

The Elementary Principles of Christ (7) – Judgment

Hebrews 6:1-3

Introduction

1. The Hebrew writer concluded his list of elementary principles of Christ with **“eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:2).**
 2. Each preceding principle is inconsequential if the final in the list is not true. The fact that all will be judged and given an eternal sentence gives weight to each matter.
 3. There is great evidence for an eventual eternal judgment in scripture, and the evidence should move us to live life in a dramatically different way than the rest of the world who rejects God.
- I. What is the eternal judgment?
- A. Judgments in Time
- a. **Romans 1:18** – wrath of God is revealed – **“revealed”** (verb, present, passive) – “the wrath of God is BEING revealed”
 - i. Following the importance/need of the gospel – **1:16-17**
 - ii. Wrath against sin – **Romans 1:32** – **“righteous judgment of God...deserving of death”**
 - iii. Context shows that such wrath is found in the revelation of historical consequences of sin (**v. 27** – **“the penalty of their error which was due”**).
 - b. National judgments:
 - i. **Proverbs 14:34** – this is true, not just on a practical level of actions and natural consequences, but DIVINE PROVIDENCE.
 - ii. **Daniel 5:21** – God rules in kingdoms, and His judgments manifest this.
 1. Context of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, being judged.
 2. **Daniel 5:22-31** – a scene Divinely revealed wrath and judgment due to unrighteousness of a nation and her leaders.
 - iii. **Isaiah 24:1-6** – Judgment on the earth – concluding section on judgment of nations (Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Israel, Ethiopia, Egypt, Judah, Phoenicia), including God’s people, with general judgment on all nations due to unfaithfulness to God.
 1. (**v. 5**) – laws, ordinance, everlasting covenant – “simply a generic expression of human moral and religious responsibility to the Creator” (Jackson, Isaiah, 50)
 - c. These judgments in time (history) all foreshadow a final judgment.

B. Eternal Judgment

- a. Jesus spoke of final judgment being committed to Him – **John 5:22-23, 28-30** – resurrection of all.
- b. **Matthew 18:8-9** – everlasting fire, hell fire – **“to be cast into”** – an action of Another on you – decision made, sentencing.
- c. **Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46** – 2nd coming of Christ, He will judge, separation, eternal sentencing.
- d. **Revelation 20:11-14** – universal judgment of all based on their deeds in the flesh, and eternal sentencing.

C. The Day of the Lord Will Come

- a. By inspiration, Peter argues for the certainty eternal judgment at the coming of the Lord by appealing to a judgment in time.
- b. The day of the Lord will come – **2 Peter 3**
 - i. **(vv. 3-4)** – doubting the promise of His coming in judgment.
 - ii. **(vv. 5-6)** – previous promise of universal judgment fulfilled after apparent delay – flood.
 - iii. **(v. 7)** – the word that promised such judgment was proven true, and promised a final, eternal judgment.
 - iv. **(vv. 8-10)** – longsuffering does not equate to slackness, but the day is certain.
- c. This day is an elementary principle of Christ which is involved in every part of our progression and walk as Christians, just as the other elementary principles.

II. The Eternal Judgment

A. The Standard of Judgment

- a. Judgment is not arbitrary with God, but based on a revealed standard – **cf. Isaiah 24:5** – laws, ordinance, everlasting covenant – “simply a generic expression of human moral and religious responsibility to the Creator” (Jackson, Isaiah, 50)
- b. Jesus said His word would judge in the last day (day of eternal judgment) – **John 12:48**
 - i. This bookends His public ministry – **(vv. 44-50)** – light, words, life.
 - ii. **John 1:4; 3:16-21** – life and light, not for condemnation but life, loving darkness rather than light.
 - iii. **John 8:31-32** – abiding in word, freedom from sin and death.
- c. Transgression and disobedience to the revealed word of God receives penalty – **Hebrews 2:1-4** – even more so with the gospel.

