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The Bible And Christianity Explained

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## DEATH AND GOD'S JUDGMENT

### GOD'S FOUR JUDGMENTS OF MANKIND

There are four major judgments of mankind described in the Bible. I explain these four judgments in chronological order in this web page. These judgments are...

- 1) GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON ALL OF US IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN
- 2) GOD'S IMMEDIATE JUDGMENT OF EACH OF US WHEN WE DIE
- 3) GOD'S JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING BY JESUS CHRIST AT HIS SECOND COMING
- 4) GOD'S JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD BY JESUS CHRIST AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

Before we look at these judgments, it is important to first understand that they are all based upon two principles:

**1) GOD'S LAW:** People are judged based upon whether or not they have obeyed God's Law; a Law written upon the conscience of every human heart from our childhood (Romans 2:14-16), and summed up for mankind in the 10 commandments of Moses (Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:1-21):

Think not that I (Jesus) have come to destroy the Law or the prophets: I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly I say unto you 'Until heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law, until all be fulfilled'. Matthew 5:17-18

Moses' commandments were further simplified by the Lord Jesus into two commandments:

Then one of them (a lawyer) asked him a question, testing Him and saying "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus said unto him "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets". Matthew 22:35-40

**2) JUSTICE:** God's judgments are based upon facts; what people have actually thought, said and done. From beginning to end the Bible tells us that God will render His judgments openly, truthfully and fairly; to each person 'according to their deeds' (or works):

God is the Rock, His work is perfect. For all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity. Just and right is He. Deuteronomy 32:4

I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. Jeremiah 17:10

God will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that does evil; of the Jew first and also of the Gentile. But glory, honor, and peace to every man who works good; to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Romans 2:6-10

For we (Christians) must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10

Little children, let no man deceive you. He who does right is righteous, even as God is righteous. 1 John 3:7

And I saw a great white throne, and Him that 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, stand before God. And the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. And death and hell delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15

And, behold, I (Jesus) am coming quickly. And My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Revelation 22:12

## **JUDGMENT #1: UPON ALL MANKIND IN EDEN**

God's first judgment occurred in the Garden of Eden. He pronounced a sentence of death upon Adam, Eve and all of humanity after our disobedience:

In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground. For out of it were you taken. For dust you are, and unto dust shall you return. Genesis 3:19

This first sentence that God imposed upon us was one of simple destruction; that each of us would cease to exist forever, body and soul. It would be the loss of life itself with all of its joy, blessing and meaningfulness. Life is wonderful. To exist as a human being is wonderful. To be destroyed was a dreadful punishment, and a clear revelation of God's great anger. Other words that are sometimes used to describe such a death are 'annihilation' and 'oblivion'.

This death that God has imposed upon us is usually caused by one of three things:

- 1) Traumatic Injury / Blood Loss
- 2) Famine / Malnutrition / Starvation
- 3) Infection / Disease / Pestilence

These three causes of death are especially prevalent during times of warfare, and are symbolized by a blood-red horse, a black horse and a pale horse in Revelation 6:3-8. Death can happen to anyone at any time, and will happen to every one of us some day. It happens to young and old, rich and poor, small and great, without favoritism and often without warning.

When God created Adam, He commanded him not to learn the difference between right and wrong, warning Adam that if he disobeyed he would die (Genesis 2:16-17, and see 'Why God

Requires Our Faith'). Adam understood the nature of death, because God had shown all of the animals and birds of the earth to him for naming (Genesis 2:19-20). Adam had seen and understood the relationship between predatory animals and their prey, and understood what death would mean for himself if he sinned.

Some Christians believe that, prior to Adam's disobedience in Eden, death did not exist on the earth. But this is not true. When God created Adam, the universe was already engulfed in a great moral struggle between God and Satan, and God created a planetary home for mankind that reflected this struggle. Within the context of that struggle it was necessary that Satan himself would have access to mankind in the Garden of Eden. This is because it would be necessary for Adam, as a man with freedom of moral choice, to have the opportunity to choose between obeying God or embracing evil.

When Adam was introduced to the animals lions did not eat vegetables, eagles did not pounce upon fruit, and sharks did not eat seaweed. The relationships between predators and prey that Adam observed reflected a much greater truth about 'spiritual predators' and their 'prey' in the universe, and a possibility of human death that Adam needed to understand. Adam did not come into a perfect world. He came into a world that was defined by moral conflict, and into a battle between good and evil that would result in victory for one side, and defeat for the other.

## **WHY DO WE DIE?**

In order to understand God's judgments, it is necessary to understand how one man's disobedience (Adam) could lead to the death of each member of the human race. The Bible's answer to this question is straightforward. It says that when Adam disobeyed God in Eden, every member of the human race sinned with him:

**...for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23**

**...by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, because all sinned. Romans 5:12**

**If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:10**

In the Greek language, which the apostle Paul used to write his letter to the Romans, he wrote the word 'sinned' in the aorist tense. The aorist tense is the simple past tense, indicating an action that someone has performed in the past. If Paul's words are to be taken literally, he was saying that each member of the human race individually and consciously committed the same sin that Adam did. Paul was saying that, for each one of us, death is the direct consequence of our own personal choice in Eden.

Many Christians either don't understand Paul's words, or choose to contradict them. They deny that death is the direct consequence of our own choices, and instead blame God for the imposition of Adam's punishment upon us. They teach that the power that sin gained over Adam has been communicated to us biologically (through 'hereditary depravity'), and that the penalty for Adam's sin has been arbitrarily imposed upon us by God (through 'imputation'). I discuss these false doctrines in my web pages on '[The True Nature of Original Sin](#)', and '[Predestination vs. Freedom of Choice](#)'.

