

Jesus, Our Savior, Becomes Our Judge!

It is important -- (no, "*imperative*") -- that every Christian realizes that living in the will of God, in this present life, **NOW**, so that they will be able to appear with confidence before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ. God had a plan "*before the foundation of this world*" for every born-again believer - which is that we each "*be conformed into the image of His dear Son.*"

Satan tries by every means possible to keep believers from following in the perfect will of God in this present life -- in order to destroy God's design!

Reading Ephesians 1:3-12, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.*"

This passage of Scripture reveals God's will for every Christians. It is God's predestinated purpose for this process of "*becoming holy and without blame before Him in love*" to take place in **THIS** life now on earth! When we stand before Christ at the Judgment Seat, we will be unable to change our past or do those things that we have left undone.

In this life we live on earth God desires to use our opportunities, choices, and actions as occasions to exhibit the characteristics of Jesus Christ - *the Fruit of the Spirit!* Satan hates believers - and God's plan to "*conform us into the image of His Son*" (Romans 8:29)

It is "*living saints*" that Satan fights against -- because those who have "*died in Christ*" have already gone to heaven cannot possibly do his kingdom any harm. What can "*graveyard saints*" do to hinder Satan's kingdom, or accomplish God's great plan once they lease this present world?

I want us, in this study, to focus in on the believer's works. Scripture is clear on the matter that no one can perform "*works*" in order to go to heaven. The Bible teaches that we are saved by God's grace, through faith, not by any works that we can do. In Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul says, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works -- [human struggle, human attainment, the product of the person himself] -- lest any man should boast.*"

No one will be able to say, “I am saved more than you, because of how hard I have worked at being saved.” God knows there is a great difference in natural ability, and He put salvation for every person on the person of His own Son, Jesus Christ, who tasted death for every one of us. Salvation is the “Gift of God” -- and comes to us through faith, only on the grounds of the Grace of God!

2 Timothy 1:9, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to **our works**, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”

Titus 3:3-8, “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. - [Here is a picture of an unsaved life] – But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, **Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He – [God, the Father] – shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly – [continually] – that they which have [first] believed in God **might be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

After we become born-again believers, it is very important what kind of works we do. Scripture refers to “bad, worthless” works of believers.

“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 hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

It is God’s plan and purpose that every believer will be taught by the Grace of God to produce Good Christians works so he will not “suffer loss” at the Judgment Seat of Christ – 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

I feel that I must emphasize that “we are saved by God’s Grace through faith, and not by works” – however, our rewards in Christ’s Kingdom will be based on our faithfulness to God’s will demonstrated by our works produced by the Holy Spirit within us after we are saved. We must first be born before we can work our way up anything to our account in Heaven.

The problem with countless good, wonderful, people is that they feel that they do not have to be “born-again” as the first requirement for salvation. And, they spend a lifetime doing good works without first being born in the family of God.

Until you are “born-again” you are not in the family of God – and there can be no record of any good works!

If I had tried to open a bank account in the name of my first child before there had been any birth, the president of the bank would have said, “Wait until your child is born and you have a birth certificate from the Doctor with their name on it, then come back and we will gladly open an account in his name.”

It is “*birth*” that makes us a member of the family of God and we must “*born*” into the family of God can you “*open an account*” in a bank of heaven!

We are not born into God’s family BY works,
we are born into the family of God TO work!

In our natural families children are born, not just to always be “*little darlings*,” to be the center of attraction, - go get all the attention, receive wonderful gifts - and never expected to do anything. No! They are expected to grow up and help with some of the jobs around the house.

There are children, of course, who never realize the purpose of their natural birth, are to share some of the family responsibilities and to work.

Many Christians have not known the purpose of their birth into the Kingdom of God. Scripture teaches that God has “*birthed*” us for a purpose that we might grow up into His likeness to become a worker together with God. The Bible reveals to every believer is to be made in the image of God -- that there is a God-given place and will for every child of God.

Birth comes first, but birthed to grow up to be a worker for God!

Any child in the natural who always wants to receive and never wants to invest in the family responsibility will make his parent sick at heart because they know that child will have all kinds of trouble later in life.

