

## God is not preparing the believer for death but for Eternal life!<sup>1</sup>

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The Bible reveals the information as to how death came into the world.<sup>2</sup> When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden the whole of mankind was put under sin.<sup>3</sup> This is the means by which death entered into the world, through the sin of one. But God has made provision for our sin.

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”<sup>4</sup>*

The death of Christ accomplished three unmeasured benefits for the **unregenerate, the lost**. These are **redemption** (*apolutrosis, agarazo, exagorazo, and lutroo*), **reconciliation** (*katallage*) and **propitiation** (*hilasmos*). The Bible reveals the benefit of Christ’s death for the **unregenerate** from three perspectives through these words and their cognates. The finished work of Christ may be defined as the sum total of what these words connote as applied to the **unregenerate, the lost**.

Also there are four major aspects of truth presented in the NT relative to the unmeasured benefits that are provided for the **regenerate, the saved**, through the death of Christ. Each of the aspects of truth is in turn expressed by one word. Further each word is surrounded by a group of derivatives as synonyms of that word. These words are: **forgive** (*aphiemi*), **regeneration** (*paliggenesis, anagennao*), **justification** (*dikaiosis*) and **sanctification** (*hagiasmos*). The Bible reveals the benefit of Christ’s death for the **regenerate, the saved** from these four perspectives.

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<sup>1</sup> John 6:39-40; cf. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 5:12.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:22.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 5:8.

The witness of Scripture is that Christ died in order to make possible the salvation of all men and to assure eternal life for all those who believe in Him.<sup>5</sup>

Paul explains to the Christians at Rome that they need to serve by being sensitive to others.<sup>6</sup> He commands them to receive (*proslambanesthe*) those who are less mature in the faith (who do not understand the apostolic teaching).<sup>7</sup> Paul addresses both groups the strong and the weak.<sup>8</sup> He commands the weak not to judge and the strong not to show contempt.<sup>9</sup> And then he gives his reason for commanding this.

“...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.”<sup>10</sup>

First, at the **Judgment Seat of Christ** all participants will be members of the body of Christ Church from Pentecost to the Rapture. This includes only those who have believed in Jesus Christ alone for the gift of everlasting life. There are no OT believers at the judgment seat of Christ. To be eligible to be a part of the body of Christ Church one must be physically born after Pentecost and during the Church age. To be member of the body of Christ Church one must believe in Jesus Christ for the gift of everlasting life. Upon believing in Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit

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<sup>5</sup> John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:47; I John 2:2; 4:10.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 14:1-15:13.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 1:5.

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 14:3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Rom. 14:10-12; Is. 45:23.

baptism occurs and one is now identified as being in the body of Christ Church.<sup>11</sup> Now as Paul wrote concerning the Christian:

“There is therefore now **no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...**”<sup>12</sup>

The **Judgment Seat of Christ** is not a “judgment” for sin but an **evaluation of deeds done from the time one was “born again” until death or the Rapture.** No sin will be mentioned at the **Judgment Seat of Christ** since all sin was paid for by Jesus<sup>13</sup>. Of course the believer must confess sins committed in order to maintain fellowship with God but there is no condemnation of a sinner once regenerated.<sup>14</sup>

All participants at the **Judgment Seat of Christ will be glorified.**<sup>15</sup> All the participants in the Rapture of the Church<sup>16</sup> have new bodies either by resurrection or translation<sup>17</sup> and they will be taken to heaven to eventually be evaluated **for rewards** at the Judgment Seat of Christ.<sup>18</sup> Those who died in Christ are the first to be resurrected at the Rapture. Those who are alive in Christ follow.<sup>19</sup>

When the writer of Hebrew writes:

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”<sup>20</sup>

He can not be speaking about the **unregenerate, those who are lost.** For the **unregenerate** die twice, once physically and then the **second death.**<sup>21</sup> It has been rightly said that those who are

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<sup>11</sup> Rom. 6:1-4; I Cor. 12:13.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 8:1a.

<sup>13</sup> I John 2:2, 4:10; Rom. 3:23-26.

