

²⁴ For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD!

- I. Why should we be prepared?
- II. When are we prepared?

To you who live in the expectation of Christ's return,

A king by the name of Hezekiah ruled over Israel in the days of Isaiah the prophet. You can read about him in the Second Book of Kings. Hezekiah became ill and his illness became worse. He was on his death bed. At that time God send his prophet to Hezekiah with this message: **the Lord says, put your house in order. You are going to die.**

It still happens today. A person goes to the doctor for some tests because he has not been feeling up to par. With the test results in his hand the doctor tells his patient that the news is not good. The tests show that he has only a short time to live. At such a time the advice the Lord gave to Hezekiah is good advice. **PUT YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER.**

What does it mean to put your house in order? It means that you should put your financial house in order so that there is an easy transfer of assets to your beneficiaries. It means to sit down and speak with those near and dear to you and tell them what is in store for you. Tell them that shortly the Lord will call you to himself. They need not be afraid for you because Jesus has saved you from all your sins and He will come to take you to Himself. You will want to settle any differences that remain between you and others. And you will want to come to the Lord confessing your sins and trusting in His forgiving love in Christ Jesus.

When you think about it, shouldn't this be the way we live each day? Shouldn't we always be prepared to meet our God in judgment?

The thought raises the question, for each of us: **ARE YOU PREPARED TO MEET YOUR GOD?** To answer this question we will need to ask two other questions. The first is; why does a person need to prepare to meet God in Judgment? The second question is; when is a person prepared for this meeting?

I. Why should we be prepared?

The reason a person needs to be prepared is because he or she is born into this world completely unprepared. Jesus told Nicodemus, **that which is born of the flesh is flesh.** In other words sinful people give birth to sinful children. This is clear from the very beginning. Once Adam and Eve fell into sin and disobedience, they could no longer bear a child that would be born in the image of God, an image which they had lost in the fall. This is emphasized by the fact that Cain murdered his brother Abel. The Bible actually reports that when Seth was born, he was born in the image of Adam.

The text says, **man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment.** These words speak directly to the point as to why a person needs to prepare to meet his God. This judgment will take place on the basis of the Law of God as it is recorded in the Bible. It is outlined in the Ten Commandments.

The very fact that there is going to be an arraignment before our all-knowing God, carries with it the implication that the judgment may be a happy one or it may be sad. The judgment will either be that a person is righteous or he is unrighteous. Without this alternative there would be no reason for judgment. So, let's take a look at the judgment.

The general philosophy of the world around us is that we are only going to live once and we should squeeze as much juice of enjoyment out of the fruit of our life each day as we can. In this context, enjoyment is defined as living to satisfy my own desires and my own passions. Life is a self-indulgent process which keeps us soaked in our personal excesses. The world left to itself is exemplified by the society of man at the time of the flood. Or take a look at how far down people had slid on the moral scale in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These are examples of natural man left to his own way of life.

We don't need to study the mortality tables of the insurance companies to know that every day we live, we move one day closer to the intersection of our judgment. We also know that there is no remedy for the mortality to which we are all subject. Death is one of the consequences of sin. Just knowing this does not make us prepared for the event. We also know that there is nothing we can do to turn away God's anger in judgment. When God applies the standard of his commandments to the conduct of our lives, we are all going to stand condemned.

Remember what the law says: **The wages of sin is death.** The law says, **the soul that sins, it shall die.** The law says, **All have sinned.** It says, **there is none that has done good, no not one.** As a matter of fact, all our attempts to make ourselves acceptable to God only bring on more of His wrath. This is where we all are by nature. We are sitting on the precipice of eternal disaster. This is why we need to be prepared for judgment.

II. When are we prepared?

Now look at what the holy writer says here, **“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ... so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”** Our heavenly Father has provided the High Priest for us to purify us for that day when we must meet our God in judgment. He is described here as the High Priest who did everything required in the Old Testament for a high priest to do. But there is a difference.

Instead of entering into the most holy place in the temple built here in Jerusalem by human hands, He entered into the heaven itself to represent us in God's presence. This is the real thing. He did not enter into the copy of the sanctuary of God. He entered in to the reality of heaven. He did not enter in repeatedly the way the priest had to do at the temple in Jerusalem. He entered once and for all. Neither did He bring the blood of a goat as an offering of atonement. He came with His own blood for atonement for all people.

The reason this Priest didn't go into the model, but entered heaven itself and did not need to carry the blood of a sacrificial animal is because He is the LORD Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God and He was bringing His own blood as the atoning sacrifice for all sin.

Jesus Christ is God's answer for all our imperfection and sin. Here is the perfect life and here is the innocent suffering and death of the Christ- all offered to God on our behalf.

It also says of this Jesus, **and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.** When are you prepared to meet your God? When you are waiting for His return. A person begins his watch for the coming of Christ when he believes that Jesus came the first time and redeemed the world. When you believe this, you will also believe that Jesus is coming again to give you the reality of what you now possess by faith.

Are you prepared to meet your God? The answer is, Yes, *I believe that Jesus Christ, true God begotten of the Father from eternity and also true Man born of the Virgin Mary is my Lord. He has redeemed me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver; but with His holy precious blood; that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as He is risen from death, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.*

Having such a faith is being prepared to meet your God at any time. Amen