

Foundations 9b — Eternal Judgment vs. Temporal Judgment

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits”. **Hebrews 6:1-3**

The Lord is a righteous Judge

For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth.

Psalm 96:13

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. **Psalm 19:9b**

All things are open and naked before His eyes

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. **Hebrews 4:13**

We will all give an account to God

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 each of us shall give account of himself to God. **Romans 14:11-12**

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

There is a difference between temporal

judgments, which are redemptive, and eternal judgments

The temporal judgments of God are redemptive in nature. Motivated by love, they are intended to bring correction in this life so that we do not continue in error and suffer eternal judgment. If we do not take heed to temporal judgments we may suffer eternal judgments. An eternal judgment can be devastating because it is eternal! This applies to both believers and non-believers alike.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment
Hebrews 9:27

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments we see the temporal judgments of God released in order to spare His people from the severity of eternal judgments. In Psalm 107, the goodness of God is expressed in His temporal judgment by a storm.

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end. Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses. He calms the storm, so that

its waves are still. Then they are glad because they are quiet; so He guides them to their desired haven. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

Psalm 107:21-31

- 1) Men are doing business outside of God’s best will for them. They are not seeking God or His guidance.
- 2) God raises up a storm.

- 3) Through the storm men are brought to their “wits end”.
- 4) Having come to their end, they cry out to God for help.
- 5) God hears and guides them to their desired haven.

This is the goodness of God expressed in a redemptive judgment. This pattern is repeated throughout Scripture.

“Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I keep Your word.

71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.

75 I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

Psalm 119:67,71,75

Scripture records (1 Cor. 11:17-34) that some of the Christian believers in the Corinthian

church were chastened by God. They ended up with sickness and premature death. This happened because they were not discerning the Lord’s body. They did not recognize or remember that the believers in their congregation are members of Christ’s body and consequently mistreated them. Due to their selfishness, they brought judgment upon themselves (1 Cor. 11:29).

The reason for God’s temporal judgment is given in 1 Cor. 11:31-32: “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” God will release temporal judgments to spare us from eternal judgment. That is His goodness.

Every son or daughter that grows to maturity is chastened

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.”

Hebrews 12:5-8

“For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” **Isaiah 26:9b**

Some have erroneously taught that there is

no judgment for believers in the New Testament; that all judgment was done at the cross. The only way anyone could believe this is if they had not read through the New Testament. The writers of the New Testament and the Lord Jesus Himself testify that God judges believers under the New Covenant.

God will judge sexual immorality in the church. He does this to help save the disobedient from eternal damnation.

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” **Hebrews 13:4**

“And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.” **Rev. 2:21-22**

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.” **Ephesians 5:3-7**

For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” **Hebrews 10:30**

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” **Galatians 6:7-8**

The Lord judges churches and individuals

The Lord rebuked the church at Ephesus because they had lost their first love. They loved God, but He was not first place in their lives. Their hearts were divided. Other interests took first place.

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.” **Matthew 22:37-38**

Jesus counseled the Ephesian church: “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent.” **Revelation 2:4-5**

Loving God with all of our heart involves doing something (the first works). The Lord promised that if we did not repent and return to our first love, doing the first works, He would take away our lampstand.

How easy it is to live a lukewarm or compromising Christian life and not realize it! This is especially true if we are surrounded by compromising believers and/or worldly people. We would be wise to associate with those who are wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord Jesus and zealous to live a holy life in Christ.

Disobedient churches and/or believers may find the Lord Himself fighting against them

To the church at Pergamos, the Lord Jesus rebuked those who “hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.” He warned the church of His judgment, saying “Repent or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth” **Revelation 2:16**

Nations will turn to God through His temporal judgments

In heaven the saints celebrate the redemptive judgments of the Lord that are released at the end of the age to help bring nations to repentance.

“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.’ ”

Revelation 15:3-4

In contrast to temporal judgments, eternal judgments are forever

Once we pass from this mortal life on earth, our eternal destiny is set. There is no more opportunity to go back and erase or re-do anything. What we have become, in this mortal life, is what we will be forever. If we are lost, we will be eternally wicked, without the ability to repent. If we are saved, our place in God’s kingdom will be set according to the degree of our transformation into the image of Jesus. The level of glory, authority and rewards, or lack of glory, authority and rewards will be set. Since our eternal destiny is based on how we live our brief life now, it is much better for us to be judged by the Lord now, rather than later. Now we can repent. After we die it is too late. Eternal judgments are forever.