## **HOW COULD WE ALL SIN?**

How is it possible that every member of the human race could have been present within Adam, and could have sinned with him? The answer is found in the book of Genesis:

**And God said "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." Genesis 1:26**

**Adam was made like the Trinity. Just as one God is a union of three Persons, so also one man was a union of many billions of persons. Every member of the human race existed within Adam, and was individually, consciously and simultaneously committing the same act of sin that he did. This claim can be tested. God has given us the tools we need to prove it for ourselves. I explain this in Testing Christianity.**

**This idea of our 'oneness' with Adam is sometimes referred to as a 'real' or 'realistic' union of Adam and mankind. It is the idea that each and every member of the human race was 'really' present within Adam, and truly sinned with him in Eden. Because it is like the union between the three Persons of the Trinity, this connection with Adam might also be called a...**

## **TRINITARIAN UNION**

**Although my reader may scoff at this idea of the oneness of mankind in Adam, it is actually a theme found frequently in popular culture today. As people pursue national and international cooperation, there are frequent references to the 'oneness of mankind' and to 'world unity'. Here in the United States similar expressions are deeply rooted in our culture, such as E Pluribus Unum (from many, one) and 'United we stand, divided we fall'.**

**In circles where pagan mysticism and contact with 'familiar spirits' is increasingly prevalent (including within the so-called 'emerging Christian church'), we hear more and more often that God is everything and in everything; and that mankind is a part of this 'divine oneness'. God is supposedly a great unifying force bringing an 'evolving' mankind forward to a peaceful and prosperous future. There is a 'ring of truth' in these words, because they hearken back to something that really is true; mankind was created in the image of God, began as 'one' and rebelled as 'one'. Now Satan is using half-truths about human 'oneness' to seduce mankind in these last days, presenting spiritual ideas that have a 'familiar ring' to them, in order to draw mankind into a great rebellion against the Creator.**

**This concept, of our real union with Adam, is genuine 'Christian mysticism'. This same 'mystical oneness' applies to the saving connection between a Christian and Christ, which happens when a sinner chooses to condemn himself to the same criminal execution that Jesus endured. Just as we chose to join Adam in his sin, we must also choose to join Christ in His death. This 'change of mind', from self-justification to self-condemnation, is called repentance.**

**The world hates biblical repentance because it requires honesty, because it does not exalt mankind (support a 'positive self-image'), and because it contradicts the world's narrative that mankind is evolving; getting 'better and better'. But it is only moral honesty that can bring failing human beings to see where the only hope for mankind lies; in the cross of Christ (see God's Forgiveness).**

**The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and the oneness between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has much more significance than just defining Who and What God is. It is also foundational for understanding who and what we are as the offspring of Adam, and what each of us can become through union with the 'last Adam', Jesus Christ. When Christians either misunderstand or neglect these truths, they render themselves useless in a world that is caught up like never before in the pursuit of real answers and real power for living.**

## **DEATH POSTPONED: THREE THINGS MADE POSSIBLE**

Prior to his disobedience, God had warned Adam that he would die on the day that he sinned:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. But of the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

But Adam did not die on that day. God passed a sentence of death upon him, but Adam's death was postponed. Something else died on that day instead. God killed innocent animals, and used their skins (or hides) to clothe Adam and Eve, covering their nakedness.

Unto Adam also, and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

This postponement of death made three things possible:

**1) MERCY** It opened a door for God's undeserved mercy, and it explained how that mercy would work. A Savior would come into the world to die for us, so that He might cover our 'moral nakedness'. With this first demonstration of God's grace came a simultaneous message about how to obtain it; we must repentantly condemn ourselves for our rebellion and believe God's message about the Savior:

He that covers his sins shall not prosper. But whosoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. Proverbs 28:13

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20:21

**2) A WARNING** It enabled death not only to serve as a punishment, but to serve as an evangelical warning to us as well. As we see death ending the lives of people all around us, it shows us the tragic consequences of our sin in Eden and the certainty of God's punishments. Death speaks to us every day, and calls us to repentance. It was this 'revelation' of God's anger that Paul was referring to in Romans 1:18.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (possess) the truth in unrighteousness.

Do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? Romans 2:4

**3) GREATER EVIL** God's mercy made it possible for people to scorn Him and laugh at His warnings, and to say 'See! Adam did not die!' It made greater wickedness possible, by allowing people to prolong their rebellion and warfare against God:

Blessed is the man that walks not in the advice of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law he does meditate day and night. Psalm 1:1-2

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by Me your days shall be multiplied, and the years of your life shall be

increased. If you are wise, you shall be wise for yourself; but if you scorn, you alone shall bear it. Proverbs 9:10-12

But after your hardness and impenitent heart you treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds. Romans 2:5-6

The Bible says that we all know that death represents God's judgment upon each of us (Romans 1:18). We recognize from childhood that death is dreadful, and represents God's anger toward us; that Someone who is immortal has imposed mortality upon us. But we deceive ourselves. Instead of ignoring death or denying its meaning, God advises us to give serious thought to it, with the promise that if we do so we will be able to draw closer to Him and His salvation. He warns us that, given the seriousness and uncertainty of life, a choice to ignore the message of death can only harm us:

It is better to go to the house of mourning (the funeral home), than to go to the house of feasting; for death is the end of all men, and the living will take it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by sadness the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth (carefree joking, merriment, partying). Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4

But woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe unto that are full, for you shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers speak well of the false prophets. Luke 6:24-26

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up. James 4:7-10

## **JUDGMENT #2: IMMEDIATELY AFTER WE DIE**

Since God's postponement of death in Eden, three classes of people have existed in human history:

- 1) People who have repented about their sins, have embraced God's offer of forgiveness, and have gone on to live out the rest of their lives in obedience to Him.**
- 2) People who have entered into human bodies conceived in the womb, but have never had the opportunity to make further moral choices beyond Eden. I am talking about people who have died before being born, or as children who never reached an age of moral accountability. This would also include people who, because of physical or mental handicaps, have never been capable of making moral decisions. This group of people was described by the apostle Paul:**

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him (Christ) Who was to come. Romans 5:14

When Paul referred to "the similitude of Adam's transgression", he was not saying that these people did not sin in Eden. He was saying that there was a difference between their sin and Adam's.

