

Have you ever heard a teaching on this? #1 - 20210828

Hi all,

When I was in Bible school in 1979 there was a class about righteousness. There was also a class about the life of Christ. There were many other classes, but not one of them taught what the New Testament actually says is the foundation of our faith.

Years later, when I offered a 'Foundations of our Faith' class when I became a Bible school Director as a required course, the students didn't have a clue what it was about. There was some moaning and groaning about being made to take that class because they thought they had moved beyond that.

In our day debates and arguments take place, friendships have been broken, people have left churches over them. I wonder if they were taught to a person shortly after a person is born again, would we have the arguments we see swirling around us? These doctrines are rarely heard in sermons anywhere. What are those foundational doctrines?

The Foundation: Hebrews 6:1-3

"Therefore leaving the beginnings of the teachings of Christ, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of the doctrine of 1) repentance from dead works, 2) faith towards God, 3) the teaching of baptisms, 4) the laying on of hands, 5) the resurrection of the dead, 6) and of eternal judgement. And this we will do if God permit."

Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgement. Notice the progression from repentance to judgment. Why aren't these commonly taught in church?

One: Repentance from dead works

The Bible interprets the Bible, which means we must look at the phrase 'dead works' to understand what the author of Hebrews is talking about. A few verses later, in 9:13-15 he uses the same term to describe one who places their faith in their sacrificial efforts to approach God, versus coming to God through the blood of Jesus' sacrifice.

Dead works therefore is placing trust in a religious system rather than accepting the salvation of grace by Jesus. Repentance here is repenting from a life of religious works done to impress or gain access to God.

Two words for repentance

When we read the NT whether it be in English or another language, it merely uses 'repent' for all instances where someone changes their mind or has a change of heart. But the Greek is much more specific.

"Metanoian" is the root word used to speak of 'repentance from dead works'. It is a true and heart-felt repentance. It is used when a person has a revelation that they have offended God, and they respond by having a change of heart and mind. It is used by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:2 when he urges people to repent from dead works to come to the Lord. It is used in II Corinthians 7:10 to describe a 'repentance that will not be repented of'.

There is another word for repentance, "metameletheis" which means repenting because they got caught, or their plan didn't work, or some other sense of regret. It is used in Matthew 27:3 of Judas who 'repented himself' for betraying Jesus. Judas didn't repent to God, he "repented himself", sorry it didn't work out. Regret. Remorse.

In a surprise, this is the word used of God in Romans 11:29: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

It means God will never feel sorry He gifted you. He won't have emotions or thoughts of regret He sent Jesus for you. The gifts and the calling He has for you - even if life happened while you were on the way to His highest and best - He will never feel sorry it didn't work out. He will never regret having called you. From His point of view, in the ages to come He will still continue to show us the riches of His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. He will never be sorry.

But it is the first word of repentance that is the foundation. Repentance from dead works. It has nothing to do with repenting of sin, other than the sin of trying to get to God on our own efforts. Sin is of course that very thing. But the issue is repentance from religious formulas. It is a total change of heart and direction away from man-made formula.

From what I've seen, many Christians who think themselves mature, are still guilty of the sin of dead works. They live by religious formula. They are modern examples of Cain, who offered to God things he had produced of his own effort and work. He wanted to come to God based on his own efforts - 'See what I did for you!' - and was rejected.

Religious works make our Father the adversary while at the same time trying to approach Him. It is a schizophrenic Christian existence as a result. Not able to trust God because they think their works are something He wants while in truth He does not want anyone to come to Him of their own works. Once we are born of His Spirit we are expected to live out of that Life in love towards our fellow man, but that has nothing to do with approaching God on our terms.

Repent of any effort based on your own strength, based on fear, to do this or that for God to get this or that from Him.

Repent of dead works. I had one lady tell me while her husband lay dying of a chronic condition that was progressing to its final outcome, she worked 65 hours a week volunteering in her church in the belief if she worked for God then He would heal her husband. Only after her husband died did she realize what she was doing, and repented.

"Repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, and the doctrine of baptisms..." We'll pick it up there next week, until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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Have you ever heard a teaching on this? #2 - 20210904

Hi all,

Most Christians have never heard that repenting from dead works is first in the foundation of Christ. Dead works is sin of course, but specifically it is repentance from our own formulas by which we think we are to approach and receive from God.

Whether the 'dead works' were founded in atheism which is one worshipping self, or being a 'good person', or more formal like Jewish or Christian or other religions man-made formulas, repentance from that is required.

Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms....

These foundational teachings of Christ are a progression we can plainly see: Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment.

That means a Christian is expected to demonstrate a progress towards maturity both as a believer and as a human being. After repentance comes "Faith towards God", which is an interesting phrase in the Greek.

Other translations simply say 'faith in God', and Young's Literal translation says 'faith on God'. The reason for the difference is the little word 'epi', which can be translated 'towards' or 'in' or 'on'. The word 'epi' describes what happens following contact with something, thus after God deals with our hearts we have 'faith towards God'. Faith is what happens after coming into contact with God.

The 'ep' a word study reveals, "expresses motion with rest following the motion". It means "to rest upon" (Thayer). The literal meaning is the rest before breathing in. It is that pause, that

rest before taking a breath. When placed in front of faith 'epi' tells us faith in God is an act of rest, a response from being in contact with the Almighty. It is the coming to one's end by the personal revelation of God. All that is wrapped up in the phrase 'faith towards God'.

That is why 'Repentance from dead works and faith towards (resting on or in) God' are very nearly one act - whether it be John the Baptist asking people to repent and come to God, or the modern version of 'pray this prayer and believe' - repentance from dead works and faith are inseparably linked. Faith towards God is based on a person having a personal revelation of God, and coming to the end of themselves.

Therefore: Faith is rest

I've frequently said that faith feels like peace, it feels like rest. That is because faith in God is based on a personal revelation of Him. Our efforts to impress or move or reach God end with faith in Him.

If everyone lived as the Bible teaches this, there would be no formulas in Christendom. No books on how to pray a certain prayer to get the desired result, no seminars on do this and God will do that. No one would try to move God or impress Him by their efforts, they would just walk with Him and from that intimacy gain revelation on their situation.

What more could He do? Therefore we rest in faith

"He who gave us Jesus, how can He not along with Him also then freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

We have Jesus, the Father's only Son who is above the whole universe: Having given Him, what else remains? Therefore our only response is to give ourselves, for no earthly effort on our part could even come close to the Father from heaven giving us Jesus. What can we give Him in return but our soul?

Rest in that. Stop the arguments against why He can't love you or save you or why you so offended Him He will kick you out of His family. Stop it. It's too late, He already gave you Jesus. There is nothing higher He can do for you. Yes, that's how overwhelming grace is. Faith is our response to that grace.

He who has entered into His rest...

Hebrews chapter 4 opens with this theme of coming to the end of self and (resting) faith in God. The author makes the remark in v10-11:

"For he who has entered into His rest, has ceased from his own works (effort). Let us **work therefore to enter into that rest...**"

Faith is rest, and that rest comes because we know Him. When you have faith in Him it is because you have come to the end of our own efforts. You give up. You turn it over to Him. Haven't you ever noticed when you surrender control His peace comes upon you? You've stopped your own works and rested - that is faith. Learn to walk in that 24/7. Every time you start to do something outside of just walking with Him, stop. Judge what you want to do is based on knowing Him and walking with Him, or your own idea to do something. If what you do isn't born of intimacy with Him, then stop. Cease your own works, and enter into His rest.

The rest of Hebrews 4 explains why we can cease from our own works. Verse 12 tells us the Word of God is alive and sharp and pierces between our soul and spirit. Unfortunately many Christians have been incorrectly taught this means the written Bible is the Word the author is talking about. That is incorrect.

Verse 13-16 tells us he is talking about the Person who is the Word of God, for he continues: "And besides that, all things in creation are open and naked before Him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have such a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession. For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feelings or our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find help in a time of need."

