

Judgment in the House of God

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christ as the house of God and the need for judgment in the church to remove the old man and its corrupt desires.

Scripture: Matthew 1:23, John 2:19, Romans 6:4, 1 Corinthians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 1:23, Ephesians 4:22, 1 Peter 4:17, Revelation 3:21

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Christ's Church"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches on the importance of judgment beginning in the house of God, emphasizing the need to put off the old self corrupted by deceitful desires and put on the new self created in righteousness. He explains that the true house of God is Jesus Christ Himself, the embodiment of God's fullness, and that judgment in God's house refers to the church where Christ dwells. The sermon delves into the significance of Christ as the standard and foundation for God's house, highlighting the new humanity believers partake in through Him.

Transcript

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God..." (1 Pet. 4:17). "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts... and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22, 24). "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:11-13).

The texts we are considering provide for us a Biblical foundation from which we may clearly see the several aspects of the nature of that judgment in God's house into which we will look in our present study. In 1 Peter 4:17, we have a very definite word from the Lord that there is an inevitable action by God which will be seen in the form of judgment. According to Peter, this action of judgment will begin first in the house of God. Now, we must first determine where, or rather who the house of God is, if we are to be properly prepared.

Does the house of God refer to the nation of Israel, or to a particular physical building or church edifice? Well, the answer to each of these questions, according to the revelation of the New Testament is no! Christ: The True House of God Essentially speaking, the true house of God, that place where the fullness

of God dwells, is none other than the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. Remember one of His names is Emmanuel, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Also, when referring to His body He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19).

Paul saw Jesus as the revelation, the unveiling of the fullness of Deity in a human body! Christ Himself was and is the true temple, the true house or abiding place of the eternal Godhead. Solomon declared that God does not dwell in temples or gorgeous edifices which are made by the hands of men! God has established for all eternity that the fullness of who He is will be seen in the man Christ Jesus our Lord. Having established now the identity of the true house of God, we must still look further into the judgment which will begin therein.

Surely Christ in His person is not under the judgment of God. He has once and for all borne the wrath of God on Calvary's dark cross and is now exalted far above the heavens, set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high! In order to properly understand the nature of the judgment to occur in God's house, we must see that this "house of God" relates to Christ's body, the church. You see beloved, the essential place where God dwells -- in Christ -- has never changed nor will it ever.

God will never extend His dwelling to include some other person or people in addition to or apart from Christ. Therefore we must see that the church, which Paul clearly teaches is the temple or house of God wherein God abides by His Holy Spirit, is only such because it is the place where Christ dwells. Only as a person becomes a partaker of Christ's new life can he be truly said to be indwelt by God. God only dwells in men on the basis of Christ's finished work and the receiving of His indwelling within the renewed spirit of the blood-washed believer.

We received an altogether different kind of life when we were born from above and placed into Christ. Christ: The Standard for God's House In the new birth, God sets aside all that we are in the old creation, i.e., that which is in us which corresponds to the sin nature and all its evil passions. This is the meaning of our being identified with Christ in His death. Paul tells us in Rom. 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..." Because of our new identity and our being placed into Christ, God sees our old identity (which was dead in sin and under its power) as actually dead.

We are dead to the old, as to our relatedness to it, by virtue of being newly related to and deriving our life, nature and character from the last Adam, our Lord Jesus, who came to dwell within in order to express the newness of His life in and through us! When we were dead in sin, our identity, our life, nature and character were derived from the first Adam whose life was perverted and corrupted by Satan's poison and we were alienated and completely separated from God. Now, in Christ Jesus, we are related on an entirely new basis!

By virtue of being translated out from the arena of the flesh (which is of the old creation) and planted into Christ, we are dead to who and what we were previously. Now He becomes our new life, who is the head over and life of the new creation! Wow, what an incredible transition! How the eyes of our heart need to be flooded with light from the Holy Spirit to be enabled to see this glorious transfer from one kind of life into the very life of Jesus our Lord! We are delivered from one kind of humanity which belongs to the first Adam and brought into an altogether different kind of humanity.

He becomes our very life, and by the power of the Spirit we draw our character from Him. We escape the corruption that is in the flesh and all that belongs to the old, and are renewed day by day. Christ: The Last Adam, the Beginning of a New Humanity You see dear saint, all that Jesus is in His glorified humanity is

given to the church so that He might be expressed through her. (Of course, Jesus does not give to the church those attributes which belong to Him as Deity, as God the Son.

Those are incommunicable qualities and attributes which belong exclusively to Him!) God, in His Son, the man Christ Jesus, not only relates Himself to us as Redeemer to the redeemed, taking on the form of a man to be a merciful and gracious High Priest, but, in addition, He imparts to us the new life of which He is the source. He displays in Himself as Son of Man, our Kinsman and Brother, what that life is destined to become in its full potential, in the church. "Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23).