Adam was present in Eden physically. If someone had a camera in Eden, they would have been able to take a picture of Adam eating the forbidden fruit. But the members of the human race who existed within Adam were not visible when they committed the same act of disobedience. In this verse Paul was simply reasoning that the sin that lies behind the universal death of all mankind must be Adam's first sin in Eden, because death has reigned over everyone going all the way back to Adam himself; including those who never had the opportunity to sin in an outward, visible way.

**3)** People who have reached an age of moral accountability and have rejected God's grace and His command to repent and believe in the Savior. These are people who, while choosing to ignore the warning of death, have gone on to live long lives of active opposition to God.

While postponing His sentence of death upon Adam in Eden, and introducing the possibility of forgiveness and mercy, God did not abandon the principle of prompt judgment and justice. After declaring the way of salvation, God began to judge people immediately after they die; placing their souls in one of two temporary 'holding areas' to await His final judgment. This promptness of judgment is evident throughout God's word:

**Seek the Lord while He may be found (while we are still alive on earth). Call upon Him while He is near. Isaiah 55:6**

**"And I will come near to you to judgment. And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the employee in his wages, the widow and the fatherless. And that turn aside the stranger from his right, and do not fear Me" says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:5**

**Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7**

**It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. Hebrews 9:27**

What were these two 'holding areas'? They were...

- 1) A place called 'Death'.
- 2) A place that is called 'Sheol' in Hebrew, 'Hades' in Greek and 'Hell' in English.

## **A PLACE CALLED 'DEATH'**

For people who have been conceived in the womb and have received physical bodies, but who die before sinning beyond their first rebellion in Eden, there is a waiting place that the Bible calls 'Death'. This place is exactly what its name implies; a place where one is simply dead. It is a place of 'soul-sleep', where one waits in a state of unconsciousness until being resurrected from the dead bodily, to experience the 'second death' at the 'Great White Throne' judgment. 'Death' is mentioned twice in the book of Revelation, where it is distinguished from Hell as one of two places where the souls of the dead are found:

**And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and Death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works. And Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:13-15**

Death is an event; the destruction of our physical bodies and the end of our life here upon this earth. For people who, either for lack of opportunity or capability, have not added to the sin of their original rebellion in Eden, God does not begin to punish them after they die. They wait in 'death' until they are resurrected to stand before God's Great White Throne. This would include the millions of infants and little children who, throughout the several thousand years of human history since Eden, have died before they were capable of making moral decisions in this life. This group would also include those who have lived longer lives, but were never able to sin due to premature deaths or various handicaps. For all of these people there will be a direct passage from their initial rebellion against God in Eden, to God's final Great White Throne judgment, with no punishment experienced in between.

One might ask 'Why not simply leave them in a state of death then? Why raise them from the dead to confront God, be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire?' The answer is found in understanding the nature of our disobedience in Eden. When mankind rebelled against God, we did so believing that we would be able to use a knowledge of right and wrong 1) to achieve our own righteousness, and 2) to tempt others and prevent anyone else from becoming more righteous than we are. We were entering a moral contest with God, hoping to bend Him to a compromise with us.

God is going to resurrect those who never had an opportunity to sin beyond their rebellion in Eden, so that He can show them the failure of their plans, and the victory that He has won over Satan and all evil through His Son, Jesus Christ. God is going to repay all of His enemies 'to their face', and this is going to include those who declared war against Him in Eden, but who never had the opportunity to wage that war:

**Know therefore that the Lord your God, he is God. The faithful God, Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations. And repays them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Deuteronomy 7:9-10**

There will be people who object to what I am saying, arguing that 'your god is a baby killer'. But what needs to be remembered is that when we were in Eden, we were fully mature and capable persons, just as Adam was. And it will be as those same capable persons that those who are brought back from 'Death' will stand before God, to receive the destruction that God warned them about before they sinned. Infancy and childhood are stages in our physical development. They are descriptions of what we are at various times in our lives, but not of who we are.

Yes, children are very beautiful and loveable, and precious in God's sight. In children we see all that God intended when He created mankind in the first place. And children are 'relatively' innocent in this present world; an innocence that must be cherished. Parents should love them dearly. Indeed, God has made them loveable, just like puppies and other newborn creatures are loveable; to arouse affectionate, protective, parental instincts within us. But regardless of 'what' children are, nothing can change 'who' they are, or reverse God's first judgment upon them. This divine condemnation that rests upon all of us at birth was referred to by the apostle John:

**He that believes on Him (Jesus) is not condemned. But he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18**

This is why it is so important to explain the Bible to children, and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them at the earliest possible age; because 1) they live under the threat of destruction, and 2) in their relative innocence they are able to understand their danger and turn repentantly to the Savior. Those who deny that children have sinned, and withhold the Biblical message from them, are like the birds in Jesus' parable of the sower, which snatch up the 'seed' of God's word before it has a chance to 'live in a child's heart'. And they disobey Jesus' commandment that children can and must 'come to Him'; because He came into the world to save 'that which was lost':

Hear, therefore, the parable of the sower. When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the roadside. Matthew 13:18-19

Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones. For I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. Matthew 18:10-11

Some might argue that every member of the human race should have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and receive forgiveness. They might claim, therefore, that it would be inconsistent with God's character to destroy people before they have the opportunity to repent and believe in the Savior. But the fact that God has chosen to introduce grace into the world, does not mean that He is obligated to offer that grace to everyone.

Our rebellion in Eden was a 'stand alone' event. God left nothing lacking when He created us, placed us in the Garden, and gave us one simple commandment to live by. We knew everything that we needed to know about God's goodness and wisdom, about death, and about what was at stake. God commanded us in complete and perfect love, goodness and fairness. The universal death of all mankind is simple justice.

