

## Lesson 34: 2LCF Chapter 31-32: Of the State of Man After Death, of the Resurrection, and the Last Judgment

*1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

**Revelation 21:1-4**

In this final lesson, we will survey the final two chapters of the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith, dealing with the state of man after death, the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment. This area of study has often been referred to by theologians as “eschatology”—the study of last things.

Perhaps few areas of study pique the interest of modern Christians more than the eschatology. The late Voddie Baucham once remarked that if a church wants to increase its weekly attendance, all it needs to do is advertise that it is teaching a series on the book of Revelation or the end times. In many cases, this is because the study of the end times has been sensationalized in many recent books and movies (ie. Tim Lahaye’s “Left Behind” series). However, it is also because many Christians simply don’t know what to believe about the end times. The book of Revelation is a sealed book to many, due to its many allusions to the Old Testament and its apocalyptic language.

It is noteworthy, however, that the events of end times have not always been perceived to be as enigmatic as they are today. While the Bible often uses symbolism and allusions when speaking about the end times, it is not altogether unclear on the subject. Perhaps this is why the framers of the Second London Baptist Confession did not alter a single word from the corresponding sections in Savoy Declaration or Westminster Confession of Faith. In a world that is now continuously swirling with various end times theories and speculations, it is remarkable that, just a few centuries ago, there was unanimous agreement between the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Particular Baptists on these facts.

### Chapter 31: Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

#### Outline

##### Paragraph 1

##### I. The intermediate state

##### A. The distinction between the body and soul in the intermediate state

##### 1. The body

##### 2. The soul

##### B. The distinction between the righteous and the wicked in the intermediate state

##### 1. The condition of the righteous

Their immediate entrance upon this condition

Their perfect holiness in this condition

Their delightful circumstances in this condition

- Their blessed companion in this condition
  - Their glorious privilege in this condition
  - Their incomplete blessedness in this condition
- 2. The condition of the wicked
  - Its location
  - Its circumstances
  - Its expectation
- 3. The absence of alternatives

Paragraphs 2-3

II. The final change

- A. The fact of the final change (paragraph 2)
  - 1. For those alive at the last day
  - 2. For those already dead at the last day
- B. The character of the final change
- C. The permanence of the final change
- D. The time of the final change
- E. The contrast in the final change (paragraph 3)
  - 1. The resurrection of the unjust
  - 2. The resurrection of the Just
    - Its pattern
    - Its agent
    - Its character<sup>405</sup>

**Paragraph 1.**

The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36; Eccles. 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23; Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24

**Paragraph 2.**

At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

1 Cor. 15:51,52; 1 Thess. 4:17; Job 19:26,27; 1 Cor. 15:42,43

**Paragraph 3.**

The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

Acts 24:15; John 5:28,29; Phil. 3:21

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<sup>405</sup> Samuel E. Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 440-41.

## **Exposition**

The three paragraphs found in chapter 31 of the Confession may be divided into two distinction sections. Paragraph one deals largely with the intermediate state of the humans after their death, but before the second advent of Christ. Paragraphs two and three deal with eschatology proper—namely the condition of the living and dead at Christ’s return (paragraph 2) and the resurrection of the unrighteousness to dishonour and the righteous to glory (paragraph 3).

### **The Intermediate State (Paragraph 1)**

Paragraph one helps us to understand what becomes of the righteous and the unrighteous after their death but before the return of Christ. This state of being has often been referred to as the intermediate state, because it is not the final destination of the human soul after death.<sup>406</sup> As it turns out, this world is not our home, but neither is heaven. The experience of the redeemed soul in heaven is a temporary one. The ultimate home of the Christian is the New Heavens and the New Earth, experienced in a resurrection body.

Jim Domm has rightly pointed out:

If we are to understand the biblical teaching concerning the intermediate state, two important distinctions must be kept in mind—the distinction between the body and the soul, and the distinction between the righteous and the wicked. Paragraph one of this chapter in the Confession summarizes very well the biblical teaching on the intermediate state in terms of these two distinctions.<sup>407</sup>

### **The Distinction Between the Body and the Soul**

The Confession clearly spells out that human beings consist of two basic components that are fundamental to our existence: a body and a soul. However, because these components are qualitatively different entities, their condition and location differ after death.<sup>408</sup> This is seen in passages like Matthew 10:28, where Jesus makes this two-fold distinction: “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

### **The Human Body**

There are several passages in Scripture that speak to the condition of the body after death. It is subject to decomposition and decay, until it returns to its original form as dust.