It isn't the written chapter and verse that is the Word that knows all, but the Person Who IS the Word from which the written Word flows, who knows all things. Therefore you can rest for your peace is not in pen and ink, but in the Lord Himself.

THAT is why our 'faith towards God' is resting upon Him, that pause when all things are at peace. For He sees our innermost thoughts and motives, critiques them, relates to our human frailties, and loves us anyway, having gone to heaven to appear before the Father on our behalf. Amazing grace.

Next week, baptisms and laying on of hands. Until then, blessings,
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Have you heard of teaching on this? #3 - 20210911

Hi all,

We've been covering what scripture tells us is the foundation of our faith from Hebrews 6:1-2: Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Baptisms...

The first rule of Biblical interpretation is that a passage must make sense to the original readers or those who heard the message when it was read to them. So what did the author of Hebrews mean when he wrote to them of the 'doctrine of baptisms'? Back then hearing of the foundational teaching of 'baptisms', meant water baptism and being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

When we read of 'baptisms' some 2,000 years after the verse was written we might be tempted to include many of the man-made 'baptisms' or our own experiences we label as a 'baptism' of some kind. Back in the 1970's there were some seeking a 'baptism with fire' which they concluded was a separate experience because in Matthew 3:11/Luke 3:16, John said of Jesus: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire..."

But that 1 statement by John the Baptist (recorded 2x) is not a doctrinal statement, for in context his messages were about the fire of God burning away the chaff of sin of our lives. That's why there is no teaching by Jesus on a separate 'baptism' with fire, and no teaching in Acts or the letters of the New Testament.

If someone has an experience of a 'baptism with fire', good for them, it is something the Lord did for them as they sought Him, and He obliged them by giving them that experience. But if we read that passage as if we were first century Christians needing the foundations of the teachings of Christ, 'baptisms' meant water and Holy Spirit.

What water baptism does

In I Peter 3:21 he writes that water baptism is a type of Noah being in the Ark and lifted through and above the waters. The Ark is Jesus. Genesis 7:16 says God Himself closed the Ark, a symbol of Jesus being the Ark, the Holy Spirit sealing us in Him, safe from the flood of judgement. The waters of baptism represent sin/judgement washed away as we rise above it in sealed in the Ark. (One could make the case that we being in the Ark and Sealed by the Holy Spirit rising above the water of judgment is a type of the pre-tribulation rapture.)

v21:"This is a figure of how baptism saves us, but not the washing of the flesh by water, but it is the answer of a good conscience towards God." Water baptism is 'the answer of a good conscience towards God. It is a response to His grace of salvation. We are raised out of the water as Christ was raised from the dead 'sin' of the world which He had carried.

Some don't have the opportunity to respond to salvation before they die; On their death bed or like the thief on the cross not having the opportunity. Because water is not salvation, but faith in Christ is, that person not water baptized still goes to heaven. But if possible, when a person comes to the Lord and would like to answer His grace by being water baptized, it is very good to do so.

Paul put it this way in Romans 6:3-4: "Don't you know what when we are baptized we are baptized into Christ's death? And as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should rise to walk in newness of life."

The practical side of water baptism.

In Acts 19:1-6 Paul comes to Ephesus and finds about 12 men he thinks are believers in Jesus:"Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" This shows that here, over 25 years after Pentecost, Paul recognized there is often a time gap between being born again in their spirit man, and receiving the Holy Spirit.

When Paul was told they had only heard of John the Baptist he told them about Jesus. When Paul water baptized them it says they came out of the water and Paul laid hands on them: "The Holy Spirit came on them; they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

When I water baptize people I teach them this passage and ask them to expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit first time or a fresh infilling when they come out of the water. I do what Paul did - lay hands on them as they rise from the water. And like Paul, I have seen some amazing baptisms with the Holy Spirit at those times.

My friend Dave

He and his wife had won a woman who was a witch to the Lord, and because she was living with her boyfriend who was a warlock and leader of a coven, she asked if she could stay with Dave and his wife while she sorted things out. There was a knock at their door; it was the warlock asking if his girlfriend was there, and Dave admitted she was. The man said this:"I won't bother her, but I just need to know; Has she been baptized yet?" Dave said he would check, and shut the door on the man, leaving him outside.