Remember beloved, we are included in the last Adam. It is very significant that Jesus came as the last Adam, for in His humanity we see the fullness of that kind of life of which we are called to be partakers! I refer not exclusively to His humanity when He walked as Jesus of Nazareth because in His resurrection, ascension and glory He is yet a glorified man. By this we see God's intention for the last Adam and all who are included in Him. Remember Jesus, the man, never ceased from being God.

Now, He is the glorified man -- yet being God, in the full deity of His eternal existence within the Godhead. Our being one with Christ, sharing in His full humanity through the new birth, is never intended to be understood as becoming who He is in His person as the God-man. We are not making Jesus less than the Eternal Son. Nor are we attempting to teach that we partake of or become what He is in deity. Rather, by the help of God's grace and by His Spirit we desire to see the significance of Christ as the very life of His people.

He is made for us all the life, character, fruit, etc., which our Father in heaven seeks to find in us as His new, corporate man. Jesus has become the representative head of a new, redeemed humanity. He Himself secured their salvation through His own precious blood. He Himself is the head of the new creation, the church. Yet, in addition to these wonderful truths, Christ is the prototype Son (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10-13; 2 Cor. 3:17,18) from which the new creation man, the body of Christ, must draw their very life and character.

As Son of Man, Jesus reveals the beauty to which the church, being a part of the last Adam and included into His humanity, is being conformed. This is what it means to be in Christ, beloved! The church has become one spirit with Christ, meaning that we are joined to Him by the new birth and He becomes to us the last Adam from whom we are made anew, united to all that He is, as the source of all we shall be in Him. So in one way we truly shall be as He is, fully and entirely expressing all He is as representative man, displaying before the heavens God's intention for His redeemed ones who are joined in spirit to Him, the head.

However, as to who He is in the Godhead -- we are forever distinct. He remains head over the church, to be praised forever as the author of our salvation and to whom alone belong glory, honor, power, praise, worship, dominion and adoration! So we see on the one hand an awesome oneness into which we are called in the fellowship of God's Son and yet, on the other hand the exceeding greatness of Himself over us, beyond us, as the King Eternal, God, our Creator and Sustainer! What an incredible salvation is ours in Christ -- all for the glory of God!

It is important to always recognize the things which differ and properly distinguish between them. Overcomers are called to "sit with [Him] in [His] throne," will be given "power over the nations," and "shall rule [the nations] with a rod of iron... even as I [Jesus] received of my Father" (Rev. 3:21a, 2:26b, 27).

Here we see the sharing of His throne, His power, His authority, but the seat of this authority is in Himself as Son of God, Son of Man -- Eternal God! He will be giving the executive commands and exercising the executive authority, yet through His redeemed sons, those who are overcomers.

In this way we share and are one, yet differ in an essential distinction from what He is as deity. We are sons made after the same image as the firstborn Son, our Lord. The Church in Christ: Dead unto Sin, Crucified to Self, Alive to God Well, hopefully we are now able to see that Christ is the house of God and that His life in us is the basis of our being called "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 6:19). Now what we must see is that the judgment which is coming to the house of God is related to the church and what is in her which is not according to Christ.

This brings us to the Scripture which we quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts... and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22, 24). A good companion verse would be found in Romans 6:11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here we see that because we are in Christ and He is in us we are to reckon, or consider, what we are after the flesh life and all its evil, corrupt desires, passions and proclivities as dead, crucified and unclean -- to be disowned, resisted and starved! All that belongs in the house of God is the expression of Christ -- His mind, His power, His character, His love for the Father, His hatred against sin, His purity toward the brethren, etc. God does not deem the activities, deeds, wisdom, planning, pride or craftiness of what we are in ourselves to be acceptable in His church.

Christ alone is to be the sum total of the church's life and expression. When we look at the first letter to the Corinthian church, we see the havoc which results when God's temple is filled with the deeds of the natural man, the works of the old creation of the flesh. Paul's vehement reaction to this travesty was the preaching of the cross of Christ and Him crucified as the only way to rectify the problem. Remember how terribly the church in Corinth was sinning? Why? Because they, the temple of God in which Christ dwelt, were yet seeking to live by and express what they were after the nature of their sinful flesh instead of yielding to the indwelling Christ as the source out of which they lived.

Some of the deeds by which they were being overcome were worldly wisdom, factions, jealousy, competition, sexual immorality, selfish rivalry, greed and much more. Paul said that these believers were yet carnal, soulical, still living out from the cursed life of flesh rather than in humble dependence upon the indwelling Christ! So here we clearly see that the judgment which God will first bring to His house will be His reaction against that life yet in ascendancy in His church which is not of Christ but is of the old man!