#### **Genesis 3:19**

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

#### **Acts 13:36**

For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption,

#### **James 2:26**

For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

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<sup>406</sup> Jim Domm, *Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead, in A New Exposition of the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, ed. Rob Ventura (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2022), 522.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

### **The Human Soul**

At the same time, the Bible speaks about the soul in completely different terms. While the body sees corruption and returns to the dust, the human soul neither dies nor sleeps, having 'an immortal subsistence,' it immediately return to God who gave it. This is seen in several places throughout Scripture:

#### **Ecclesiastes 12:6**

the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

#### **2 Corinthians 5:8**

Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

#### **Philippians 1:21-24**

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

Sam Waldron has pointed out that this section provides a helpful introduction to the biblical teaching on death that can be summarized in four propositions:

##### **1. Death, physical death, is a penal consequence of sin.**

As a penal consequence of sin death is a perversion of God's created order; part of the wreckage which man's fall made of God's perfect creation. See Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Romans 5:12-21; and I Corinthians 15:22.

##### **2. Death, physical death, is a radical and unnatural separation of the soul and body resulting in the decay and dissolution of the body and the nakedness of the soul.**

Neither the soul, nor the body was intended to exist apart from the other.

**3. Death, physical death, is a sign and sacrament of the future eternal death of Adam's race.** This significance of physical death is the sting of death', that is to say, its worst aspect. Death, the most horrible physical event conceivable, is the symbol of hell, the most dreadful calamity which may overtake any person. See Revelation 20:14; I Corinthians 15:56, 57; Hebrews 9:27.

**4. The sting of death has been removed for those in union with Christ.** They do not die in Adam. They die in Christ and, therefore, its sting, its most fearful significance, does not exist for them. See 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Revelation 14:13; Romans 8:37-39.<sup>409</sup>

### **The Distinction Between the Righteous and the Wicked**

During this intermediate state, Scripture clearly spells out a distinction between the righteous and wicked and their destinations during this time. During this time, the righteous and the wicked receive a foretaste of their eternal reward or punishment,

#### **The Righteous**

The Scriptures depict the destination of the righteous in the intermediate state as a place of paradise for the believer.

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<sup>409</sup> Samuel E. Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 444-45.

**Luke 23:43**

And he (Jesus) said to him (Criminal on the cross), "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

**Proverbs 14:32:**

The wicked is banished in his wickedness, But the righteous has a refuge in his death."

**Philippians 1:23**

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

**2 Corinthians 5:6-9**

6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

**Hebrews 12:22-24**

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

**Revelation 14:13**

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

On this theme, the Confession describes this condition of the righteous in the following ways:

1. This condition is immediate: "immediately return to God who gave them..." (Luke 23:43)
2. The believers soul is made perfect: "The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness..." (Hebrews 12:23)
3. They find themselves in a place of paradise: "are received into paradise..." (Luke 23:43)
4. They enjoy the companionship of Christ: "where they are with Christ..." (2 Corinthians 5:8)
5. They behold the face of God: "and behold the face of God in light and glory..." (1 John 3:2)
6. They await the redemption of their bodies and the consummation of all things: "waiting for the full redemption of their bodies..." (Romans 8:23)

Waldron comments on these realities:

The intermediate state is often viewed in the Scriptures as an anticipation or preliminary fulfilment of the blessedness of the eternal state. Thus there is a certain continuity between the intermediate state and the eternal state... [but] there is a balancing reality with reference to the intermediate state which also receives clear emphasis in the Scriptures. The intermediate state, though a state of perfect holiness and in one sense a state of perfect happiness, is from another perspective a state of incompleteness (Revelation 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:3-4).<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 459.

## **The Wicked**

The Confession describes the destination of the wicked as “hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day.” This aligns with the clear teaching of Scripture on the subject, though a few distinctions are necessary.

Jim Domm provides a helpful explanation:

It can be shown from Scripture that the term "heavens" refers to that which is above, and the term "Sheol" refers to that which is below. Just as the term "heaven" includes several ideas (the airy heavens, the starry heavens, the heaven of God), so the term "Sheol" includes several ideas (the grave, hell, pit). Thus, the Scripture speaks of the righteous who go to Sheol (the grave), but not to the Sheol of fire (hell). The righteous are also said to go to Paradise (heaven). The wicked, on the other hand, go to the Sheol of fire (hell) as well as Sheol (the grave).<sup>411</sup>

**Figure 31:1 - Heaven vs. Sheol<sup>412</sup>**

### ***Heaven of God / Paradise***



### ***Sheol of Fire***

## **Luke 16:19-31**

19 “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 *The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ 27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they*

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<sup>411</sup> Jim Domm, *Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead*, 526-27.