It is also possible to make God “*sick at heart*” (Revelation 3:16) when we do not grow up in our Christian living, but only take the blessings of His Son’s life, death and resurrection, never really desiring to know His WILL for our life -- because He knows we will wake up when it is too late, and He will never be able to do for us in the future as He has planned for us now, because, we have never grown up, to get God’s job done -- that is, to carry His gospel to every creature -- to be faithful in every good work -- and -- bring forth fruit -- and, by so doing, glorify our Father which art in Heaven!

The purpose of this Bible study is to give us a better understanding of why we were born, both naturally and spiritually by the theme of our study, “*Living Your Christian Life NOW in the Light of Eternity.*”

It is in the light of eternity that God deals with Christians in this present life. He does not deal with us only in the light of the years we live here on earth. We are an “*Eternal Creature*” So only in the light of eternity that we can understand God’s dealings with us in this present life.

The Bible teaches that Jesus could return back to earth at any moment. He has promised to return. Jesus said in John 14:1-3, “*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have*

told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again, and receive you unto myself**; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

The angels of God promised Christ would return to earth, at Christ ascension, “And while they -- [500 followers of Jesus] -- looked steadfastly toward heaven as He – [Jesus] – went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven**” (Acts 1:10-11).

Paul refers to this return of Jesus Christ back to earth in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, “**For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump 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.”

Many Bible believers refer to this event that could take place at any moment, as “The Rapture”. Though the word “Rapture” does not appear in Scripture, its teaching is clearly there. “Rapture” is a Latin word meaning “Our gathering together unto Him.”

This event, of Jesus return for His Bride, the Church, comes **before** His literal coming to earth – when His feet touch the Mount of Olives and He returns as King to set up His Millennial kingdom on earth (Zechariah 14:4). This is the event John reveals in Revelation 19:11-16. This event, when Christ returns WITH His saints, cannot take place until several other things happen – and signs of His return take place.

But the “Rapture,” when Christ returns FOR His saints, can take place any moment. John, in Revelation 4:1, pictures this event – as he sees a door in heaven is open and a voice calls him to “come up hither.” Immediately, upon arriving in heaven, John beholds the glorified Christ upon His Throne --His judgment Seat.

There seems to be the impression with many true born-again believers who believe in Christ’s Second Coming that if they could just make the Rapture – that’s all that really matters; that’s all that was necessary to be truly live blissful in heaven forever and ever. We sing “The Great Marriage Supper of the Lamb” and rejoice as we sing. However Scripture does not teach that those in the Rapture go immediately to the Marriage Supper. The first thing on the agenda for believers, after the Rapture of the Church takes place, is what Scripture calls, “The Judgment Seat of Christ.”

This event that will take place in the life of every believer is something that the Devil does not want us to know about because he does not want us to live our daily life in light of this. He does not want us to realize that we will someday give an account of every unconfessed, unrepented sin of commission and of omission at this Judgment Seat of Christ. He knows that there is coming a time when we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ -- an occasion we need to keep before our minds every moment of our Christian living -- **and Satan does not want us to know that!**

This “*Judgment Seat of Christ*” will be *only* for believers. It is an event of “*rewarding*” believers in two areas: (1) for their *faithfulness* to God’s will and (2) their *attitude* while carrying out God’s will.

The word “*Judgment*” is a misnomer in that there is no punishment handed out – except the realization of loss rewards. The actual Greek word for “*judgment*” is “*Bema*” – referring to the occasions when rewards were given to athletes who had won certain contests.

The Bible nowhere teaches in a “*General Judgment*” for all mankind. The Bible clearly and emphatically teaches in a *first* and a *second* resurrection – one for the just and one for the unjust. There will be this Judgment Seat of Christ, which will be a time of rewarding the believers that will take place right after the Rapture of the Church. Then *over a thousand years later* there will be “*The Great White throne Judgment*” for the sinners, rendering to them their eternal sentence.

See my series of studies on “*The Judgment Seat of Christ*” – also we will study concerning this later in this study.

Christ, Himself will be the Judge at this rewarding time of the Saints

John, the beloved disciple, who had lived, walked and talked with Jesus, the Son of Man for 3 ½ years – who “*laid his head on the Master’s breast,*” gives a true picture of Christ as Judge in Revelation 1:12-18. John writes . . .

