relevance of the Church is lost in its lack of trust and faith in God. But the revealing aspect of the above Scripture is “faith to faith.” When we struggle the first time as a Christian, we have little faith. Perhaps we handle a given situation in the only way we know how, which is the way of the world. Because, as we come through different stages of our lives, we learn more about the faith of God and begin to trust Him more. Just a few years ago, I may have settled my previously mentioned financial struggle with the bank, justifying that God would help me make the payment rather than simply handling the entire situation. But now my faith has grown, and I have seen God answer many prayers. My trust in Him has grown as well.

God wants worship services to be just that. He is not interested in feeding your flesh in the name of worshipping Him. He is not seeking bigger buildings, more lights, better sound, or better performances. He desires that we worship Him in spirit and in truth. John 4:23 says, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”

The above Scripture says, “But the hour is coming, and now is . . .” because we have access to the Father through the Son. Jesus is the Truth. We can truly worship in spirit and in truth if we come to God with a contrite heart, asking not what He can do for us, but what we can do for Him. It is true, God does not need us to spread His Word. In speaking to the Pharisees, they were told by Jesus in Luke 19:40, “But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out'.” But God cannot bless the stones or any other inanimate object. He desires to bless us through our praise to Him.

God’s praise is reciprocating. He returns His blessings to us through our faith in Him through His Son, Jesus. So, what is the answer? What is the Church? The Church is not a building. The Church is a body of Believers who join in with the Church at large to give praise to an All-Mighty God who loves us; a God who wants to care and provide for us; a God who seeks to bring as many as He can to Himself for eternity. Is that you? Are you ready to be The Church, or are you merely going to accept going to church? The difference is in the capital “C.” Are you The Church or simply going to church?

Notes