Dave quickly told his wife to fill the bathtub they were going to have a quick water baptism of the woman. They did, she did, and Dave went back to the front door: "Yes, she has been baptized." The warlock shook his head, "Then there's nothing I can do" as he walked away. The warlock realized something happened when she was baptized.

Water baptism is when we of our own free will answer His grace with the response of being baptized, and demons who have previously influenced them will flee. Most 'deliverances' happen when a person turns from sin, for the demons realize they've lost influence and will leave them to find other more willing hosts.

This brings up the baptism with the Holy Spirit

At their water baptism Paul laid hands on the men and they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Jesus used the term in Acts 1:5; Baptized WITH the Holy Spirit. Of the 8 times in Acts this experience is mentioned, all 8 use 'with the Holy Spirit'. Not baptism 'of' the Holy Spirit, not baptism 'in' the Holy Spirit, but "with". Why?

When we say we are baptized WITH water it means the water is the agent, the material, used in baptism. When Jesus said WITH the Holy Spirit it indicates He is the agent used, the material used in the baptism. In water baptism the whole body becomes wet, but the water is displaced by the person. When you get into a bathtub the water level rises because your body pushes aside the water. Not so when baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The difference is He saturates the whole person, spirit, soul, and body. We don't displace Him like He is water, the 'water' of the Spirit saturates our very being, like we are a sponge. The Revelation 22:1 indicates there is a single river of Living Water coming from the Father's throne, but Jesus said in John 7:37-39 a believer will have 'rivers of Living Waters' flowing from his 'innermost being'. Verse 39 confirming He was talking about the Holy Spirit, ie tongues. He flows through us, like we are a sponge absorbing Him as He flows, spirit to soul to body.

Tongues involves that flow from the throne to our spirit, out our soul (mind/emotions/will) who controls the flow, and using our body to speak in a language we have never learned. Why tongues? Because the Father wants His will done on earth but needs a legal way to gain access.

So He by-passes our ignorance of what to pray for by giving us a language He fills with content and purpose, allows us to pray it back to Him, completing a legal transaction. When we pray in tongues we are as Paul said, speaking mysteries to God, His perfect will.

When a person comes up out of water baptism they are wet. Acts 10:44-46 indicates when a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit they speak in tongues. There are other fillings of course, in Acts they involve things like boldness, speaking more eloquently or with wisdom beyond one's education and ability, singing from the spirit man, and so on. But the first indication seen throughout the 30 years of Acts, is that a person speaks in a language they never learned:

"When Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon those who heard his words...and the Jews with Peter were astonished that they had received the Holy Spirit, for they heard them speak in tongues and magnify God..."

This is the briefest of overviews of baptisms and it is clear this will be a 5 part series, lol. Next week the laying on of hands and week 5 will cover the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

I hope this is a blessing to you, thought provoking perhaps...until next week, blessings,
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Have you heard of a teaching on this? #4 - 20210918

Hi all,

We've partly covered the foundations of the faith as listed in Hebrews 6:1-2: Repentance from dead works, of faith towards God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The laying on of hands - overview

There are 3 reasons scripture provides for this foundational teaching to be applied: Blessing, setting apart for God's work, and healing.

These 3 are for the laying on of hands person to person. In the Old Testament, sacrifices for sin were made by the priest laying hands on the head of the sacrificial animal and confessing the sins of the person or nation. (Leviticus 1:4, 16:21, etc) That practice is a picture of the Father spiritually laying hands on Jesus to carry the sin of the world on the cross, so is not covered in this study, having ended with the cross. (II Corinthians 5:16-20, Isaiah 53:10-11)

Blessing

In Genesis 27 the aged Isaac lays hands on Jacob and Esau to transfer blessing and birthright. In Genesis 48 Jacob (Israel) laid hands on Joseph's two sons and prophesied over each. In Mark 10:14-16 Jesus laid hands on little children and blessed them. The Greek word 'bless' is 'eulogeo'. It is where we get 'eulogy' and is from the word 'logos' meaning 'word' and 'eu' meaning 'well or good'. It means to speak good things over a person.