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

John sees Christ, not as the dying “*Lamb of God*” or the “*Son of man*,” as Isaiah reveals in Isaiah 53, but as the One now changed in His character, position and relationship. The One John reveals is to judge the Church that is pictured in the seven letters of Revelation 2 and 3.

And John is told to write this vision – not to the heathen and unbelievers – but to the Church, so they will know the “*things that shall be hereafter.*”

Daniel 7:13-14 describes his same scene, when he writes, *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him – [Jesus Christ] - near before Him – [God, the Father]. And there*

was given Him – [Christ] – dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

At this time, in God’s divine order of things, Jesus Christ will enter into His New Office, as Judge of the Church – King of kings, and Lord of lords. In the past He was the Creator of all things, He was the voice of God in the Old Testament and the Prophets. *“In the fullness of time”* He became like unto His brethren, taking the form of man, tasting of man’s journey of life here from birth to death -- He rose again from the dead, ascended back into heaven, and sat down at the Father’s right hand to be a High Priest in the presence of God for us. However, He now seeks to teach every born-again believer, though in times past was his Savior, he some day will meet Him as Judge.

Titus 2:11-13, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

The Bible reveals Jesus as Judge. When we see Him again He will be changed in position. Notice how many times He says to the Church, *“I know thy works”* (Revelation 2 and 3). The *“works”* of believers will be the basis for His judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

1 Peter 4:17, “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?”

Hebrews 10:31, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

This verse in Hebrews tells us that it will be a fearful thing to come into Christ’s presence without preparing ourselves by obedience to His revealed will given to us in His Word. Understanding this changed position of Christ is vastly important!

One time in the Northern part of our country in the early fall a young boy had gone out on a pond of water in a field beside a road, to try out the ice for it was the boy of every boy to see who could so skating first. But the ice was not thick enough and when he got out in the middle, he broke through. He cried, *“Help, Help”* even though he did not know there was any one in hearing distance. But as it happened, a man was out the same afternoon for a ride in his horse and buggy and happened by on the road near the pond in which the young boy had gone to skate and was just across the rail fence when he heard a cry for help. He stopped his horse and stood up in his buggy, just in time to see the hands of a person going under the water through the thin ice.

Now, he did not have to get off of the buggy and jump in and get wet in the cold water. He could whip his horse on and drive home. But who can hear the cry for help and not desire to help? He jumped from his buggy and over the rail fence taking his

overcoat off and jumped in and soon came up with the form of a young boy. He laid him on the ground and worked the water out of him, until soon the boy opened his eyes. The man found out where the boy lived, and wrapping him in his own dry overcoat, and driving as fast as his horse would go, delivered him to his parents.

The boy lived and grew up to become a man with a business of his own. The man who saved him became an elderly man.

One day, the young man made a decision to commit a crime. He knew that if he was caught, it would put him in prison for life. But of course he would not get caught so he did the crime. But, alas, he was caught and thrown into jail. After weeks, the case finally came to trial. He was brought into the court handcuffed to the officer. The Jury came in and as time for court came, in walked a judge in a long black robe and called for the trial to begin. Later the case was given to the jury who went out and came back with a verdict of guilty. The young man was ordered to stand before the judge. As the judge turned to the law to read his penalty, he said to the young man, *“Son, do you have anything to say to the court before I sentence you?”* The man said, *“Judge, don’t you know me. I would not be here if it had not been for you.”* He reminded the judge about the time he had gone skating and went down and it was the judge who was the man who was passing by and went in after him and saved his life

The judge thought for a while and then said, *“Yes, I remember that day. Do you mean to tell me that you are that man? You are that boy that I saved?”* The young man said, *“Yes! And, judge are now going to put me away for life, when you are the same man who risked his life to save me?”*

The judge answered, *“Son, the day I passed by where you were skating I was just an ordinary man out for an afternoon drive, and don’t forget you cried for help and I was the only one who heard your cry and I was glad to have been able to answer your cry. But since then, I have stood in this courtroom, have taken an oath in the presence of God, this flag and the Bible. I said I would be a true judge, uphold the law and give to the offenders what the law requires. Son, I have no other choice. Our relationship has changed since the first time I saw you. I was then your Savoir, but now I am your judge.”*

So it is with Jesus Christ, once the Son of man, our Savior, will someday be our Judge. A law binds a judge. Jesus said, *“The same word I have given you, shall judge you in that day.”*