

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHRISTIANS SIN? - Part elevenSunday, December 2nd, 2012, 10:00 a.m. - Teaching #1608

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST? (continued)

Hebrews 6:1-2 - "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, [2] and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."

This series had its birth studying the judgment of God as it manifests itself in this present world. People don't often recognize God's judgment as such. They don't know what to look for. So we took several weeks almost ignoring the future judgment of God as it will manifest itself when Jesus comes again.

Then we began looking at how God's judgment would be manifested to all at the Second Coming of our Lord. Last week we finished studying the judgment seat of Christ as it relates to *believers*. A lot of people have a hard time putting together the two ideas that we are presently totally justified through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the clear teaching of Scripture that Christians too must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to have their deeds examined and measured. That was the core of last week's teaching.

Today we will consider the final judgment as it relates specifically to *unbelievers*.

1) THE NATURE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT FOR UNBELIEVERS

We're going to examine in detail the final state of those judged without salvation through Jesus Christ in the next three weeks of this teaching series. For now, let me just make some basic observations:

- a) **Acts 10:38-42** - "....how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. [39] And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, [40] but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, [41] not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. [42] And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead."

Underscore those words, "....and he (Jesus - 38) *commanded us to preach....*"(42). Jesus never left the option on the table to declare a gospel that excluded His future judgment.

Of course, there are so many wonderful things we're to proclaim about Jesus Christ. But when Peter speaks these words, he says there is something very specific that we are commanded to proclaim about Jesus. The very first thing he mentions is we are to tell everyone Jesus is the coming Judge of the world. And He will judge everyone - both the living and the dead (42).

This is not my opinion, and it's not my attempt to mock other religions. But we must always remember, Jesus has no equals. This world may treat all religions the same, but one day Mohamed is going to come out of his grave, where he's been rotting all these years just like everyone else, and he will stand shoulder to shoulder with every other person in front of the Judge, Jesus Christ. Our world needs to know that.

- b) **Matthew 7:21-23** - "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' (a clear *profession* of faith) will enter the kingdom of heaven, (that's the issue at stake here - entering heaven) but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' [23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

James 2:14-17 - "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith (this is not someone *denying* Christ) but does not have works? Can that faith save him? [15] If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, [16] and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? [17] So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

What could possibly be the purpose of recording these words of Jesus and James? Why would Jesus preach a sermon and James write to the church about an attitude that *looked* and perhaps even *felt* like genuine commitment, but was empty of saving power?

In fact, Jesus would wrap up His whole sermon on the mount with the example of a house that looked solid and well-constructed, but would fall when that great storm of final judgment came - **Matthew 7:26-27** - "And everyone who hears

these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. [27] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

And here's the hard New Testament truth. One of the purposes of the final judgment will be the **outward** revealing of false **inward** faith. Genuine faith **will** justify all by itself. But that doesn't undo the fact that Jesus said there would be **many** (Matthew 7:22) who **thought** they were in but never were.

So I am to learn it is never safe merely to **mimic** the standard of religious declaration demonstrated by those who sit with me in church. My faith in Christ Jesus must be **my** faith in Christ Jesus. He must be my joy and my Lord and my ultimate loyalty. That's what faith in Jesus **means**. And the final judgment will expose all that is **less** than this.

c) **Romans 2:5** - "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."

For all unbelievers, the day of final judgment is described as the day of **wrath**. This is the essential difference in the nature of judgment day for believers and unbelievers. For those who have trusted in and acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God's mercy and grace will be magnified. For those who have lived for self and pleasure and have refused to bend the knee to Jesus Christ, judgment day will magnify God's justice and holiness.

The biggest mistake people make regarding God's coming wrath on judgment day is to draw their conclusions about how God will judge sin **then** by the way He seems to judge it **now**. Look around you. We don't see great Old Testament like manifestations of God's wrath being poured out on people who resist and reject Jesus Christ. And so people conclude that, because God is patient and longsuffering in **this** age toward rebellion and disobedience, that His reluctance to **judge** sin will extend into the day of judgment itself. But the Bible won't allow such deceptive thinking. Consider the context of the verse we're studying under this very point:

Romans 2:4-5 - "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? [5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are **storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.**"

Paul says, "Yes, of course God is very kind, even in the way He treats sinners in this age of grace. He's kind, not because He thinks lightly of sin, but because He wants that kindness to soften your heart and lead you to repentance. But if you don't **learn** now from the kindness of God, you will only make things **worse** for yourself on the day of judgment!"

2) PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF MANKIND

a) ***The doctrine of final judgment satisfies our sense for the need of final justice in this fallen world.***

This world is **not** a fair place, and Christians should be the very first ones to admit it. We are not to judge God solely by the events that take place in the news. This kind of **false perception** happens all the time - "**How could a good God allow.....?**" You've heard it a thousand times.

The doctrine of the **final** judgment reveals that God will be seen as **ultimately** fair and just and good. Paul told slaves to be submissive to their masters, and then reassures them - **Colossians 3:24-25** - "**....knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. [25] For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.**"

b) ***The doctrine of the final judgment enables us to forgive those who wrong us without striking back with any kind of vengeance.***

Romans 12:19 - "**Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."**

The very common mistaken notion of the Biblical revelation of God - especially cited from the Old Testament - is the notion that Christians who hold to the revelation of a vengeful God somehow perpetuate hate and violence in this world. In fact, the opposite is the case. **Only** Christians who hold to the future outpouring of God's wrath can respond to personal injustice with love and prayer.

Every act of revenge is an act of unbelief. We strike back when we think if we don't, the scales of injustice will never be put right - that somehow sin will triumph and righteousness will be trod under foot.

For the Christian who takes both the Cross and the day of judgment seriously, every sin committed against him is **either** paid for on the Cross, if the perpetrator is or becomes a Christian, or it **will** be made right at the final judgment.

Further proof of this principle is found in the fact that the Bible tells us that even Jesus took this attitude when He was unjustly

treated - **1 Peter 2:21-23** - "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. [22] He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. [23] When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

- c) ***The doctrine of the final judgment needs to be before the mind of the church as a motive for missions and evangelism.***

The decisions people make in this age have consequences that they don't think about. We are called to echo loudly the words of our God through the prophet Ezekiel - **Ezekiel 33:11** - "Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?"

If **we** don't like to think about judgment day we need to remember that **Father God** thinks about it all the time. In fact, the Bible teaches that the delay of our Lord's return is due solely to the fact that God is waiting for the world to take the message of judgment seriously:

2 Peter 3:9 - "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

You and I will never share God's passion for the lost until we share His obsession with the coming day of judgment. God help us to do this while there is still time.