It is my own belief that, when the inhabitants of 'Death' are cast into the Lake of Fire, they will not suffer. They will simply and instantaneously be consumed in that Lake and cease to exist. This is the destruction that God warned about in Eden, and is imposed upon those who have committed no other sin than their first act of rebellion in Eden.

This is what I believe the Lake of Fire will be; a place of destruction. How long it will take for someone to be destroyed will be directly proportional to his sins. The Bible states that there are some whose wickedness will be so great, that they will never be fully consumed. The punishment for their sins will continue on forever into eternity.

For our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29, Deuteronomy 4:24

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice "If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:9-12

**And the devil that deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.**  
Revelation 20:10

## **A PLACE CALLED 'HELL'**

The second place that God began to place human souls after death was Hell (also referred to in the Bible with the Greek word 'Hades', and the Hebrew word 'Sheol'). It is important to explain, at the outset, that Hell and the Lake of Fire are two very different places. Hell has always been a temporary residence for the souls of men. The Lake of Fire is the 'second death', where people in physical bodies will be cast to experience God's final, permanent judgment. Jesus always distinguished between Hell and the Lake of Fire, and students of the Bible must recognize this.

When Jesus was talking about the Lake of Fire, He sometimes referred to it as 'Gehenna'. Gehenna was Jerusalem's city dump, south of the city in the 'Valley of Hinnom'. It was a place where fire was consuming trash 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and thus was a fitting symbol for the eternal Lake of Fire. In addition, the Valley of Hinnom was a place where, several hundred years before Jesus' day, the people of Israel had offered their children as burnt sacrifices to the pagan God 'Moloch'. Thus the perpetual fires of Gehenna not only represented God's final judgment, but spoke clearly about the fact that people can commit sins that leave them fully deserving of that judgment.

Some translations of the Bible fail to convey the distinction between Hell and the Lake of Fire. For instance, in the following passage, the original Greek word that is translated 'Hell' was actually 'Gehenna'. Jesus was warning about God's final punishment of a person; both soul and body. Not the temporary punishment of only the soul in hell:

**And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell (Gehenna). Matthew 10:28**

Most people have a very negative concept of 'Hades' or 'Hell'; but Hell has not always been a completely unpleasant place. In His story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Jesus described Hell as a place divided into two parts, with the righteous and the unrighteous living in separate sections. Hell (Sheol, Hades) was simply the place where the souls of those who either obeyed God's command to repent of their sins, or who disobeyed it, went to await future events. The righteous dwelt in 'Paradise' ('the arms of Abraham' or 'Abraham's Bosom'), and the unrighteous dwelt in 'Torments':

**There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and lived luxuriously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.**

**And he cried and said "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am tormented in this flame". But Abraham said "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and you are tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from here to you cannot. Neither can they pass to us, that would come from there". Luke 16:19-26**

## **HELL HAS CHANGED**

Up until the Lord Jesus completed His work of salvation upon the cross, all of God's people had been held in the pleasant side of Hell; 'Abraham's bosom'. It was called Abraham's bosom because Abraham himself was there, waiting for God's fulfillment of the promise that someday someone from his family (Abraham's 'Seed') would provide God's promised salvation. Abraham and those with him were not yet able to enter into the presence of God, because the atonement for their sins had not yet been accomplished. But when Jesus died, and satisfied the demands of the Law against the sins of man, He was able to enter Paradise to announce salvation to God's people, and to proclaim defeat and certain doom to the unrighteous.

This is why Jesus told the repentant thief, who was dying upon a cross next to Him, that they would be together in Paradise later that same day:

And one of the criminals which were hanged railed on him, saying "If you be Christ, save yourself and us". But the other answering rebuked him, saying "Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong. And he said unto Jesus "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom". And Jesus said unto him "Verily I say unto you, today shall you be with Me in Paradise. Luke 23:39-43

The Bible tells us that Jesus spent the entire time between His death and His resurrection in Sheol (Hades, Hell). This is seen in King David's prophetic Psalm about Jesus' death and resurrection:

For You will not leave My soul in Sheol (Hades, Hell); neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption (bodily decay). Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27,31 13:35

Jesus broke open the gates of Hell on behalf of God's people, when He Himself was resurrected from the dead:

And I say also unto you that you are Peter (a stone). And upon this rock (Myself) I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

Mary Magdalene met the Lord Jesus at the point in time when He had been raised from Sheol and had received a resurrected body from His Father, but had not yet ascended into heaven to be reunited with His Father:

Jesus said unto her "Mary". She turned herself and said unto Him "Rabboni"; which is to say 'Master'. Jesus said unto her "Touch me not. For I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to My brethren and say unto them "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God". Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her. John 20:16-18

Since Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the souls of people who die are now placed immediately in one of three locations:

- 1) In heaven, to be with God and await bodily resurrection.
- 2) In 'Death', to await bodily resurrection and judgment.
- 3) In Hell (Sheol or Hades) to suffer, while awaiting bodily resurrection and judgment..

God's people now enter directly into the presence of God when they die. As the apostle Paul wrote, 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord' (2 Corinthians 5:8). Hell is now exclusively a place of immediate torment and punishment for those who have died in rebellion

against God. There they wait, without hope, for the 'Great White Throne' judgment, when Hell itself will be cast into the Lake of Fire (along with Death). It may seem strange that people who now exist in hell only as souls (without bodies), should be able to experience physical pain. But this is how Jesus described Hell; as a place where God can inflict physical pain upon non-physical beings.