That is why the Spirit of the Father will often cause a person to prophesy over the person they are 'blessing', speaking good words over. If we were to study this use of the laying on of hands we would

see it is a special event, not something common. In each situation mentioned in scripture, both the person laying their hands on and the receiver of the blessing knew it was special.

The person laying hands on the other should realize there is a transfer, a blessing spiritually that (can) happen if the 2 involved will involve a 3rd - the Lord.

Setting apart for ministry or service in the Lord

In Numbers 8:10-11 the whole nation of Israel came forward to lay hands on the members of the tribe of Levi who were chosen to be God's priests.

In Numbers 27:18-20 Moses is instructed to lay hands on his successor, Joshua, who would lead Israel after Moses's death. Deuteronomy 34:9 tells us Joshua was "...full of the Spirit of Wisdom because Moses had laid hands on him..."

This shows us there can be a deposit or impartation during the laying on of hands. In the blessing part above I focused on the person laying hands on another prophesying. But here we see Joshua actually receiving an impartation from the Lord through Moses laying hands on him.

This is where I want to stop and emphasize something: Moses laid hands on Joshua by command from the Lord. All too often we rush in and our mouth starts going as soon as we touch that person. I have found through decades of experience, to hold back, not to lay hands on the person right away, but to linger in prayer before putting my hand(s) on them. I do this to get the mind of the Lord, for we have no power in and of ourselves, it is all Christ in us the hope of glory. So we need to wait and get His mind, His leading, His words before we put our hand on someone.

In the New Testament we see a group of 5 men from several nations* gathering for fasting and prayer in Acts 13:1-4, when the Lord prophesies through one or more of them to 'Separate Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them.' *Barnabas (Cyprus), Simeon (Niger), Lucius (Libya), Manaen (Israel), Paul (Turkey).

Verse 3 says after He told them that they fasted and prayed a little longer, then laid hands on them and sent them away. Note again they were told by the Lord to do so. They didn't just think it up, they followed instructions.

In I Timothy 4:14 Paul tells Timothy "not to neglect the gift that is in you, which was given by prophecy by the laying on of hands of the elders (old men, leaders, presbytery)."

And in I Timothy 5:22 Paul cautions not to lay hands on someone for ministry too quickly, lest they fall into sin. Earlier in chapter 3 he tells Timothy a leader must be experienced, and lists traits of their lives which are seen in 3 categories: Stable in life, stable in Christian character, stable in family relations. (Some leaders were single, so this admonition has to do with the larger reputation of godliness. Paul was single, for instance, yet certainly a leader.)

Healing

This doctrine of the laying on of hands is so commonly practiced, as I said above, most have diluted the power due to having little faith in the Lord in this practice.

When I was a teenager, the very first thing the Lord taught me about healing was from Mark 1:40-42, where the Lord touched the leper and 'the leprosy departed from him'. He instructed me about the power of the touch, how the power in my spirit would flow to a person's body to accomplish the Lord's will. (Sometimes that would be healing, sometimes it is something deeper, like dealing with them about why they are in that condition in the first place.)

The main reason I avoid the classic auditorium style prayer line is because before I lay hands on a person I pause to see what the Father wants to do. That takes time. And very often when I lay hands on a person's head, they are praying in tongues or praying in their known language, or they want to tell me all about it, which actually hinders them receiving in that moment.

I have found the Lord is a gentleman and as long as they are talking He won't. I tell people to stop praying, stop explaining to me what is going on, just shift into 'neutral' and be still...only then can I

sense the anointing leave my hands and flow into the top of their head and into their body or soul. It is at that moment they receive what He wants for them. Sometimes healing, sometimes a grace for something else, sometimes it is something personal He hides from me as it is just between them and Him.

In Mark 5:23 Jairus recognized how special the laying on of hands is, telling Jesus of his sick daughter: "Come and lay your hands upon her and she will live..."

