

**Excerpts from Life-study of First Peter,
Message 28 & 29**

**CHRISTIAN LIFE AND ITS SUFFERINGS
(10 & 11)**

Bible Verses:

1 Pet. 4:12 Beloved, do not think that the fiery ordeal among you, coming to you for a trial, is strange, as if it were a strange thing happening to you;

1 Pet. 4:17 For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?

In [1 Corinthians 11] verses 31 and 32 Paul goes on to say, “But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined that we may not be condemned with the world.” This indicates that if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. The

judgment in verse 32 is not for eternal perdition. In this verse, to be judged by the Lord indicates that when we, the believers, those who love the Lord Jesus, are judged by the Lord, it is that we may not be condemned with the world. To be judged by the Lord is temporary, but to be condemned with the world is eternal. The condemnation of the world is for eternal perdition. But the judgment we suffer today is for dispensational discipline, not for eternal perdition.

We should not be ignorant of what the Bible says concerning God's judgment. Many of today's Christians do not know anything about God's dispensational discipline. When they read about judgment, they may say, "Oh, we have been redeemed by the Lord, and we can never be judged. It is heretical for anyone to teach that a Christian can be judged by God." As we have seen, this is not a heretical teaching or anyone's personal teaching. This is the teaching of the holy Word. The matter of God's dispensational

discipline was taught by both Peter and Paul. Therefore, we need to believe and accept this teaching from the pure Word of God.

According to the Bible, God in His government carries out His universal administration by different kinds of judgment. We should not have the concept that God is not judging the world today. God's judgment is everywhere. Every nation is under His judgment. According to the record in Matthew 25 , at the time of the Lord's coming back, all the living ones will be judged. At the end of the millennium, all the dead unbelievers will be judged by the Lord at the white throne. Thus, there will be the judgment of the living and the dead.

Between these two judgments, there will be a period of a thousand years, the millennium. Immediately before the beginning of the millennium there will be the judgment of all the living nations... After the millennium, the Lord Jesus will judge the dead unbelievers at the white

throne. At that time, He will also judge the demons. Then the unbelievers and the demons will be cast into the lake of fire. This judgment will be the judgment for eternal perdition.

We, the saved ones, will not have any share in the judgment for eternal perdition. There is no need for us to be afraid of that judgment. As far as judgment for eternal perdition is concerned, God has passed over us in Christ as our Passover Lamb. However, we should not think that, because God has passed over us concerning this judgment, we could not have any problems and will not suffer the judgment of God's dispensational discipline.

Our situation as believers in Christ can be compared to that of the children of Israel. They experienced the Passover, and they were redeemed by the Passover lamb. After they made their exodus from Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they enjoyed the living water out of the cleft rock and the heavenly manna. They saw the miracles God did for them. Nevertheless, out of more

than two million people who came out of Egypt, only two, Joshua and Caleb, escaped the judgment of God leading to death. All the remainder, including Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, died under God's judgment. This does not mean that they were under God's curse. It means that they were under the judgment of God's dispensational discipline. As we have pointed out, this kind of judgment is not for eternal perdition. It is related absolutely to God's dispensational dealing. Moses, of course, was saved. God intended to preserve his body so that Moses could appear on the mount of transfiguration to be with the Lord. But because Moses made a mistake, God apportioned to him a particular disciplinary judgment.

Because many Christians today are veiled by traditional teachings, I would urge you to come back to the clear and pure Word of God, which is unveiling and enlightening.

God's judgment for dispensational discipline is absolutely different from the Catholic concept

of purgatory. Many years ago, I was falsely accused of teaching a doctrine of purgatory. The teaching concerning purgatory is false and heretical. But to teach the matter of disciplinary judgment, a discipline that is dispensational, is altogether according to the Scriptures. This teaching has nothing to do with purgatory, and it certainly is not heretical.

We need to see the truth concerning God's judgment and have a holy fear of God.

Among the early apostles there was a strong belief that the Lord Jesus would come back soon to judge the unbelieving sinners, who are ungodly and disobey His gospel (2 Thes. 1:6-9). Peter's word here should refer to this.

We may regard the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the Lord's coming back as two great mountain peaks seen by the apostles. On the day of Pentecost, when God poured out His Spirit for salvation, the Lord opened the door for all sinners to be saved. First, the door was opened for the Jews and then, for

the Gentiles. Expecting the Lord Jesus to come back soon, the apostles did not realize clearly that there was a gap between the “peak” of Pentecost and the second peak of the Lord’s coming back. If we read Paul’s writings, we shall see that he also expected the Lord Jesus to come back soon. The gap between Pentecost and the Lord’s coming was not made clear to the early apostles. When they asked the Lord Jesus about the time of His coming, He told them that this was something known only by the Father (Acts 1:6-7). The Father kept this matter as a secret within Him. Therefore, not even the Lord Jesus was free to reveal this to the disciples. As we have pointed out, the apostles could see only the two peaks.

Perhaps you have had the experience of seeing two mountain peaks from a distance. You did not realize at first that between these two peaks there was actually a large gap. It seemed that the two mountain peaks were next to each other. Later you may have realized that these two mountain peaks were not in the same mountain

range. I would use this as an illustration of the gap between the day of Pentecost and the day of the Lord's coming back.

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