## **CHRIST, THE RESURRECTED JUDGE**

Since His death, burial, and resurrection, God the Father has committed the judgment of all things to His Son, the Lord Jesus. It is now He Who has absolute authority over the world, over Satan, and over the souls of all people (both the living and the dead). This authority is expressed in the following passages:

I (Christ) will declare the decree: the Lord has said unto Me "You are my Son. This day have I begotten You (from the dead, Acts 13:33, Revelation 1:5). Ask of Me, and I shall give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel". Be wise now therefore, O you kings. Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.  
Psalm 2:7-12

And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth". Matthew 28:18

For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who has sent Him. John 5:22-23

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus, Whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:36

And Jesus commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. Acts 10:42

Because God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man (Jesus Christ) Whom He has ordained. Whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead. Acts 17:31

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and lived again; that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. Romans 14:9

We see Christ's immediate exercise of judicial power over the living in the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, when they lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11); a profound event that brought great fear upon both the church and the surrounding community. We see that same judicial authority exercised in the deliverance of Peter from Herod's prison, followed by Herod's death when he refused to glorify God (Acts 12).

We also see Jesus's judicial power proclaimed in His messages to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapters 2-3. In those messages Jesus warned of prompt judgment upon those churches and Christians that refused to obey Him:

Remember therefore from where you are fallen. Repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your lampstand out of its place, except you repent. Revelation 2:5

Repent, or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. Revelation 2:16

Behold, I will cast her into a bed; and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death. And all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches the reins and hearts. And I will give unto every one of you according to your works. Revelation 2:22-23

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write "These things says He that has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars. I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but are dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. If therefore you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. And they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. And I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life. But I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels". Revelation 3:1-5

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth. Revelation 3:15-16

**Jesus' constant watchfulness and judgment of the church was also stressed by the apostle Paul:**

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you, or by man's judgment. Yes, I judge not my own self. For I know nothing by myself. Yet am I not hereby justified. But He that judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes. Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then shall every man have praise from God. 1 Corinthians 4:3-5

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (are dead). For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32

Wherefore we labor that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted by Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. 2 Corinthians 5:9-11

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

There have been Bible teachers and commentators that have taught that the 'Judgment Seat of Christ' is a special place where Christ will judge Christians only, in distinction from His judgment of the rest of the world. They have based this understanding upon the following verses:

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and lived again; that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you disrespect your brother? For we (Christians) 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 every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Romans 14:9-12 (Isaiah 45:23)

For we (Christians) must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5:10

While these verses indicate that Christians will have to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, they do not say that the Judgment Seat of Christ is reserved for Christians alone. In fact, in the passage from Romans 14, Paul indicates that every knee (of angels and all mankind) will bow before Christ to be judged. And in the verse from 2 Corinthians, Paul says that Christians will be judged on the same basis as non-Christians; according to what they have done, whether good or bad.

Paul foretold Christ's judgment of all men.

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. Romans 2:16

And Peter directly connected the judgment of Christians with God's judgment of all humanity, telling us that God's final judgment must begin with God's people, but will not end with them:

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Peter 4:17-18

Three things are true regarding the Judgment Seat of Christ:

- 1) It began immediately after Jesus' resurrection from the dead.
- 2) It is an impartial judgment of all people, Christian and non-Christian.
- 3) It will end at the 'Great White Throne': the place of final judgment for all of God's enemies, human and angelic.

## CHRIST, THE JUDGE OF SATAN

One of the most glorious aspects of Christ's Judgment Seat is seen in His power over Satan. When Jesus overcame at the cross, and ascended into heaven to appear before His Father, the prophetic words of King David were spoken:

The Lord said unto my Lord "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool". Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:44, Acts 2:34, Hebrews 1:3

Who are Jesus' enemies? Chief among them is Satan. The step by step conquest of Satan through the judicial power and authority of Jesus Christ is one of the great themes of the New

Testament; especially in the book of Revelation. This conquest of Satan is being achieved in three steps:

- 1) CASTING SATAN OUT OF HEAVEN
- 2) CONQUERING SATAN ON THE EARTH
- 3) CASTING SATAN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE

We are given a vision of the casting of Satan out of heaven by the prophet Isaiah, and in Revelation 12:

**How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, who did weaken the nations! Isaiah 14:12**

**And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, and prevailed not. Neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven...**

**"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ. For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night".**

**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time". Revelation 12:7-12**

**It is important to understand the meaning of this passage. Up until Jesus completed His death upon the cross, Satan had always had a legal right to come into the presence of God the Father, and to ask Him how He could allow His holy and precious Son to die on behalf of such evil people. Satan was constantly accusing sinful humanity before the Father, as well as confronting the Lord Jesus with that same wickedness as deceitful men mocked and tormented Him while He was dying for them.**

**But once God's gracious purpose was accomplished, and a redemption for undeserving sinners was achieved, Satan had no more moral leverage in heaven. The discussion between himself and God was over, and his attempts to compel God to accept a moral compromise with himself had failed. This is the significance of the casting out of Satan. Jesus foretold this judgment of Satan that He would accomplish through His death:**

**Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. John 12:31**

**And when the Holy Spirit is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me. Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. John 16:8-11**

**I believe that this casting out of Satan occurred shortly after the ascension of Christ into heaven (after His resurrection). And I believe that Jesus' establishment of the New Testament church and the gracious salvation that people all over the world began to experience, was an open demonstration of His victory over "the evil one":**

**Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:14-15**

**But it is more than the establishment of the New Testament church that has testified to Jesus' victory over Satan. The casting out of Satan has also been manifested to the world for 1900+ years in the persecution of both the Jewish people and genuine Christians:**

**And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman (Israel, the Jewish people) which brought forth the Man Child (Christ). And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed (Christians), who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:13,17**

**One might ask 'Why didn't the Lord cast Satan into the Lake of Fire immediately? Why conquer Satan in stages, and allow him to trouble the world?' The answer lies in the fact that, while Satan can no longer convince God not to save sinners, he nevertheless has the right to convince sinners to reject God's salvation and oppose Him. It has been necessary that the world remain a place of moral struggle, and of moral choice, until the Lord Jesus will come back to earth to bring an end to the Gospel offer, and to Satan's deception.**