God's intention in bringing the church into existence is to reveal the beauty of His Son through many who are united to Him in Spirit and are displaying His life. When we leave this ground and Christ, His life and fullness in expression are not our all-consuming passion, we no longer have any basis for being called His church, in the strictest sense of the word. Although if we begin to sink into self and get away from God's central purpose for the church we do not cease from being saved, we do open the door for heaven's judgment and correction!

God will not honor any other than His Son. God will not accept any life in His church except the new life which is Christ's. He will not tolerate men running His church or believers running their own lives! Christ must be all and in all! Having looked at Christ as the house of God, the church as the embodiment of

Christ, and the nature of the judgment to which the church is subject, let us lastly look at the instrument of judgment which God uses to accomplish His housecleaning.

The Cross: God's Instrument for Both Judgment and New Life "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:11-13). Here we see that whatever is in us that cannot pass through the fire test is under the judgment of God.

Those things which pertain to the life not according to Christ are symbolized by Paul as "wood, hay, [and] stubble." All the beauty of Christ's life is symbolized by "gold, silver [and] precious stones." So Christ is both the foundation upon which we must be built as well as the life that must be expressed as the essential character of the church. This equals maturity in Christ. Moreover, the "wood, hay [and] stubble" can symbolize all that which is of the first Adam that is yet having ascendancy in the house of God.

God's house should only be the expression of the last Adam and the life which belongs to Him! The instrument through which God accomplishes this great judgment, this great housecleaning, is the cross of Christ -- as all its mighty power is made effective in the church! All that the cross has secured -- forgiveness for the sinner through Christ's shed blood, not only dealing with the sin problem, but the sinner himself being crucified with Christ, taken to the grave, buried in Him, and so passing out of the scene (that is, the passing away of the old creation and all that is included in it) -- must be wrought, in ever increasing measure in us!

Moreover as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, quickened by the power of His life, we too are included in this resurrection life. Consequently, in order for Christ in His fullness to truly be expressed in His body, the church, there needs to be a great return to the preaching of the cross, and an unveiling of its meaning and power to put to death the flesh and bring in the newness of Christ's life. Only as we come back to God in brokenness and genuine repentance, asking Him to open the eyes of our hard hearts to see the full meaning of Calvary and be changed, can we hope to please our Father in heaven!

Nothing short of a fresh unveiling of Christ crucified and what this truly means to all who are united to Him by the new birth will be sufficient to rectify the crisis that the church is presently in the throes of. We must be completely devastated as to any hope or confidence we yet have in anything that we are in ourselves. The condition of dependence on self is the root cause of all the sin, ruin and massive confusion that is so characteristic of Christendom today -- homes are being broken up, church families are being divided, preachers are building kingdoms and using the church as a means for personal gain -- and the list can go endlessly on!

All this, because the spotlight is off the crucified, glorified Christ and our identity in Him as dead to ourselves and has been turned to focus upon the demon of human potential, the cursed religion of Cain! Worldliness, licentiousness, greed, covetousness, self-seeking lifestyles, dead religious activity and a host of other Satanic works are the results incurred when the cross is removed from Christianity. Eventually, if the trumpet is not sounded, if God's people are not warned and so fail to turn from the accursed life of "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16), apostasy will result.

In this condition another Jesus, another spirit and another gospel (Gal. 1:8) make up the religion in which folks become engrossed. Such a religion is entirely rejected of God, beloved! Called to Live by Dependence on Christ Alone So we see that the recovery plan by which God secures a true testimony of

His Son, a living expression of Christ in a people, is implemented by and realized through a renewed understanding and fresh partaking of the meaning of the gospel of Christ, and Him crucified!

This indeed seems very elementary and yet is so lacking today. May the Lord be merciful to us and grant to each one a through and through renewed vision of Christ our Lord, and deeply work the meaning of the cross in us, that we may be moved out of the way to give place to Him whose life alone will please our Father in heaven! May the Lord grant to us the humility needful for His grace to bring forth the everincreasing splendor of Christ's life and enable us to learn the life of absolute dependence upon the indwelling Christ who is the vine from which we, the branches, draw our very life!

May the Lord help us to see the housecleaning necessary in our own lives. May we clearly see all that we are driven by, controlled by and under the power of that is not Christ. May He bring loving judgment, the judgment of the cross, so as to enable us to reckon as dead all the deeds of the first Adam, that the splendor of all the last Adam is may be seen in and through us. And finally, may God grant us His grace to pray for His church that we all "may grow up into Him in all things" (Eph. 4:15) and be made to reflect the glory of God through Jesus living His life in fullness through His church! God grant these things we pray for Jesus' sake! Amen. !

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