<sup>412</sup> This diagram is an adjusted version originally released by Samuel E. Waldron in *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 463.

also come into *this place of torment*.’ 29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

### **Acts 1:24-25**

24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

### **1 Peter 3:18-20**

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

### **2 Peter 2:9**

then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment

## **What About Purgatory?**

The Confession seeks to address the question of purgatory with this statement: “besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.”

Roman Catholics often argue for the doctrine of purgatory using two texts of Scripture: Matthew 12:32 (blasphemy against the Holy Spirit) and 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (testing by fire). Neither text teaches purgatory, but speaks about unforgiveness (in both ages) for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and test a man’s work (not purging the man) by fire. Instead, Scripture repeatedly teaches that the human soul goes to one of two places, either to paradise or to torment, and “a great chasm has been fixed” between the two, that none may cross over (Luke 16:26).

## **The Resurrection (Paragraphs 2-3)**

Paragraph two deals with the distinction between those who are alive at Christ’s parousia (presence or arrival) and those who have already died. Together with paragraph three, the bodily resurrection of just and the unjust is affirmed. Both will experience the resurrection of their “selfsame” bodies, though the quality of these resurrection bodies will be changed—the just to honour and the unjust to dishonour.

### **1 Corinthians 15:50-52**

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

What comes next will be discussed in the final chapter of the Confession.

## Chapter 32: Of the Last Judgment

Chapter 32 of the Confession asserts that there will be a final judgement at Christ's second coming. As a consequence of this judgment, every person will either be appointed to a place of everlasting life or of eternal punishment. Waldron has pointed out that “the three key elements in this teaching about a general judgement are its timing—the second coming of Christ; its scope—absolutely universal; its issues—everlasting life or eternal punishment.”<sup>413</sup>

### Outline

#### Paragraph 1

- I. The concept of the last judgement
  - A. Its scriptural summary (derived from Acts 17:31)
    - 1. Its Author: 'God' (the Father)
    - 2. Its occasion: 'an appointed day'
    - 3. Its object: 'the world'
    - 4. Its manner: in righteousness'
    - 5. Its mediator: by Jesus Christ'
  - B. Its messianic instrumentality (John 5:21-23)
  - C. Its absolute universality
  - D. Its dual activity: giving and receiving'

#### Paragraph 2

- II. The goal of the last judgement
  - A. The identity of the goal
    - 1. The manifestation of God's mercy in the salvation of the elect
    - 2. The manifestation of God's justice in the damnation of the reprobate
  - B. The realization of the goal
    - 1. For the righteous
    - 2. For the wicked

#### Paragraph 3

- III. The impact of the last judgement (practically and presently)
  - A. Of what is known and certain about the judgement
    - 1. It is a deterrent from sin for all men
    - 2. It is a consolation in adversity for the saints
  - B. Of what is unknown and uncertain about the judgement
    - 1. Watchfulness against sin (Luke 12:35-40)
    - 2. Eagerness for Christ's coming (Revelation 22:20)<sup>414</sup>

#### Paragraph 1.

God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

Acts 17:31; John 5:22,27; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccles. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:10,12; Matt. 25:32-46

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., 483.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 482-83.

## **Exposition**

Paragraph one of the chapter provides an overview of the final judgment. This section may be divided into five or six parts (author, occasion, objects, manner, mediator/agent, activities). Jim Domm explores these in some detail below:

### **1. Its Author**

The author of the final judgement is God the Father.

#### **Acts 17:30-31**

30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,  
31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world...

#### **Romans 14:10-12**

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

### **2. Its Occasion**

There is a day of judgment that is coming. This will take place on the "last day."

#### **John 12:48**

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

### **3. Its Objects**

The Confession asserts that God will judge the world. From Scripture, we see that this includes, the righteous, the unrighteous, and even the angels.

#### **Ecclesiastes 3:17**

God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.

#### **Jude 6**

6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day

### **4. Its Manner**

God will execute his judgment in perfect righteousness, according to his own immutable character.

#### **Psalms 9:8**

7 But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, 8 and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.

### **5. Its Agent/Mediator**

The Confession notes that "all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ..."

#### **John 5:22**

22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son

#### **1 Timothy 4:1**

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead...

## 6. Its Activities

The Confession states that all will appear before Christ's "to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil."