**One can get a glimpse of God's purposes for allowing Satan's continued activity here on earth, in the book of Revelation:**

**And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying "How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And white robes were given unto every one of them. And it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. Revelation 6:9-11**

**In these verses we see that it is within the context of moral struggle, and the testing and proving of the faith of God's people, that God's plan is fulfilled. Satan's continuing activity on earth is providing the context through which a great many will be graciously saved, while a great many will also be justly damned. The Lord Jesus said that His second coming would not take place until His Gospel message of salvation had first been preached throughout the world:**

**And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Matthew 24:14**

### **JUDGMENT #3: OF THE LIVING AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING**

**There is much that has been said and written regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ into the world. The entire prophecy section of this web site addresses this subject, and I would refer my reader to it. Christ's second coming is also referred to throughout the Bible as 'The Day of the Lord'. Here I will list a few important aspects of it.**

**1) A TIME OF 'HARVEST'** The second coming of Christ is frequently described in the Bible as a time of harvest. It is symbolized by the final prophetic Feast of Leviticus 23; the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a time when God's people will be fully and finally saved, and when God's enemies will begin to experience full and final destruction. This dual aspect of Christ's coming is found repeatedly in the scriptures:

Whose fan is in His hand (Christ). And He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn. But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house. And His disciples came unto Him saying "Explain unto us the parable of the tares (weeds) of the field". He answered and said unto them "He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. But the tares (weeds) are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares (weeds) are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do evil, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear". Matthew 13:36-43

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down; and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall come forth, and separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus said unto them "Have you understood all these things?" They said unto Him "Yes, Lord". Matthew 13:47-51

And I looked, and behold a white cloud. And upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man (Christ), having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap (gather God's people). For the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire. And he cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe". And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside of the city (Jerusalem). And blood came out of the winepress, even up to the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs (roughly 185 miles). Revelation 14:14-20

**2) VICTORY OVER DEATH FOR GOD'S PEOPLE** At His second coming, the Lord Jesus will introduce a radical change in the 'normal' life-and-death experiences of people on earth. The bodies of God's people, who have died throughout history, will be raised from the dead. And at the same time there will be Christians living on earth whose bodies will be instantaneously changed into immortal, eternal bodies:

Behold, I shew you a mystery. We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord

shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Not only will God's people receive new bodies instantly, but as we see in the passage above, they will be removed from the earth to join Christ. Christians refer to this event as the 'rapture' of the church. It is something that will take place just before God begins to pour out His wrath upon the remaining, non-Christian inhabitants of the earth.

**3) DELIVERANCE UNTO DEATH FOR GOD'S ENEMIES** A great many of the people who will remain on earth, after God's removal of His own people, will die. The 'Day of the Lord' is repeatedly described as God slaying human beings from one end of the earth to the other:

Behold, the day of the Lord comes; cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate. And He shall destroy its sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light. The sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. And I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. Isaiah 13:9-11

For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind; to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh. And the slain of the Lord shall be many. Isaiah 66:15-16

In the passage below, given to Jeremiah as the Jewish people and their city of Jerusalem were about to be destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 586 BC, God issued a warning to the Gentile nations of the world regarding the certainty of their own future judgment:

And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup (of My fury) from your hand to drink, then shall you say unto them "Thus says the Lord of hosts: You shall certainly drink. For behold, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My name (Jerusalem), and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished. For I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth", says the Lord of hosts.

Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say unto them "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation. He shall mightily roar upon His habitation. He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth, for the Lord has a controversy with the nations.

Thus says the Lord of hosts "Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. He will plead with all flesh. He will give those that are wicked to the sword" says the Lord. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. Jeremiah 25:28-33

God's argument, in the passage above, is that He has revealed the certainty of His judgments to the world through His treatment of Israel, Jerusalem and the Jewish people. The destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon in 586 BC, and again by the armies of

Rome in 70 AD (followed by the dispersion and suffering of the Jewish people over the following 1800+ years), leaves the nations without excuse.

We are shown this coming divine judgment upon the nations in the Trumpets and Bowls of Revelation; a judgment that begins by limiting the destruction to 1/3 of the earth as the trumpets sound (Revelation 8 & 9), but then is completely unleashed as the bowls are poured out (Revelation 16).

**4) JUDGMENT OF THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET** As I explain in my other web pages on prophecy, I do not believe that the Beast and the False Prophet are single beings. The Beast is something that has existed since 70 AD, while the False Prophet is a technological creature of our own times. I believe that, in these last days, the Beast and the False Prophet are comprised of all those people who will promote and accept the Mark of the Beast.

And I believe that, just as there will be Christians who will not experience death, but who will instantly become physically immortal and enter into eternal life, so also there will be wicked people upon the earth who will not experience death, but whose bodies will also be made immortal. But these people will not enter into eternal life; they will enter into an eternal death. They will be cast directly into the Lake of Fire without experiencing death:

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived those that had received the mark of the beast, and those that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Revelation 19:20

This judgment, where Jesus will send people directly into the Lake of Fire, was described by Him in His Olivet Discourse:

When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations. And He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world".

Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels". Matthew 25:31-34, 41

The Lord Jesus will not be alone when He judges the nations; He will be accompanied by those who will have refused the Mark of the Beast and suffered for having done so:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; who had not worshiped the Beast nor his image, nor had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

It is important to note that, as the Lord Jesus is surrounded by these saints and answers both the righteous and the wicked about the basis of His judgments, His explanation will be summed up in one single sentence:

"Truly I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me". Matthew 25:40,45

This judgment, upon those who will have mistreated Christ's 'brethren', will be unspeakably dreadful. This is seen in the fact that these persons will be tormented "in the presence of the Lamb". This means that Jesus will be watching their torment, while they themselves will have to look upon the One who had been willing to die for them, and whose mercy they had not only rejected for themselves, but had opposed for all mankind.

