

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 28 (HCLD 19)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2.

Vocabulary: Hell, Judgment

Question: : What shall be done to the wicked on the day of judgment?

Answer: On the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand,[a] and, upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences,[b] shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them;[c] and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.[d]²

WCF XXXIII.ii The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.³

¹ The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 19

Q51: What does this glory of Christ, our Head, profit us?

A51: First, that by His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members;[a] then, that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.[b]

a. Eph. 4:10-12

b. Psa. 2:9; John 10:28-30; I Cor. 15:25-26; Acts 2:33

Q52: What comfort is it to you that Christ "shall come to judge the living and the dead"?

A52: That in all my sorrows and persecutions, I, with uplifted head, look for the very One, who offered Himself for me to the judgment of God, and removed all curse from me, to come as Judge from heaven,[c] who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation,[d] but shall take me with all His chosen ones to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.[e]

c. Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23-24; Phil. 3:20-21; Titus 2:13

d. II Thess. 1:6, 10; Matt. 25:41

e. I Thess. 4:16-18; Acts 1:10-11; Heb. 9:28

² a. Matt. 25:33

b. Rom. 2:15-16

c. Matt. 25:41-43

d. Luke 16:26; II Thess. 1:8-9

³ Matt. 25:21, 31-46; Rom. 2:5-6; 9:22-23; Acts 3:19; II Thess. 1:7-10; Mark 9:48

One would think that the scene painted here would by fear alone drive man into the arms of God. Not so, for none come unto the Lord unless the Father draw them (John 6:44). In John 12:40 we read that God has both blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and be converted. In verse forty-one the Scriptures continue that Isaiah also pointed out this fact. Let us understand that when God blinds the eyes and hardens the heart, this is a passive action by God. This means that left to themselves man will harden his own conscience and rationalize away anything he might see. Paul speaks of this in Romans one where we read, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath showed it to them" (Rom. 1:19). Paul continues in this passage by saying that they even have knowledge of the invisible things to include the power of the Trinity (Godhead). Further into this passage we find that when they refuse to acknowledge God after this supernatural revelation of even the invisible things of God that God gives them over to a reprobate mind, by which they sear their consciences and enter the grossest of sins, from which point they will never turn toward God.

Now as men, for the most part we do not like this doctrine and therefore not even the whole of the reformed church which was the first to preach this truth of the Bible believe this truth and attempt to give some responsibility to the creature and/or allow that a God of love would not do these things and there is some way a hope that all men through the preaching of the Gospel will come to knowledge of Christ. This is unscriptural! We dealt with this in an earlier question concerning the fall and in several questions dealing with both salvation and the members of the invisible church. The TULIP stands tall planted in the rich soil of God's own word. Every petal of this flower of grace having been revealed in the word of God and given a heavenly radiance in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord. These five points of Christian doctrine continue together unto this appointed day of judgment.

At one point in history it was the church who introduced the idea of all the distorted and fantasy creatures from hell that graced literature for several centuries. The church in an attempt to scare the citizenry into the church commissioned artists to paint scenes by which they gave form to what the beasts of hell would look like. Likewise it was the church that first used gargoyles (grotesque half-man, half-beast statues) that graced the tops of buildings and other entry ways, supposedly to scare away evil demons, which they were supposed to represent. In reality they wanted to keep the public aware that demons were real and that they were an awful creation of hell. The populace then being properly reminded of the demon behind every bush and rock would voluntarily enter the church for protection. This along with physical torture to death made the entire world seem Christian at one point in history, the vast majority belonging to the Church of Rome. Alas, the pitiful efforts of the feeble fallen minds to do what only God can do, draw men unto himself. Such tactics filled the pews and coffers of the church, but added not the first soul to the book of life, that having been written before the foundation of the earth by God.

God's justice demands no less than this judgment. Appeal to what a loving God would not do is pure rationalization by guilty men to salve the fear of God born in the heart, which nature shouts from every mountain peak. The very concept of eternal reward and heaven demands an equal perfection to the wrath of God and a literal hell as described above from the pens of the Westminster Assembly and as taught in the Bible.

Some here will see a complicated theology and point to the arguments of where we begin the process of our systematic theology and present the infra/supra-lapsarian arguments. This is not true. One side of this argument will place the election as the very first thing God did in the eternal counsel with Himself and the other will place the creation first. One will claim that predestination (election/reprobation) cannot be separated from providence, the other that the two cannot be combined. While there may be profit for our scholars to wrestle with such weighty thoughts into the areas God has not made manifestly clear, we can rest with the presentation of our TULIP as being sufficient to understand these things, under which man is rotten to the core and cannot save himself nor reverse the process; however for His own mysterious reason, from no merit of the creature God unconditionally elected some to eternal life; (Note

