

Lesson 1: Toward a Better Understanding of Judgment after the Cross

So, what about those who were judged for their sin after the cross?¹

I. FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS: What does the New Covenant say about our sin?

A. Jesus takes away our sin.

John 1:29²

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Hebrews 10:10

By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10:12

But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

HEBREWS 10:14

For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

B. Our sins are continually cleansed by His blood.

1 John 1:7

If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

C. We are forgiven for past present and future sins.

Ephesians 1:7-8

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He lavished on us.

Colossians 1:14

In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

D. God is not imputing our sins to us.

Romans 4:8

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

E. God has covenanted with us to never again remember our sins.

Hebrews 10:16-17

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"¹⁷ then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

F. We are free from the wrath and judgment of God.

Romans 5:9-10

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

¹ For a detailed study about forgiveness, please view our teaching entitled, "Do You Know How Perfectly Forgiven You Are" which is on our website at: <http://graceandfaithministries.org/do-you-know-how-series-2/>

² Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture is quoted from the New American Standard Bible, Copyright © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

John 5:24

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

II. How we interpret passages must be based on solid principles.

A. We must rightly divide the Word.

2 Corinthians 2:2

But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

B. We must interpret New Testament passages based on the clear teachings of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 1:1

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

C. We must interpret the Scripture based on the clear teachings of the same author. For example, how do the communion passages in 1 Corinthians 11 fit in with Paul’s other teachings about judgment and sin?

III. So, What about Ananias and Sapphira?

A. The Wheat and Tares Principle: Non-Christians will always be in and around the Christian Church.

Matthew 13:24-30

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

Matthew 13:36-43

Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”³⁷ And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,³⁸ and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out

of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,⁴² and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then **THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN** in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

B. Those who believe in Jesus will not come into judgment.

John 5:24

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

C. Non-Christians are already under the judgment of God.

John 3:18-20

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.¹⁹ This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

D. Ananias and Sapphira received the judgment of God.

Acts 5:1-11

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,² and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife’s full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles’ feet. ³ But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.⁸ And Peter responded to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?” And she said, “Yes, that was the price.”⁹ Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.”¹⁰ And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

E. There are only two possibilities/theories about Ananias and Sapphira’s standing with God prior to this sin.

1. They were believers. Most commentators assume this theory.
2. They were non-believers.

F. Here is why I believe they were NOT Christians.

1. Their story is in contrast to that of Barnabas immediately prior in chapter 4. We are certain that Barnabas was a believer.

Acts 4:36-37; 5:1

*Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet, **BUT** a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira...*

2. They are identified as a man or certain man and his wife, not as believers, or saints or Christians, or brothers (as is the norm in the book of Acts).

Acts 5:1

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife...

3. Satan had filled Ananias' heart!

Acts 5:3

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

- a. This is in direct opposition to being filled with the Holy Spirit. "The thought (filled your heart) is to be completely filled by Satan! *Filled (eplērōsen)*. The very verb used of the filling by the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). Satan the adversary is the father of lies (John 8:44). He had entered into Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) and now he has filled the heart of Ananias with a lie." -Word Pictures in the New Testament.
- b. A Christian cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit, and with Satan.
- c. Ananias and Sapphira had no reverence for God. They were deliberately putting God to the test, likely as a mockery. This is why they didn't give all because their giving was only a pretense.

Wuest Expanded Translation Acts 5:7

And Peter said to her, "Why is it that it was agreed by both of you craftily to make trial of and put to the proof the Lord's Spirit?"

G. Christian's sins have been judged once and for all at the Cross, so if God already judged their sin of lying to Him at the Cross, and received them as His Children, He cannot judge them again for the same crime.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (Non-Christians, although their sins have been forgiven at the Cross, are still under sins penalty until they receive Jesus).

H. God does not kill His Children; He gives good gifts and Blessings, not snakes and scorpions.

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. Romans 8:32

8:32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

I. The unbelieving (tares) were afraid to join them.

Acts 5:13

Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people (the non-believers) esteemed them (the believers) highly.

J. You shall know them by their fruits.

Luke 6:43-45

"For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather

grapes from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

IV. The Sons of Sceva

Acts 19:11-20

God was performing **extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul**, ¹² so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out. ¹³ **But** also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” ¹⁴ Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “**I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?**” ¹⁶ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. ¹⁸ Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. ¹⁹ And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

- A. This passage is very similar to the one about Ananias and Sapphira. First of all, we have the positive example of miracles being done by the hands of Paul compared to the positive act of love when Barnabas sold land and gave to the apostles to help others.
- B. These events are both followed by the word “but” and then an imitation act took place. In the above passage some Jewish exorcists attempted to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons. These were not believers. It appears they were using the name of Jesus in a sort of competition with Paul. Similarly, Ananias and Sapphira conspired together to test God pretending to give all.
- C. Both stories ended in disastrous results for these mockers. In this story the man who was demon possessed jumped on them and overpowered them so much so that they had to run away naked.
- D. In both stories fear fell upon all the people.
- E. In both stories the church grew as a result of what happened.
- F. In this story it resulted in believers confessing and disclosing their former practices. Not one of them believed they could hide anything from the Lord.

