

The Basic Doctrines of Christianity

Our Judgement

First we need to understand that judgement is both positive and negative in its rewards.

Romans 14:10 [NIV] “... for we will all stand before God’s judgement seat.”

No human being will avoid this moment in their lives.

Romans 14:11-12 [NIV] “It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’” So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God.**”

This moment in our life will **not** be a “Hi God, remember me!!” type of moment.

John the apostle had a preview of this event in a vision.

Revelation 1:10, 12-17 [RSV] “I was in the Spirit [Holy Spirit giving the vision of a future event] on the Lord’s day [the day of Jesus Christ’s second coming], and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet [the sounding of trumpets is linked with Christ’s return] ... then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands on like the Son of Man [John recognised Jesus] clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round His breast [the cloths of a high priest]. His head and His hair were as white as wool, white as snow, [John was having a problem finding words to describe the glory and majesty he was seeing]. His eyes were like a flame of fire, His feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters [a roaring waterfall]. In His right hand He held seven stars, from His mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword [the word of God – see **Hebrews 4:12**], and His face was like the sun shining in its full strength. **When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead ...**”

The natural reaction to such a glorious and Holy being is to fall before them in awe and humble adoration.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 [NIV] “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. **For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.**”

Nothing we have ever done will be hid from the eyes of Jesus Christ on His judgement seat.

2 Corinthians 5:10 [NIV] “**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.**”

A time of reckoning of all we have accomplished or failed to do.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 [NIV] “**But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.**”

Very good advice from Paul.

This was linked to the taking of bread and wine during the communion service.

We need to use this reminder of our need for Christ’s mercy to take stock of our lives each time we take communion.

1 Corinthians 11:28-30 [NIV] *“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.”*

I feel the weak, sick and being asleep refers to our spiritual condition rather than physical.

We can be spiritually dead even when we are physically alive.

Genesis 2:15-17 [NIV] *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, **“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”**”*

When Adam and Eve ate of this tree, deciding for themselves what was good or evil, instead of looking to God for guidance, **they died spiritually.**

Genesis 3:23-24 [NIV] *“So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

Both Adam and Eve were cut off from God as have every rebellious human being ever since.

All of us need the reconciliation to God that we can only receive through Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 [NIV] *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, **not counting men’s sins against them.** And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Having been reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice it is our duty to preach in lifestyle and words this message from God for others to see and hear.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

When we do this we are preparing ourselves for the judgement day.

1 Peter 4:17-19 [NIV] *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”*

Referring to those who have been called by God to be Christians in each era, who will be judged at Christ’s return and the first resurrection.

Matthew 25:31-33 [NIV] *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. **All the nations will be gathered before him,** and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”*

Because of what we have already learnt about more than one resurrection and judgement, “*all the nations*”, refers only to Christians in those nations.

But note all these people were separated into sheep and goats. [Sheep are easily led, will follow the shepherd, goats are stubborn and rebellious].

Matthew 25:34-40 [NIV] *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*

These people were laying down their lives in servicing the needs of others.

Note:- They were unaware of this being anything special, it had become part of their new nature. They had taken on the attitude of a servant as they followed Christ’s example.

Matthew 20:25-28 [NIV] *“Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**”*

Jesus Christ is greatest because He serves the most.

Matthew 25:41-46 [NIV] *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ **“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”***

The result of these self-centred people who were Christians and were being judged in this first resurrection, was **not** good!

“Eternal” Greek “*aiōniōs*” – perpetual – forever – laying stress upon permanence – duration, either undefined but **not** endless – the judgement of God that has **no** appeal.

“Punishment” – Greek “*kōlasis*” – an eternal state.

Note it does **not** say “*punishing*” an ongoing state of pain and torment.

Mark 9:43-47 [NIV] *“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,”*

Drastic self-discipline is recommended to avoid this eternal punishment by fire in hell.

The Greek word translated hell is “*gēēnna*” – this is the valley of Hinnom that was situated just outside Jerusalem, where children had been sacrificed to the pagan God Molech by fire.

It was a place of unquenchable fire, whatever was burnt in this place ended up as ashes.

Revelation 20:14 [NIV] *“Then death [physical death and the physical grave were a thing of the past because all who had eternal life were spirit beings] and Hades [the grave] were thrown into the lake of fire [the “gēēnna” of Mark 9:43-47]. **The lake of fire is the second death.**”*

Hebrews 9:27 [NIV] *“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,”*

We all die once at some time then we face judgement the outcome of which is eternal life or eternal death, the second death from which there is **no** resurrection.

Genesis 2:8-9 [NIV] *“Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*

God created many different trees, some for food, others for decoration.

Two very special fruit trees were available, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Eating the fruit of the tree of life would have given Adam and Eve eternal life and they were free to do this.

Eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to be avoided.

Why?

Only God is omniscience [knowing all things] and hence **only** God can decide what is good and what is evil.

To eat of this tree is to challenge God’s Sovereignty.

Adam and Eve chose what was **not** available to them or good for them and as a result they were cut off from God and eternal life [the fruit of the tree of life].

Adam and Eve were left in a state of spiritual death and needed once again to be reconciled to their Creator.

As humans have continued to follow this example of rebellion against their Creator we all need this reconciliation or we face spiritual death and eventually eternal annihilation.

God initiated this reconciliation beginning with Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:6-7 [NIV] *“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**”*

The feeling of guilt at having rebelled against their Creator caused them to become embarrassed with the nakedness.

The effort to cover this embarrassment was very limited and of material that would very soon become ineffective.

Genesis 3:21 [NIV] *“**The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**”*

God provided a covering for their guilt the skin of an animal.

I believe the animal that died to provide these skins was a lamb as this would look forward in time to the covering of sin by the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, the lamb who sacrificed His life for us to be freed from sin and its guilt.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 [NIV] *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”*

Reconciliation to God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the message we are to proclaim to the world as Christians who are already reconciled to God.

To avoid a very negative judgement at Christ’s return we need to give up eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of what is good and evil.

Accept that the all-wise God decides what is good and what is evil and tells us in the words found in the Christian Bible.

Then preach the message of reconciliation to everyone we have contact with by first becoming reconciled to them, then encouraging them to become reconciled to God.

1 Peter 4:7-11 [NIV] *“The end of all things [physical] is near. [Today may be the last day of our physical life.] “Therefore [read what was explained before this scripture] be clear minded and self-controlled so that we can pray [expecting God to answer our prayers because they are within His will for us]. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins [our sins and others as we encourage them to be reconciled to God]. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very word of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides [through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit] so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen [so be it].”*

The six Christian doctrines all lead us to live a life as described above.

Note: Jesus Christ is central to each doctrine.

Let the apostle Peter have the final word.

2 Peter 1:3-11 [NIV] *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is short-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*