This 'face-to-face' torment harkens back to a passage that I have already quoted in this web page:

Know therefore that the Lord your God, he is God. The faithful God, Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations. And repays them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Deuteronomy 7:9-10

**5) THE BINDING OF SATAN** The second coming of Christ will be to conquer the world and rule over it, ushering in 1000 years of peace and restoration (the Millennium):

And the seventh angel sounded. And there were great voices in heaven, saying "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. And He shall reign for ever and ever". Revelation 11:15

In order to accomplish that goal, it will be necessary to restrain Satan's activity:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled. And after that he must be loosed a little season. Revelation 20:1-3

**6) A MILLENNIUM (1000 years) OF WORLD PEACE AND PROSPERITY** This will be a period of God's supernatural blessing, upon the nation of Israel and the entire world, that is described repeatedly in the Old Testament:

And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. Isaiah 2:4

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. And a little child shall lead them. Isaiah 11:6

### **JUDGMENT #4: OF THE DEAD AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE**

At the end of the Millennium Satan will be released, to go and deceive the nations one last time, leading them to wage war against the Lord Jesus and His people in Israel. This attack against Israel by "Gog and Magog" was also foretold by the prophet Ezekiel:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog; to gather them together to battle (the number of whom is as the sand of the sea). And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city (Jerusalem). And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil

that deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:7-10, Ezekiel 38

Immediately after God's destruction of Gog and Magog, and the casting of Satan into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, we are shown God's final judgment of a rebellious humanity by Jesus Christ, seated upon a 'Great White Throne':

And I saw a great white throne, and Him that 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, stand before God. And the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. And death and hell delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11-15

In this passage we see the second of two resurrections of the dead, each associated with the judgments of God. The first resurrection is of God's people at the second coming of Christ, at the beginning of the Millennium. It will be a time when God's people will enter into God's blessings and rewards.

At the end of the Millennium a second, physical resurrection of the wicked will take place. This is the final judgment found in the Bible. And as the righteous will have already been judged and rewarded, so also the wicked will be judged and rewarded justly for their behavior.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:2

Some might wonder why God could ever create a Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and put anyone into it. But we must see the Great White Throne in its larger context. Jesus will not sit upon that Throne until after...

- 1) He, in perfect holiness, will have died for the sins of mankind.
- 2) He will have sent His gospel message to the entire world.
- 3) He will have come back to earth to cleanse it from the destruction of war, brought upon the earth by Satan.
- 4) He will have given 1000 years of peace and prosperity to the world.

It will be in this context that a relentlessly evil archangel will be cast into the Lake of Fire:

How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, who did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High". Yet you shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see you shall narrowly look upon you, and consider you saying "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble; that did shake kingdoms? That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof? That opened not the house of his prisoners?" Isaiah 14:12-17

And it will be in this same context that a humanity endlessly willing to be deceived by Satan, and to join him in his hatred for God, will also join him in the place originally prepared for him and his angels. The Great White Throne judgment must be seen in this context. If we cannot see the justice in that Throne, then we cannot see justice at all.

## **TO BURN FOREVER?**

While Satan will be tormented eternally, I do not believe that everyone who is cast into the Lake of Fire will suffer eternally with him. I believe that people will suffer in direct proportion to the sins they have committed.

While the Bible says that the Lake of Fire will burn forever, it is only Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet who are specifically described as suffering forever in that fire (Revelation 19:20, 20:10). It is my belief that the Beast and the False Prophet are not individual persons, but are comprised of all those who will 'unite as one' in the last days to impose the Mark of the Beast upon humanity, and to take that 'Mark' in their own bodies.

The Bible talks about degrees of punishment. Jesus warned some of the cities of Israel that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them (Matthew 10:15, 11:23-24). He also indicated that those who disobey God in relative ignorance will not be punished as severely as those who knew more and continued in their disobedience (Luke 12:48).

It is my belief that many who have been cast into the Lake of Fire will, at some point, simply cease to exist. This is a terrible fate, to be sure, but God is just and right in all of His ways. The first death is exactly what it appears to be; the loss of our existence (extinction). When people stare this 'first death' in the face and persist in disobedience and rebellion throughout a lifetime, there is only one judgment possible for them; a prolonged, fiery second death directly proportional to their wickedness.

## **THE JUDGE SAYS "COME!"**

God has given His only Son as a ransom for us all, and has been inviting the world constantly, since the original rebellion of mankind in Eden, to return and be reconciled to Himself. I have written on this page about how death represents God's warning to us. But God also speaks to us through His goodness. It is His everyday kindness and patience, seen in the sunshine and rain that grow our crops, as well as in the many other aspects of everyday life that we enjoy so much, that reveals just how worthy God is of our respect and affection.

You have heard it said 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy'. But I say to you 'Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those that hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you'; that you may be the children of your Father Who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Be perfect therefore, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:43-45,48

We also are men like you, and preach unto you that you should turn from vain worship to the living God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are in them. Who in times past allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts 14:15-17

**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9**

Ever since mankind's fall in Eden, beginning with the first animal sacrifice that clothed Adam and Eve, God has been calling us to come back to Him and be saved:

**Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18**

**Jesus says "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28**

**And the Spirit and the bride say 'come'. And let him that hears say 'come'. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation 22:17**

## **THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF HUMAN SOULS**

In this web page I have presented a basic message of God's word: that every individual member of the human race was present within Adam, and rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden. This idea, that we all existed within Adam before being physically born later in human history, has sometimes been referred to as 'the pre-existence of human souls'. This is not a new concept. In fact, it was present in the minds of Jesus' disciples when they asked him about a man who had been born blind.