V. What about those who were sick and had died because they did not discern the Lord’s body during communion?

1 Corinthians 11:18-22

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. ¹⁹ For there must also be factions among you, so that **those who are approved may become evident among you**. ²⁰ Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper, ²¹ for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. ²² What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink?

Or do you **despise the church of God** and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

Vv 27-35

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner**, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.²⁸ But a man must **examine himself**, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself **if he does not judge the body rightly**.³⁰ **For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep**.³¹ But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.³³ So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.³⁴ If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

A. Taking communion is a declaration of our faith in Jesus.

1Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

According to Fritz Rienecker's "Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament," the Greek word "KATAGGELLO," translated "shew" or proclaim, here, "is used in the sense of making a solemn announcement by word of mouth." So, as we take communion, we are solemnly proclaiming the Lord's death and our union with Him through that death. This is a profession of our faith, and therefore, there are serious consequences for those who profess something they don't possess". -AWLC³

- B. Those who took communion in an unworthy manner (v 27) were non-believers, tares among the wheat. They are people who go through the motions of being a Christian (for dishonest reasons), but the fruit of their lives (despising the church of God, getting drunk and ignoring/shaming the poor), demonstrate that they are not true believers.**
- C. Those who are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (v 27), i.e. GUILTY of Jesus' death, are all non-Christians. Because their sin put Jesus on the cross (as all of our sins did), and they have not believed in Jesus to remove that guilt.**
- D. What are we to examine (v 28)? All of our failures and sins? No, we are to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (if we are believers).**
2 Corinthians 13:5
Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!
- E. He eats judgment to himself, not discerning the Lords body (v 29).**

He was saying that any person who is not a Christian and partakes of communion is not making a proper judgment of what it takes to be a part of the body of Christ and is therefore guilty for professing a lie.-AWMI

³ Andrew Wommack Living Commentary

- F. The people/tares are judged for not correctly discerning the body. The people/tares were mocking the “body of Christ” by getting drunk and ignoring the poor. Jesus cares so deeply for His sheep/body, that He says that whatever you do to the body you do to Him.

Matthew 25:44-45

Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ 45 Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

Matthew 18:6

But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

- a. So not discerning the body is not correctly realizing that the body is Jesus’ Body and treating it “the body” with contempt.
- G. Notice that it says “many among you”, not many OF you.
- H. In verse 30, the “many” who were sick and asleep (dead) were the non-Christians who were being judged for making a mockery of the blood and body of the Lord. They were non-believers who were already under the judgment of God because they didn’t believe in Jesus. They were non-covenant people and therefore could not partake of the benefits of the New Covenant.
- I. Verses 31-32 read, “But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.
- b. When WE believers are “judged” it is discipline by a loving Father. It does NOT involved sickness and death.
 - c. When the world is judged, it is condemned for not believing and for making a mockery of the Lord and His Body. As we saw with Ananias and Sapphira, this sort of contempt can result in death.
 - d. When we judge ourselves, we judge that we are “in Him”, and we judge our relationship with His body. If we are esteeming His sacrifice and loving each other, we will not be disciplined by God.
 - e. When we are disciplined it is to keep us from the condemnation of the world. In this context, the condemnation of these fakers was sickness and death.
- J. In Jude we find a passage that points to the love feasts during which communion was commonly taken. He points out the fact that there were non-believers among them.

Jude 5, 12, 19

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe (the context here is of non-believers)... ¹² These are spots in your love feasts (love feasts included taking communion), while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; ¹³ raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of

darkness forever (clearly, this is a description of one who is devoid of the Spirit of God)...¹⁹ These are *sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit* (now he makes it clear they do not have the Spirit and are thus not believers)...²⁰ But you (referring to believers), *beloved* (only believers are called beloved in the New Testament), *building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,*²¹ *keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* (believers keep themselves in God's love and expect His mercy and eternal life).²² And *on some have compassion*, making a *distinction* (the distinction is between believer and non-believer);²³ *but others save with fear* (the others are non-believers who need to be saved and who are making a mockery of the faith), *pulling them out of the fire* (unbelievers are destined for hell fire), *hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.*

John 3:16-18

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.