

Judgment After Death....Really?

As Christians we confess the sufficiency of Scripture for our faith. The Bible informs us of all God wants us to know about everything and especially our Christianity. It is not only sufficient but authoritative. The Bible not only speaks, but speaks correctly to all the issues it addresses. It is sufficient – all we need; and authoritative – divine. It is at this very point that Rob begins his departure from orthodox Christianity. Behind all the ‘weird’ stuff he believes he does not think the Bible is sufficient and thus, not authoritative on all matters of our faith. Let me provide you with three reasons why, believing the Bible is sufficient and authoritative; I think physical death is the deadline for trusting Christ.

1 – In the garden of Eden God forewarned our first parents about the judgement of death. In Eden God clearly stated that disobedience would lead to a judgment in death (Genesis 2:17). It isn't as though judgment after death should take us by surprise or is a new doctrine or one without scriptural precedent. God is wholly righteous so he doesn't take his word back and what he says will come to pass will actually happen. So the first reason why grace is not available after death is because God established death as judgement. So even today death is God's judgement for sin. Ezekiel 18:4 says the soul that sins will die. Romans 6:23 tells us the wages of sin is death. God cannot/will not offer another opportunity for grace after he's already established death as judgement.

2 – Hebrews 9:27-28 reads “**27** And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, **28** so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” Most people only know and quote verse 27 which, in and of itself is true. However, the real force of verse 27 is verse 28. The “just as” of verse 27 points to the basis of verse 27. “Just as” judgment comes after death, “so” Christ was once offered for our sins and will come again. The verses center on “Just as...so.” If verse 27 is false then verse 28 is false. The writer

certainly believed that Jesus died for our sins and will return. He believed is so much that he linked it to the certainty of judgement after death. If, according to the author, judgement does not occur after death then Jesus did not die for our sins and will not return. But, he was so sure of judgement after death *and* so sure that his readers were familiar with the concept and believed it that he based the Lord's sacrificial death and certain return on the concept of judgement after death. So, unlike Rob, I believe that judgement will occur after death because the Bible author declared it so and more, declared it so as a certainty equal to and possessing the same validity, force and essentiality as a Christian doctrine as the death and return of Christ.

3 – Jesus taught that judgement occurred after death. In the parable of the rich man he said “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” (Luke 16:23-24). Because Jesus is God, omniscient (knowing everything) and truthful, his comments about what happens to people (either saved or unsaved) must be truthful.

We can always ‘suppose’ about things but at some point we either trust God or think our intelligence can provide us with a knowledge superior to or different from God's. But this is the very thing that got Adam and Even into trouble. They suspected they knew something about life and death that God didn't; for instance, that they wouldn't die if they ate of the fruit. From beginning to end the Bible consistently warns us about creating a worldview separate from or different from God's word. This is what Rob is doing. It isn't anything new. It's as old as the first couple. The Scripture warns, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” (Proverbs 14:12). Nonetheless, our fallenness continues to tempt us to disbelief and disobedience. It really comes down to our view of the Bible. Is it a sufficient revelation? Is it an authoritative revelation? For Rob the answer is no. This means he has to look for Christian truth outside of and apart from the Bible. In effect, at that point, anything anybody says could be considered as true.

How, at any point after leaving the Bible, do we decide on what is true? Usually it becomes a matter of picking and choosing what I like, what is pleasing to me? Again, that sounds very familiar to Adam and Eve's sin in the garden; the sin that got us all into this mess and continues to 'damn' people who think they can figure out a better way than reading, believing and obeying God's Word.

Each day I try to read a short one-page devotion by Charles Spurgeon in a book called "Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith" by Spurgeon. Today's reading is "Then thou shalt walk in thy way safely, and they foot shall not stumble." Spurgeon writes "That is to say, if we follow the ways of wisdom and holiness we shall be preserved by them...Our greatest danger lies in ourselves...Alas! our worst peril is our own carelessness." At 54 I have learned not to walk by my own wisdom, not because I'm smart but because I've been dumb enough to try to it my own way

Finally, may I recommend this review of this book? As well, you might consider buying the book itself. It will more definitively answer questions about hell.

<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2011/03/18/toward-a-better-understanding-of-hell/>