- i. **“neglect so great a salvation”** – All the more tragic – it is not a word for condemnation, but if you neglect it you receive condemnation.
 - d. Example of Israelites – **Hebrews 3:16-19; 4:1-2** – disobedience, unbelief to word, gospel.
 - i. Wilderness wandering purpose – **Deuteronomy 8:1-4, 19-20** – testing obedience, live by word, perish by disobedience to voice of God.
 - ii. **Hebrews 4:11-12** – the word discerns thoughts and intents, thus judges the heart and rewards accordingly.
- B. The Nature of Judgment
 - a. The judgment will be universal – **John 5:28-29** – all.
 - i. He will judge the world – **Acts 17:30-31**
 - ii. Every, each one – **Romans 14:11-12**
 - iii. Paul’s efforts are for this purpose – **2 Corinthians 5:9-11** – **“we must all appear”** – **“we persuade men”** – *anthrōpos* – the human race, mankind (plural).
 - iv. None can escape – **Romans 2:3**
 - b. The judgment will be impartial – **Romans 2:4-11** – God’s goodness despite the Jews’ obstinance was not indicative of exemption from judgment, but the opposite – attempting to move them to repentance knowing they would be judged.
 - i. Not based on race or nationality, but deeds before God – **Acts 10:34-35**
 - ii. Not based on status, but deeds before God – **Ephesians 6:9**
 - c. The judgment will be just – **Psalms 51:3-4** – David’s acknowledgment.
 - i. **Psalms 19:9** – His judgments are always true and righteous.
 - ii. All is laid bare – **Hebrews 4:13** – there is nothing, good or bad, that He will miss.
 - iii. Men may be fooled, by others and by themselves, but their works will follow them to God’s righteous judgment – **1 Timothy 5:24-25**
 - d. The judgment will be final – **Hebrews 6:2** – **“eternal judgment”** – i.e. the sentencing, the final decision, is eternal, or irreversible.
- C. The Preparation for Judgment
 - a. The reality of judgment is a fundamental principle because it dramatically shapes how we live our lives – **Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; 12:13-14**
 - b. Paul lived his life with this in mind, and such is reflected in his ministry of the gospel – **Acts 24:15-16, 24-25** – conscience without offense,

righteousness and self-control followed by judgment. (**cf. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10**)

- c. It affects how we live in respect to the law's revelation, and specifically in how we treat others – **James 2:12-13**
 - i. (**vv. 10-11**) – we will be judged by everything in the law – not just some commands/prohibitions.
 - ii. (**vv. 1, 8-9, 13**) – do we show mercy, or do we show partiality?
 - iii. **Cf. Matthew 6:14-15** – failure to show mercy will result in failure to receive mercy.
- d. The reality of judgment, and such revealed plainly as a first principle, beckons one to prepare – **2 Timothy 2:19**
 - i. **2 Peter 3:14** – should move us to diligence in pursuit of holiness!
 - ii. **1 John 2:28-29; 4:17-19** – practicing righteousness and being made perfect in love.
- e. “Someday you’ll stand at the bar on high, someday your record you’ll see; someday you’ll answer the question of life, what will your answer be? Sadly you’ll stand if you’re unprepared, trembling you’ll fall on your knee; facing the sentence of life or of death, what will that sentence be? Now is the time to prepare my friend, make your soul spotless and free; washed in the blood of the crucified one, he will your answer be. What will it be? What will it be? Where will you spend eternity? What will it be, o what will it be? What will your answer be?” (“What will your answer be?”)

Conclusion

1. **“eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:2)** is a fundamental principle of Christ.
2. We can be certain that judgment is coming, but we can also be certain of our standing before God prior to that great day.
3. The love of God is greatly shown, not only in that He has forewarned us of the coming judgment but has given us everything we need to be prepared for that day.
4. The Hebrew writer lamented the spiritual condition of his readers because God had given them a foundation to build on which they had neglected. His call is to move on from these principles by building on them.
5. **“And this we will do if God permits.” (Hebrews 6:3)**