Why have we lost our confidence in this teaching, in this practice? You can help yourself stir up this gift and practice if you will not rush to put your hands on someone, but linger to be led by His Spirit first, THEN put your hands on them for the heavenly outcome.

Why healing?

In Mark 16:16-20 we have the Lord saying, "These signs will follow those who believe, in my name...they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." Or as I read it: "These signs will follow those who believe in my name...they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." I have found results happen with those who believe in His name, not just those who simply believe in Him.

The word 'signs' is in the Greek, 'signs'. A sign is given to confirm, authenticate, or corroborate something communicated. In other words, the sign of healing by the laying on of hands is given not for our well being, not to bless us, but rather as a confirmation, authentication, or corroboration of what we teach about the Lord.

I've often observed that a sign appeals to the mind, a wonder to the imagination. This sign of healing as we lay hands on someone is given first as a confirmation of all we know and believe about Jesus. I would add a key element to healing by the laying on of hands can be seen in Acts 3:1-8 when Peter pulled the lame man up and commanded him to walk. He later explained in 3:16 the man was healed 'by faith in the name of Jesus'.

The laying on of hands without faith in the name of Jesus, very often results in nothing accomplished. It is not our faith in the practice of the laying on of hands, but faith in the power of the name of Jesus. Use His name sparingly, don't dilute so to speak, the power by tossing His name around 20 times in a prayer - in the context of today's study, refrain from using that most sacred and holy name until it is needed to bless someone, or to set them aside for the Lord's use, or healing.

Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment next week...until then, blessings,

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Have you seen a teaching on this? #5 - resurrection and judgement - 20210925

Hi all,

Now we come to the last two stones laid down in the foundation of the faith: The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

The Greek of Hebrews 6:1 is written in this way: "Therefore having left the beginning of the Christ teaching, to maturity we should go on, not again a foundation laying.."

The word 'maturity' is 'teleiotes' and means "Consummation through collecting a combination of truths leading to a future consummation or completeness." The root word suggests fulfillment in an end stage.

So this is telling us maturity is the building of layers of truth, and as we know, not just knowledge but the application of those truths into our lives as a lifestyle. That lifestyle is called godliness. Not perfection, just godliness in grace.

The word 'foundation' is 'themelios', where we get 'theme'. It means 'a stone laid down' as part of a foundation along a true line, which will be used to build the rest of the building. It was also used in daily life to depict the course of instruction given by a teacher; line upon line, truth upon truth, here a

little, there a little. Once the cornerstone is laid the rest of the building follows the plan of the Master Architect, the Lord. That's life for disciples.

All of that to say this...

The foundation of 'resurrection of the dead' does not mean a debate about a pre-tribulation or mid-tribulation rapture. The foundation is that there will be a resurrection of the dead. The details about 1st resurrection and 2nd doesn't really matter. The truth is all of us, every one of us, will have a resurrection from the dead and face judgement. V2 is written in the Greek as one thought: "...and both the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment."

They are seen as one unit. Not just resurrected. And not just judged. But as one unit, 'both the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment'. We are raised to stand before our maker and give an account. The rest is interesting to discuss, but not to the point of division or strife. We need to be sure we have that foundation, that focus.

For the Christian

We have judged ourselves and received the remedy, Jesus. So our judgement is not heaven or hell, but to stand before the Lord to receive accordingly for 'things done while we were in our (earth) *body.' But it is still a resurrection and judgment. Paul said if we carry ungodly character to the grave like envy, strife, divisions, they will be like wood, hay and stubble: They will be burned away when we stand before the Lord. "But you will be saved, yet as one who has been through a fire." (I Corinthians 3:3-15) *II Corinthians 5:10

That's why I'm not using this space to differentiate between the resurrections prophesied in scripture - prophecy is 20/20 in hindsight and we can always find reasons we don't agree with each other. The point the author makes is there is in fact a resurrection and a judgment in our future.

Popular in some circles...