<sup>14</sup> I John 1:9.

<sup>15</sup> Rom. 8:30.

<sup>16</sup> I Thess. 4:13-18.

<sup>17</sup> I Cor. 15:50-58.

<sup>18</sup> I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10.

<sup>19</sup> I Thess. 4:13-18.

<sup>20</sup> Heb. 9:27.

believers die physically once, undergo the resurrection of the just in their order or are translated to be with God.<sup>22</sup> But those who are lost, the unregenerate, die once physically and after the resurrection of the unjust they suffer the second death, eternity in the Lake of fire, complete separation from God eternally.<sup>23</sup> Since all Epistles are written to the regenerate the author of Hebrews is addressing the regenerate, and in context only believers in Jesus Christ.

Next Paul tells us what will go on at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

“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.”<sup>24</sup>

When Paul says “**we**” and “**all**” he means believers in Christ in the Church age only. For he includes himself as well as others who are in Christ. There is only one **day of judgment for the Christian**. It is called the *Bema*, or the Judgment Seat of Christ. He also explains that this will be a time of reward for deeds that were good or loss of reward for deeds that were bad. Again no sin is mentioned here at the judgment seat of Christ for everyone at this event has had their sin paid for by Jesus and that’s the reason they can be at this event in heaven. They believed in Jesus, the guarantor of everlasting life.

Some Christians may not realize that they may feel shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Yet, we can have confidence before Christ at the *Bema* only as we abide (*meno*, remain in fellowship) with Him here and now. For the believer who has conformed to the world he/she will be ashamed at the Rapture and at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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<sup>21</sup> Rev. 20:14.

<sup>22</sup> I Cor. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. 20:11-15.

<sup>24</sup> II  
Cor. 5:10.

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”<sup>25</sup>

“Even though eternal salvation is an entirely free gift which can never be lost, the New Testament makes plain that the believer must give an account of his or her Christian life in the presence of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12)...Therefore, shame is decidedly possible at the Judgment Seat. This is all the more true since Christians at that time will have their eternal bodies. Thus sin will no longer inhibit appropriate regret and embarrassment about those things in one’s earthly life that did not please the Lord.”<sup>26</sup>

The believer must always remember that we are saved by grace through faith. God’s grace may be defined as “That merited work of God whose end is salvific to those who appropriate the gift through faith and no merit of their own.”<sup>27</sup>

“Some believers will experience false guilt. John has a remedy for such people and it’s basically this: chill out.”<sup>28</sup> “The believer who doesn’t *feel* confident about the coming judgment at the *Bema*, but yet who is walking in fellowship with Christ, should realize that God will take into account all of the loving deeds we have done. It is comforting to realize that we may be harder on ourselves than the Lord Jesus will be.”<sup>29</sup>

Paul writes to explain what will be going on at the Judgment Seat of Christ so that we can be prepared for it and change our ways in order to avoid shame.

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<sup>25</sup> I John 2:28.

<sup>26</sup> Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John: Walking in the Light of God’s Love* (Irving, Tx: Grace Evangelical Society, 2000), 125.

<sup>27</sup> Robert P; Lighter, Trinitarian class, Houston, Texas.

<sup>28</sup> Robert N. Wilkin, *The Road to Reward*, Grace Evangelical Society, Irving, Texas, 48.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 48.

“According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”<sup>30</sup>

Some teach that Christians are “saved by faith; judged by works”<sup>31</sup> but this is not what the Bible teaches. A Christian has his deeds after becoming a Christian reviewed by Jesus Christ at the *Bema* in heaven. These deeds will not determine the eternal destiny of the Christian but the reward (s) to be received after he/she has been reviewed. Motives will be scrutinized by Jesus. No doubt much of the Christians efforts are not considered good by Christ and they are “burned up”. But if one is in Christ they are eternally saved from any judgment or condemnation. At the *Bema* it is the deeds of the Christian and not the position of the Christian which will be examined.

