



The Lost Foundations – Eternal Judgment

Introduction

The elementary principles are for the followers of Jesus Christ. They are not for the edification or conviction of non-believers. This is particularly important to keep in mind as we explore the principle of eternal judgment.

Sadly, many have raised their hand, walked the aisle and said a prayer; for the express purpose of avoiding eternal judgment. This is one of the most egregious deceptions in the church today; for even the most cursory study reveals that everyone will be judged – one way or another.

Furthermore, most assume that eternal judgment happens at a moment in time – sometime in the future. As it so often does, our event oriented view of Scripture minimizes the weight and importance of foundational truth – even in the most obvious cases.

The Eternality of God's Judgment

Eternal (*aiōnios*): Without beginning and end, that which always has been and always will be; perpetual. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*

All that is eternal is God's creation, possession and responsibility. It is without beginning or end because God is timeless.

Judgment (*krima*): Condemnation of wrong, the decision (whether severe or mild) which one passes on the faults of others; the sentence of God as judge. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*

Eternal judgment is not something we are waiting for. It is without beginning and end – even for the church.

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 1Peter 4:17

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. Romans 14:10-12

Eternal judgment has begun at the house of God. It has been happening; it is happening; and it will continue to happen. God's judgment is not bound by time. He is perpetually judging every single person.

Now that we recognize the eternal nature of God's judgment; we can consider the judgment events that will occur at the end of the age.

Two Judgment Events

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who 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, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15

This is the judgment that most Christians understand – the one they hope to be delivered from (more on this later). Some may be surprised to know that there is another judgment.

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. 2Corinthians 5:9-10

Whether you are being introduced to the judgment seat of Christ for the first time, or this is a reminder of its existence in your future, I pray that you will take the time to seriously consider the importance of this truth. It is a paradigm-shifting game-changer – particularly in light of the eternity of God’s judgment.

So, go ahead and consider God’s judgment of the things we have done in the body (and are planning to do). Take inventory. Are they the things that are pleasing to Him? What might we receive in light of the good and bad we have done?

The Peril of Not Progressing

This is the heading given to Hebrews 6, in the New King James Version. Several other translations title this section “The Peril of Falling Away”. Regardless of your position on Eternal Security (I am intentionally avoiding that debate here), it is clear, from the verses following the elementary principles, that something perilous is at stake.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection... And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.
Hebrew 6:1-6

Like the elementary principles, this warning is for the followers of Jesus Christ. “And this we will do if God permits.” Permission implies judgment. Clearly there is judgment here; and it is not judgment that waits until a future event. Make no mistake about it:

God is judging our response to the elementary principles.

At this point, it might help to remember that there are two types of judgment. There is judgment that includes condemnation; and there is judgment that something doesn’t belong or is missing (e.g., sin and faith, respectively). Here – particular to our progressing – we are dealing with the latter.

So, why wouldn’t God permit us to move on to the meatier matters? This question has greatly encouraged me to gain a full understanding of the elementary principles. What I have learned is quite sobering:

The elementary principles are for more than understanding. They are to be believed and lived out in our lives. To do otherwise is to invite peril!

Without this foundation, it will not matter how beautiful and well presented our houses have become. The storms of Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49 will ruin that house. We will be like the seed of Matthew 13:21 –

... yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Furthermore, our poor foundations inhibit Jesus Christ’s building of His church. Our poor foundations hinder our being made into faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

Our neglect of the elementary principles is our rejection of His blessing; it is disobedience to His call; and, it is rebellion against His commands. It is nothing less than an invitation to eternal judgment.

Conclusion

It has been the Lord's will to unsettle you with the warnings of eternal judgment; and this warning of not progressing beyond the elementary principles. We have lived too long as citizens of this world. Our conformance has dulled our hearing and weakened our desires for maturity as God's heavenly people. We must regain our eternal perspective, purpose and passion.

Working it Out

The writer of Hebrews encouraged his readers to teach these principles. Of course, teaching assumes understanding. Still, I wonder if each one of us must understand all the principles before teaching them.

Perhaps we could teach each other, in community, what we understand; and, in community, we could encourage one another to believe and live out of every principle.

Then, if God permits, we can move on to the meatier matters. What a feast we will have!!

Recommended Reading

Though I have not read them, the following books come highly recommended. Both can be found at one of the many online distributors.

Eternal Judgment (The Foundation Series); Derek Prince

Your Eternal Reward: Triumph and Tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ; Erwin W. Lutzer

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Humbly Yours and Forever His,

Rob