that once more reprobation too can be seen as a passive act by God, if God does nothing, man is doomed to hell.) Because God did not choose all of humanity for salvation, the atonement was not effective for all, but only those God chose and applied the blood to; God having made the choice, since it is of God's will both for man to will and to do, man cannot resist the call of God to salvation in Christ Jesus; and finally since it is all of God, beginning, middle and end, those whom God has chosen cannot remove themselves from God's hand and will inherit eternal life despite themselves. These doctrines been decreed in the eternal counsel of God, and are now being played out on the stage of history. We need not understand these eternal decrees by God or the process of the Divine intellect by which they were arrived at, but from the Holy Writ we know these are true because God said so. Thus there is no doubt that an eternal hell is a literal fact and the wicked will inhabit it for all of eternity as just punishment for disobedience of the God who created them. Concerning the judgment itself, I believe it will be an individual judgment but not of the nature we might picture it. The Divines rightly point to the guilt being acknowledged by the conscience of the creature. The Bible mentions the books being open along with the Lambs book of life. Each of the wicked then will stand on the left hand of Christ the righteous judge and without a word being uttered acknowledge their guilt to a person. Every sin they have ever committed either by deed or omission being instantly revealed to their minds. The sentence while individual will be corporate in appearance in that all are immediately consigned to the fires of hell. Hell not being some dark and hot domain where Satan will rule supreme, but a literal lake of fire where Satan will suffer eternal torments even as all other wicked angels and unbelieving men forever.

The Bible speaks of all deeds done in secret being revealed. I believe this is how they are revealed, not in some cosmic confrontation in a heavenly court room as if reprobate men had some possibility of defending themselves and staying the execution of God's eternal and just judgment upon them. Their darkest deeds done on the blackest of nights are in those books and they see them there written and prostrate themselves in fear before Christ and thus the Scripture is fulfilled as every eye shall see Christ, and every knee shall bow before Him as Lord of all!

In closing I might clear another point connected to this. That is in the English Bible we read in 2 Cor. 4:4 words that seem to indicate that Satan has blinded man from the truth. This is incorrect in that the small letter "g" in the Greek is a capital letter and denotes God. Satan does not have this power to blind men to the truth of God, and as we read in Romans, it is God who does the blinding as such, though man does not need any to apply the blindfold, his own ego being quite capable of this self inflicted act of death upon himself.

Also note that the books of life open before Christ are filled with the good works (those accomplished for Christ and the glory of God alone) by which the faithful receive their heavenly reward. There is no accounting for the many sins that have been part of the life of the believer in the flesh. Every sin has been paid for and has been removed by the blood of Christ. The Bible says they are removed as far as the East is from the West. Love, which can come from God alone, is then said to cover a multitude of sins. When God forgives (a completed act in Christ) it is complete and forever. The past will not be weighed good against bad, but of good works that bring reward and earthly works that are burned with the destruction of the world from which they were born. There is one general resurrection of good and evil, the good to eternal joy in Christ, the evil to eternal damnation in the fires of hell.

Suggested Sermon Outline

The Right Hand of God

Why is there added: And sits at the right hand of God?

Because Christ ascended into heaven so that He might manifest Himself there as the Head of His Church, through whom the Father governs all things.

What benefit do we receive from this glory of Christ, our Head?

First, that through His Holy Spirit He pours out heavenly gifts upon us, His members. Second that by His power He defends and supports us against all our enemies.

What comfort does the return of Christ TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD give you?

That in all affliction and persecution I may await with head held high the very Judge from heaven who has already submitted Himself to the judgment of God for me and has removed all the curse from me; that He will cast all his enemies and mine into everlasting condemnation, but He shall take me, together with all His elect, to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.

I. Christ Went to His Throne in Heaven

A. Christ left His people on earth to begin His eternal reign as our Lord in heaven. Which he wrought in Christ, when *he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* (EPHESIANS 1:20-23)

B. The church headquarters is in heaven. And *he is the head of the body, the church:* who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. (COLOSSIANS 1:18)

C. The government is in place and at work. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ***All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*** (MATTHEW 28:18)

II. Having Christ in Heaven Benefits Believers

A. The gift of the Holy Spirit and the related gifts which benefit the church here come from Christ=s throne in heaven. Wherefore he saith, ***When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*** (EPHESIANS 4:8)

B. As reigning Lord of the Universe, Christ defends believers against all His and their enemies. And ***I give unto them eternal life;*** and they shall never perish, ***neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*** (JOHN 10:28)

Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 26 treats this topic: How doth Christ execute the office of a king? Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

C. The present heavenly reign of Jesus focuses the prophecy of Isaiah. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, *the LORD is our king; he will save us.* (ISAIAH 33:22)

D. The new order is in place and functioning. For he *must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* (1 CORINTHIANS 15:25)

III. It Matters to Have a Highly-placed Friend

A. Having Christ in heaven encourages believers to have an optimistic and expectant attitude. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and *lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* (LUKE 21:28)

B. Through Jesus, heaven is now our country. For *our conversation is in heaven;* from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (PHILIPPIANS 3:20)

C. Jesus has the demonstrated power and authority to set all things right. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, ***Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. (MATTHEW 25:41-43)

D. Believers can expect great things to come. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, ***Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*** (MATTHEW 25:34)

E. The good times are only going to get better. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon ***his kingdom***, to order it, and ***to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*** (ISAIAH 9:7)

F. Now that Christ has come to heaven, the earth will come to Christ. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and ***a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely:*** and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, ***THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*** (JEREMIAH 23:5-6)