**And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" John 9:1-2**

Clearly the disciples were open to the idea that a person can sin before he is born, and that a person's unfortunate birth can result from his own actions, as well as from the actions of his parents. The Bible does not tell us where the disciples had gotten this concept; from Jesus or from someone else. Personally, I believe that the disciples' question reflects discussions that Jesus had been having with them about death and mankind's rebellion in Eden, as well as the potential impact of parental sins upon children.

It is important to observe that Jesus did not rebuke His disciples for asking Him this question. He did not say 'Where did you get a crazy idea like that', or deny the possibility that a person can sin before he is born. He simply told the disciples that, in this particular case, the man's blindness did not stem from anyone's sin, but from the eternal purposes of God; that Jesus Himself might be glorified through it. Here Jesus gives us a practical example of keeping both the sovereignty of God and the moral accountability of man in mind as we seek to understand the world (see Predestination and Freedom of Choice).

**Jesus answered "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." John 9:3**

## **THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE SON OF GOD**

For those who might scoff at the idea of the pre-existence of souls, I have two questions. First of all, have you researched this subject? Do you know how long this concept has been around

in the Christian church, and of how widely it has been discussed and believed? I would suggest a web search on the subject. You might be surprised at the results.

Secondly, I have a simple question for Christians pertaining to the Trinity: 'If Jesus is the Son of God, then how can Christians claim that He is co-eternal (equally old and timeless) with the Father?' This is a question that has been thrown at Christians since the earliest days of the Church, by those who have argued that Jesus must be younger than the Father, and therefore not fully eternal and divine (a view known as Arianism).

The Biblical message is that Jesus has always existed, and truly is co-eternal with the Father; without a beginning or an end. He is the ageless Creator of the universe. But the Bible also tells us that Jesus was born (or begotten) of the Father before creation began. So how can Jesus be co-eternal with the Father, and be His Son at the same time? The only logical explanation is that He existed within the Father before He was begotten of (or from) Him. No other explanation is consistent with both the Bible and common sense. The Son of God must have 'pre-existed' within the Father, before coming out of Him to be His Son (see *God is a Family Called the Trinity*).

I would argue that the same thing is true of the human race. Every member of the human race existed consciously within Adam, before coming forth from him in subsequent human history. This relationship between God the Father and God the Son, and a corresponding relationship between Adam and his offspring, is an important part of what the Bible refers to when it says that mankind was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Not only were we all one, as the members of the Trinity are One, but the 'unfolding' of the Trinity is also reflected in the 'unfolding' of mankind.

For many 'fundamentalist' Christians, the word 'mysticism' conjures up thoughts of dabbling in the occult, in 'Eastern' religions, or in the 'charismatic' movement. In their retreat from these nebulous and 'irrational' things, they have rejected all mysticism. But there is a genuine, biblical mysticism that we all need to understand. Today Christians are surrounded by mysticism on all sides, both within the 'church' and outside of it, and the simple fact is that the only way to combat false mysticism is with Biblical mysticism.

Much that has passed for Christian orthodoxy since apostolic times has been grounded in 'rationalism' and human philosophy. There has been a longstanding denial, since the days of Augustine, of our real union with Adam in his rebellion (see [The True Nature of Original Sin](#)), and the implications of that for our lives. It is my belief that the church will not know divine power again, especially in these profoundly mystical 'last days', until it returns to these great truths.

## **FREEDOM OF CHOICE?**

People have understandably asked 'How it is possible that, if each of us had real individual freedom in Adam, billions of human beings all made the same identical choice to disobey God. Doesn't this suggest that either 1) we really didn't have individual freedom of choice, or 2) the temptation that confronted us was beyond the ability of anyone to resist'? My answer is twofold.

First of all, I cannot explain how the three Persons of the Trinity can be distinct and separate Persons, and yet be one God at the same time. For some, trying to 'picture the Trinity' might conjure up visions of 3 people tied together in a 3-legged race, tripping and stumbling over each other. It seems that such a union would interfere with Their individual identity and freedom of action, but it does not. This union is beyond my ability to understand; but I know

that it is true nevertheless. I would suggest that a similar oneness between Adam and the rest of mankind is equally impossible to understand, and yet equally true. I do not have to understand a thing in order to appreciate its reality. God has provided proof for it (see **Testing Christianity**), and that is enough for me.

Secondly, as a possible explanation of how billions of people might have all made the same choice, I would suggest that when we were in Adam, we may have all been aware of one another to some degree. Ultimately, Adam's choice may have been a cooperative decision, where mankind said 'Let us rebel against God'; a choice very similar to the 'Let us' decisions that the Trinity made in Genesis 1:26 and 3:22. Each of us might have felt emboldened to rebel against God through the knowledge that the entire human race was joining us in that effort (strength in numbers). If Adam's choice was this kind of 'joint decision', then that would explain how one man's decision could be the unanimous choice of many individual people at the same time.

## **THE CITY OF MAN**

There is one instance where we find the 'Let us...' decisions of man going head-to-head against the 'Let us...' decisions of God:

And they said one to another "Let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly". And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth".

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. And the Lord said "Behold, the people are one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do. And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Let Us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from there did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. Genesis 11:3-9

God's battle against 'the city of man' is an important theme of the Bible. At Pentecost we see the Holy Spirit reversing the confusion of human languages that He initiated at Babel; uniting a repentant people under Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1-13). The conflict between the city of man (Babylon), and the city of God (Jerusalem) is found throughout the Bible. We find this conflict described in Psalm 2, and its end foretold in Isaiah and Revelation:

Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us." He that sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and vex them in His strong displeasure: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion (Jerusalem)." Psalm 2:1-6

Prepare slaughter for his (Satan's) children, for the iniquity of their fathers, that they do not rise nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. "For I will rise up against them," says the Lord of hosts, "and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, son and nephew," says the Lord. Isaiah 14:21-22

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are grown rich through the abundance of her delicacies. Revelation 18:1-3

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all". Revelation 18:21

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God". Revelation 21:2-3