### 2 Corinthians 5:10

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

### Matthew 16:27

27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

### Romans 2:6-11

6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.<sup>415</sup>

After reviewing the activities of God's judgement, some may ask how it is that God's judgment can be based upon good or evil deeds. Sam Waldron explains:

[This] presents an unanswerable argument against the popular easy-believism. It is commonly taught in our day that there are at least two different judgements: one for Christians and one for the unsaved. Those who have made their decision for Christ go to the judgement for Christians. At this judgement their deeds do not determine whether they are eternally saved or not, for, it is said, salvation is by grace and not works. Their deeds only determine how many rewards and crowns they will receive in glory. In this way it is maintained that our deeds have absolutely nothing to do with our basic destinies...

What is wrong with this teaching? The Bible, first of all, everywhere makes abundantly clear that exactly what is at stake in the judgement of our deeds is whether we are believers or not. Second, the Bible everywhere makes perfectly clear that both believers and unbelievers appear at the same judgement (Matthew 25:31-46, Romans 2:6-16). To assert, as many do, that such teaching is legalism or salvation by works is to disclose that one is ignorant of fundamental aspects of the gospel itself. Salvation is not by works, but its whole point is to produce works. Where one's lifestyle is not radically altered, there no gracious salvation has been at work.

Judgement proceeds on the basis of our deeds, because our deeds taken as a whole, manifest our character and our character manifest our relationship to Christ and the presence or absence of faith in Him.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Jim Domm, *Of the Last Judgment*, in *A New Exposition of the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, ed. Rob Ventura (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2022), 536-37.

<sup>416</sup> Samuel E. Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 485-86.

## **Excursus: The Sequence of Christ's Return and the Last Judgment**

See Appendix - Millennial Charts

### **Paragraph 2.**

The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who do not know God, and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Rom. 9:22,23; Matt. 25:21,34; 2 Tim. 4:8; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess. 1:7-10

### **Paragraph 3.**

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will he have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen.

2 Cor. 5:10,11; 2 Thess. 1:5-7; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Rev. 22:20

## **Exposition**

Paragraphs two and three deal with the goal, reality, and impact of the last judgment

### **The Goal of the Last Judgment (Paragraph 2a)**

Domm writes: "The goal of the last judgment is twofold: the manifestation of God's mercy in the salvation of the elect, and the manifestation of His justice in the damnation of the reprobate."<sup>417</sup> Man is not the centrepiece of God's judgment; God and His glory are the centrepiece. Domm continues:

Let us never forget that the ultimate goal of the last judgment doesn't have to do with man, but God. It is for the manifestation of His mercy and His justice. We sometimes hear people saying, "If God were truly good, why doesn't He do something about all the terrible things that go on in the world?" He is and He will. He's doing something about it right now and He will do more. We have no right to question God's ways or timing, especially in light of the fact that the curse was introduced by our rebellion and disobedience.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Jim Domm, *Of the Last Judgment*, 538.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, 539.

## The Realization of the Goal (Paragraph 2b)

<b>The Last Judgment for the Righteous</b>	<b>The Last Judgment for the Wicked</b>
<p><i>then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord</i></p> <p><b>Matthew 25:21</b> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'</p> <p><b>John 5:24</b> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.</p> <p><b>Romans 2:6-10</b> <sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.</p> <p><b>2 Timothy 4:8</b> Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.</p> <p><b>Revelation 21:3-4</b> <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."</p>	<p><i>the wicked, who do not know God, and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.</i></p> <p><b>Matthew 25:41</b> <sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'</p> <p><b>2 Thessalonians 1:6-9</b> <sup>6</sup> since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup> and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might</p> <p><b>Matthew 3:12</b> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."</p> <p><b>Mark 9:43, 48</b> <sup>43</sup> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire... <sup>48</sup> 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'</p> <p><b>Revelation 14:9b-11</b> "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger; and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."</p>

From these passages, it is evident to see that at the last judgment, the Christian will receive eternal life in the presence of his God, while the unbeliever will come to experience everlasting destruction in a place of eternal conscious torment.<sup>419</sup> A.A. Hodge adds:

The strongest terms which the Greek language affords are employed in the New Testament to express the unending duration of the penal torments of the lost. The same words... are used to express the eternal existence of God (1 Timothy 1:17; Romans 1:20; 16:26), of Christ (Revelation 1:18), of the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 9:14), and the endless duration of the happiness of the saints.<sup>420</sup>

### **The Impact of the Last Judgment (Paragraph 3)**

The Confession notes that Christ would have us to be persuaded that a day of judgment is coming for the following purposes:

#### **1) To deter all men from sin**

James Renihan writes:

