

## Your (Christian) Coming Judgment

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As I think back over the many years I have been a believer in Jesus Christ, since the 25<sup>th</sup> of December of 1959, and the numerous local churches and Christian groups I've visited and joined since then, I am overwhelmed by the almost total lack of systematic in-depth instruction in and from the Bible, the Word of God, to which I witnessed during those many years. It has been my experience as a graduate of a recognized evangelical Christian college (now a university), a one-time pastor of an evangelical local church, and a participant in various Christian activities in several countries in and outside the United States, that throughout most of evangelical Christendom the overpowering emphasis is centered on the repetition of the basic, introductory doctrine within God's Word, i.e., the *gospel of grace*, to the exclusion of its "meat" doctrine, i.e., the *gospel of glory*, reiterated throughout the Word and designed to bring a Christian from immaturity to maturity and secure the goal of his calling.

Having been blessed with an ever-increasing knowledge of the Word in these later years, I have progressively become disconcerted over the belief by so many Christians, and the leadership in so many evangelical local churches, that it is the local church where one who is lost without Christ should be exposed to the gospel of grace. To this end local congregations are repeatedly fed a diet of simplified messages, void of any concerted theological substance designed to feed the ample supply of spiritual-deficit Christians, but designed to appeal to the lost who may possibly be in the pews. It appears to me that evangelical Christendom in general has not and will not realize that the primary purpose of the local assembly of believers, the local church, is for the purpose of building up Christians, those who have already believed on Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 10:23-5**), in order that they need not be classified as were the Christians in the book of **Hebrews**:

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

**(Hebrews 5:12-14)**

Christ intended Christians to first go out into the fields of the lost and *there* bring them to Christ; and, *then* to bring them to the local assembly for intricate and intensive instruction in the Word so that they might advance from immaturity to maturity (**Matthew 25:19, 20**). The local church is where Christians seriously "go to school," which is not to mean approximately 30 minutes of parroting from a denominational quarterly once a week, often termed "Sunday School." Rather, it is up to the pastor-teachers of local congregations to teach the Word of God in-depth (**Ephesians 4:11, 12**), to bring the babe in Christ to maturity in Christ.

To reiterate, the purpose of such a thorough education in the Word of God is to insure that the child of God may transition from spiritual immaturity to maturity, thereby being equipped to routinely and properly make moral decisions that will insure his safe deliverance from evil throughout his temporal pilgrim journey and his eventual achievement of the "goal of his

calling.” This spiritual process (transition) centers on a Christians understanding and acceptance of the “gospel of glory,” the *salvation of the soul*, which is quite different from the “gospel of grace,” the *salvation of the spirit*.

Now before my evangelical brethren “go off the deep end” thinking that I have either made up a different salvation doctrine or that I believe a person may lose eternal life, which he has received by believing in Christ, I assure you that this is not the case. Scripture absolutely guarantees that once a person has believed in Christ, that person will never lose that eternal salvation. *Salvation of the soul* differs from the *salvation of the spirit* only with regard to millennial varieties, not eternal varieties. Confusion exists because even though both aspects of salvation are evident and separately discussed in the Word, most bible students and teachers believe they are one and the same, always striving to equate the two, which invariably leads to conflicting positions.

Scripture reveals that man is a tripartite (3-part) being (spirit, soul, and body [**1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12**]) and these three facets of man are never confused or treated as equal throughout Holy Writ, even though numerous teachers of the Word attempt to violate this principle. Granted, one’s *spirit* immediately ascends to God upon physical death of the body (**Luke 23:46; John 19:30; Acts 7:59; 2 Corinthians 5:8**), but the prognosis of the *soul* (life) of man is an entirely different matter. And even though its connection and transition does not alter the eternal varieties of man, it does impact his recognition and position during the coming kingdom of Christ.

To properly present both of these aspects is not the intent of this discussion. I strongly encourage the reader to access the book, [Salvation of the Soul](#), by Arlen L. Chitwood, from [www.bibleone.net](http://www.bibleone.net), which presents the different aspects of God’s redemptive (salvation) plan for man. It is the purpose of this discussion to present “one facet” of God’s redemptive plan for man, embedded within the “gospel of glory,” which should influence every Christian every day of his temporal life as he proceeds to its end.

And that “one facet” is the clear teaching in God’s Word that once a Christian passes from temporal to eternal life, he will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to face a thorough exposition of his temporal life subsequent to his saving faith in Christ, which will reveal determinations that will affect his recognition (rewards, some or none) and position during the Messianic Era (Christ’s millennial [thousand year] kingdom on earth).

Frankly, this truth receives very little attention in the local churches within evangelical Christendom today. Even though all Christians agree that they are directed by Scripture to live holy lives, most avoid considering the negative consequences that may await one who neglects this scriptural mandate. Rather, most wish only to consider what they believe are the positive features of their salvation experience, which are almost always ambiguous expectations presented by the pulpits of evangelical churches. Most Christians are taught and simply believe that once this life ends they will immediately go to heaven to live a sublime life with God.

But this is clearly not the case. Before any Christian will face such an imagined and ambiguous existence, Scripture teaches that Christ will establish His kingdom, which will last for one thousand years upon the earth. And although the majority of Christians will be excluded from

participation within Christ's kingdom, selected Christians will reign with Him over this domain (**Revelation 20:4ff**), depending upon the results of their evaluation at His Judgment Seat. Such will be the product of how each Christian will have built upon his *sure foundation*:

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that 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 clear; 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. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)*

Because of this, the apostle Paul, knowing that Christians are the “*workmanship*” of God “*created in Christ Jesus for good works* [the building blocks of “*gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw*”] (**Ephesians 2:10**), emphatically declared to those who made up the local church in the city of Corinth that his aim was to be “*well pleasing to Him*,” knowing that all Christians “*must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.*,” which in fact was a most serious (terror-related) matter in his mind.