Stewardship is important and we Christians are considered to be “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”<sup>32</sup> God requires faithfulness from His stewards.<sup>33</sup>

Some examples of faithful stewards are listed in Hebrews 11 and are there as an encouragement to us to continue to be faithful to God.

The Gospel is built upon Christ and His death and resurrection. The “good news” is that years ago God sent His only begotten Son to take on flesh and to die for the sin of the world.<sup>34</sup> So our

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<sup>30</sup> I Cor. 3:10-15.

<sup>31</sup> Lifetruths, leaders guide, LifeWay Church resources, Summer 2005, Aug. 21, 2005, p. 144.

<sup>32</sup> I Cor. 4:1.

<sup>33</sup> I Cor. 4:2.

<sup>34</sup> John 3:16; I Cor. 15:1-4.

personal sin, those we commit are not what send us to hell. In John's gospel the answer to why people go to hell is given.

“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 ...”<sup>35</sup>

Jesus in the Upper Room Discourse gives the reason that people go to hell. This is the only sin that can send a person to hell. And it is “because they do not believe in Me.” There it is! The sin that sends one to hell is not believing in Jesus! This is why Jesus said “He who believes in Me has eternal life.”<sup>36</sup> All who believe in Jesus will be at the *Bema* after being resurrected or translated and be evaluated for rewards to be used in the Millennial Kingdom. Whether some have more than others is the prerogative of Jesus but all Christians will be in the Millennial Kingdom with Christ.

The judgment in Matthew 25<sup>37</sup> has nothing to do with the Church but is some times described as the Sheep/Goat judgment at the end of the Great Tribulation on earth and just prior to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Only Dispensational Theology makes a clear distinction between Israel and the Church. Here it is important to note that the Church is not present but is now at the *Bema* in heaven. This judgment is on earth. Here there are three human participants: the brethren, saved Jews, the sheep, saved Gentiles, and goats, the lost Gentiles.

The Gentiles are judged on the basis of how they treated the Jews in the seven year tribulation on earth. For those who befriended the Jew, indicating they were saved Gentiles, they are allowed entrance into the Millennial Kingdom. This judgment occurs 75 days prior to the

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<sup>35</sup> John 16:8-9.

<sup>36</sup> John 6:47.

<sup>37</sup> Matt. 25:31-46.

establishment of the Millennial Kingdom by Jesus Christ.<sup>38</sup> Those Gentiles who believed in Jesus and befriended the Jews in the tribulation will hear these words, “Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”.<sup>39</sup>

The lost for all time are judged at a one time event at the end of the Millennial Kingdom just prior to going into the Eternal State. This judgment is detailed by the apostle of John as follows at the Great White Throne Judgment.

“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.”<sup>40</sup>

Mankind has always insisted that their works were the way to have God bless them and now they shall find out how wrong they were. For here it plainly implies that the Book of Life was opened and they were not in it. The Book of Life is a book in which every living human name is written. During their life time if they have believed in Jesus for the gift of everlasting life their names will remain in this book.<sup>41</sup>

All believers in Jesus Christ are in the Book of Life and their names will never be erased from it.<sup>42</sup> But non-believers names are erased from the Book of life if before death they have not believed in Jesus. Then the books of works are examined. Each lost person will be given of review of his entire life, without Christ, and then summarily be place in the lake of fire for

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<sup>38</sup> Dan. 2:34-35, 45; 12:2, 11-12.

<sup>39</sup> Matt. 25:34.

<sup>40</sup> Rev. 20:12-15.

<sup>41</sup> Rev. 3:5; Psalm 69:28. Or as in the case of Abraham, he believed God, Gen. 15:6.

<sup>42</sup> Rev. 3:5.

eternity. They have suppressed the truth in unrighteousness.<sup>43</sup> This is the fate of those who have not believed in Jesus Christ for everlasting life. Instead of everlasting life they receive by their own choosing the second death which is a life of eternity in the lake of fire.

It is very important to know that by believing in Jesus Christ for everlasting life you get it. This is the only way to have a life of bliss eternally. "He who believes in Me has everlasting life."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Rom. 1:18.

<sup>44</sup> John 6:47.