Christ, the one who will sit on the throne of judgement, would have everyone understand, as a means of deterring sin, that the awesome day is coming. As Hebrews 10:31 states, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," for this all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful God (2.1-3) will hold sinners accountable for their actions. The certainty that one will stand before His holy bar ought to temper the inclination to sin-though sinners will only act according to their nature (5.2-4). Nevertheless, Christ's command is that people be persuaded of the horror of standing before God, naked and alone as a sinner, on that day (2 Corinthians 5.10-11). Sinner, beware.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Samuel Waldron makes a compelling case for this in a Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, 488-89. He writes: The Scriptures positively assert that the sufferings of the damned are eternal (see Matthew 18:8, 25:41, 46, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Hebrews 6:2, Jude 6, Revelation 14:10,11). Those who deny the doctrine of endless torment have frequently objected to it by arguing, "The terms translated by the words, "eternal" or "everlasting," in these passages may in some cases designate limited or finite duration? To this objection several responses may be made:

1. While it is true that in some instances this language may be used of finite duration and may simply mean 'age-long' or something like that, it is undoubtedly true that, if the biblical writers wished to express the idea of eternal duration, these were the best and only words available to them. Says Hodge, "The strongest terms which the Greek language affords are employed in the New Testament to express the unending duration of the penal torments of the lost."
2. In the vast majority of the uses of such language the meaning is that of endless duration. When used of the age to come and not this age, it universally refers to endless duration. Shedd says, "In by far the greater number of instances, aion and aionios refer to the future infinite age and not to the present finite age; to eternity and not to time." Says Stuart, "In all the instances in which aionios refers to future duration it denotes endless duration..."
3. The language which refers to the eternal blessedness of the righteous is strictly parallel to that which refers to the eternal torment of the wicked. Thus, any argument which denies the eternity of the punishment of the wicked also undercuts the eternal duration of the blessedness of the righteous (cf. Matthew 25:46).

<sup>420</sup> A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1869, 1958), 393.

<sup>421</sup> James M. Renihan, *To the Judicious and Impartial Reader: A Contextual-Historical Exposition of the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, 588.

## **2) For the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity**

A day is coming when God will right all wrongs; do away with sin, sickness, death, and the devil; He will vindicate His children; He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and He will dwell with them forever!

## **3) To shake off all carnal security and be always watchful**

Because the day is unknown to men and they know not at what hour the Lord will come, Again, Renihan writes:

Although the day is sure to come, its timing has not been revealed. Christ's purpose in this is plain: when sinners understand that the day may come quickly, they should flee the coming wrath and find succor in the forgiveness of sins found in Christ. Carnal security, which is confidence in the flesh, produces lax living. Watchfulness, however, calls to holiness. The uncertainty of the timing of the day is not simply a warning to unbelievers, but also a spur to believers to wait anxiously for its arrival. Weary of the world and its evil ways, the believer ought to long for the second advent and the events it brings to pass.<sup>422</sup>

## **4) That we would be prepared to say, "Come Lord Jesus; come quickly. Amen."**

Believers should long for and seek to hasten the day of Christ's return. Peter writes, "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, *waiting for* and *hastening* the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!" (2 Peter 3:11-12).

For the believer, it is not a day to fear, but to eagerly wait for with hopeful expectation. Nevertheless, many believers experience a feeling of tension in this. Domm writes:

Isn't it ironic that those who have no real grounds for hope and confidence in the Day of Judgment are often so casual about it, while those who have every reason to anticipate that day with joy and confidence are often gripped with fear and dread as they think of it? If you profess Christ, but have weak assurance, and tremble at the thought of the approaching Day of Judgment, what does the Word of God indicate should be your attitude as you think of it? These texts are clear. The Christian's homecoming will be a time of great joy.<sup>423</sup>

But, William Gurnall offers us great comfort.

Let thy hope of heaven conquer thy fear of death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to die who hopest to live by dying? Is the apprentice afraid of the day when his time will be out? He that runs a race, of coming too soon to his goal? The pilot troubled when he sees his harbor? Death is all this to thee! Thy indenture expires and thy jubilee is come; thy race is run, and the crown won, and is sure to drop on thy head when thy soul goes out of thy body. Thy voyage, how troublesome soever it was in its sailing, is now happily finished, and death doth but land thy soul on the shore of eternity at thy heavenly Father's door, never to be put to sea more.<sup>424</sup>

*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid., 589.

<sup>423</sup> Jim Domm, *Of the Last Judgment*, 540.

<sup>424</sup> William Gurnall, *Gleanings*, 133