...In recent years is the belief that hell/lake of fire and judgement is not eternal; that at some point the Lord will give those in hell or the lake of fire another chance, The question is asked how could a person be in torment forever when they only lived a few years on earth? But we could also ask why a Christian thinks they will spend eternity in heaven for just a few years of life on earth? The point is the author uses the word 'eternal judgment'. The word 'judgement' is 'krima' and means 'a verdict'. An eternal verdict.

Another hypothesis is that at some point of being in the lake of fire, the Father will simply snuff out the life of those individuals. They will cease to exist. To date however, we've seen spirit beings are eternal. Why wouldn't He just snuff out the life of Lucifer and the fallen angels? They are spirits, so eternal. It is foolish to hold to beliefs that cannot be proven by scripture, and even more foolish to debate that which we cannot prove, for these types of ideas are just ways for people to wrap their minds around who they know to be a good God, sending people to eternal suffering.

But if we step back and look at being with God the Father for eternity, and look at the concept of a lake of fire, it gets down to those who love righteousness as demonstrated in goodness, honesty, love, moral integrity and such. The only people in the Father's kingdom are those who love such things. Let me ask you this: If you go to a wonderful church full of intense worship and good teaching of the Word of God, how many of your unbelieving friends are eager to join you at each service? Exactly. And if a Satanist invited you to their coven meetings to worship the devil and nature and the spirits of nature, how eager are you to attend and keep attending that? Exactly.

Then how is it we do not understand that the only people in heaven are the ones who want to be there?

What is the Father to do with people who don't love Him and the above qualities that flow from Him? If someone loves dishonesty and taking advantage of people, lying and such, would they be happy in heaven? If someone is a user of people for their own gain, would they be happy in a kingdom culture that serves one another in transparency and purity of motive that looks for their neighbor's best interest?

A place had to be prepared, not created but prepared* for those who reject all that is God. They are spirit beings so they are eternal as far as we know and has thus far been demonstrated, but where to put those who reject love, joy, peace, moral uprightness, godliness, kindness, patience and so on? Wouldn't a God of love give them what they love? Wouldn't the only fair verdict be to give them what they desire? (*Matthew 25:41. Hell/lake of fire is the complete absence of God, a place He has withdrawn from, therefore it could not be created but only prepared.)

And such is the kingdom of darkness. That kingdom culture is all about everything that is NOT God. Instead of love there is hate and anger and fear. Instead of loving each other by demonstrating good will and kindness there is selfishness and such. In this earth life there are many things to dull one's senses to the torment of hell they are already in - remember that - the unsaved are already citizens of hell just as you are already a citizen of heaven: Distractions from the reality of hell include drugs, alcohol, gambling, eating, constant partying, and such. But once one dies, their spirit and soul go to the kingdom that person is a citizen of. That is hell. That is torment. But that is what they want.

We don't know the future...

By making the above points I am trying to get us thinking about the fact the only people in heaven will be those who want to be there because they love righteousness, uprightness, honesty, love, and all the godly traits which flow from the Father. Beyond that, we aren't told much in scripture.

But we do know the foundation of the teaching of Jesus is repentance from dead works, of faith towards God, of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. We do know that much of the body of Christ has never been taught these foundational truths, and therefore whatever foundation they do have, is incomplete. That makes whatever faith structure they've built on top of that foundation is as crooked and fragile as a building built without firm foundation.

I was a teacher at a Bible school that offered all kinds of 'tickle my ears' classes, but very few classes (mine only) on the basic foundations of the faith. So we had people thinking they were mature because they were learning so much, but when you listened to them pray or talk with them, they didn't have a clue when asked to explain what water baptism does for a person, or why we should be baptized. They didn't know that repentance is the first word of salvation as one turns to faith in God. So when they prayed, the faulty structure of faith they had built on their very incomplete and poor foundation became clear. They didn't know they were to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons. They didn't know they were to ask the Father, not Jesus, for requests. And so many other things like that.

Let us have a strong foundation in our faith, even if we have to tear down some things we've built on our faulty foundation and start building anew in those areas. Sometimes a little remodeling is good for the other all health of the 'building'. Blessings and new subject next week. Until then,
John Fenn

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