*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 . . . (2 Corinthians 5:9-11a).*

This is why the apostle Paul constantly strived to discipline his body, to properly run the race of faith in hopes of gaining the imperishable [everlasting] crown, and to not be *disqualified*:

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)*

The truth is that Scripture is replete with the prospect of God's judgment of all mankind, which most certainly will include “*His people*,” Christians. Witness the following:

*For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:14)*

*But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. (Matthew 12:36)*

*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. (Romans 14:10)*

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)*

*For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." (Hebrews 10:30; cf. Deuteronomy 32:35, 36; Psalm 50:4; 135:14; Romans 12:19)*

To this end God specifically arranged His Word to include numerous and accurate historical accounts that would convey the seriousness of His judgment upon His people who *refused to wholly follow Him*, such accounts serving as *types* in the Old Testament with corresponding *anti-types* in the New Testament. One primary example would be the experience of God's chosen people, the Israelites, upon their deliverance from Egypt under the blood of the sacrificed lamb, resulting in their wayward journey through the wilderness, and their ultimate rejection to enter the Promised Land.

Paul's fear of being *disqualified* in the race of the faith and thereby being *disapproved* to receive the imperishable crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 [see above]) is contextually illustrated in the verses immediately following his concern, in 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, the anti-type of the Old Testament type in which Israel is disapproved, excepting only two persons, entrance into the Promised Land of Canaan.

*Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:1-12)*

This passage clearly presents the type/anti-type treatment of the *Israelites* under the leadership of *Moses* with *Christians* under the leadership of *Christ*, which God uses as "examples" in His Word to teach Christians a most significant spiritual truth concerning their pilgrim journey during this life. And this truth is further emphasized by the two individuals (Caleb and Joshua) that were exceptions to God's verdict over Israel's adult population. Both were allowed by God to enter the Promised Land because they had "*wholly followed the Lord.*"

*So the LORD'S anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, "Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the*

*land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.” (Numbers 32:11, 12)*

The lesson is quite piercing once a Christian understands that Scripture compares his prospects for entering the coming kingdom of Christ is foreshadowed and illustrated by Israel’s prospect for entering the coming Promised Land during that bygone era. It is a lesson that is strongly reinforced in the book of **Hebrews**, a book directed to Christians, believers in Jesus Christ, not to “non-Christians who professed but were not actual believers in Christ,” as so many attempt to teach.

The great burden of **Hebrews** is not that of rescuing the unsaved from the lake of fire, but it is that of delivering Christians, the one’s already rescued, safely through their pilgrim journey to the goal of their calling, which is “*bringing many sons to glory*” (vs. **2:10**). **Hebrews** chapter **three** begins by referring to the “*heavenly calling*” of believers in Christ. Then the author calls attention to the journey of the Israelites as they left Egypt and headed towards an inheritance reserved for them in the land of Canaan.

And that which befell the Israelites in their wilderness journey can also befall Christians on their pilgrim journey. Later, the emphasis is not only upon Christ’s present ministry on behalf of Christians, but also upon His future ministry when the results of His present ministry will be realized — that day when He will rule the earth as the great king-priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Then the author urges Christians to be aware of the promises of the great recompense (payment) of reward at Christ’s return and to live by faith (vss. **10:35-39**). Finally, Christians are instructed to “*lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares [them], and [to] run with endurance the race that is set before [them]*” (vss. **12:1, 2**), so that they may obtain the *prize* (**Philippians 3:14**).

(For a better understanding of the book of **Hebrews**, this reader recommends that you access the book, [From Egypt to Canaan](http://www.bibleone.net) by Arlen L. Chitwood, at [www.bibleone.net](http://www.bibleone.net))

The bottom line, for you the Christian reader, is that you will most certainly face Jesus Christ as Judge. Before His Judgment Seat your entire life will be intricately exposed — every motive, every intent, every action. And based upon Christ’s findings at this time, a determination will be issued that will affect your participation and position during the Messianic Era, Christ’s 1,000 year kingdom-reign upon the earth — the goal of your calling.

Fortunately, God has graciously supplied each Christian a concrete means in dealing with his sin during this lifetime so that it will not be an issue at the time of his judgment, as follows:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

(The word “*confess*” in **1 John 1:9** is the Greek word, *homologeō*, which means to “assent to” or “acknowledge.” Bottom line, Christians are to “name,” “own up,” “take responsibility” for their sins, i.e., make no excuse for them [a

trait so prevalent in these times]. But once this is done, they are to most assuredly know that their sins have been forgiven, never to be held against them at the Judgment Seat of Christ.)

Additionally, every Christian is assured that they will face no future judgment if they “walk according to[after or in agreement with] *the Spirit*” rather than according to the flesh.

*There is therefore now no condemnation [Greek: katakrima, adverse sentence] to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1; cf. Colossians 2:6, 7)*

And although the means for how a Christian may achieve this present goal to “walk according to *the Spirit*,” which is comparable to being “filled with [controlled by] *the Spirit*” (**Ephesians 5:18b**), is a subject for another study, this writer recommends that the readers compare the following comparable passages of Scripture for the solution:

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20)*

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:16, 17)*