

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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Judgment and Resurrection

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:27–28, KJV 1900)

In these two brief verses, Paul walks us through the grand panorama of God's redeeming grace from beginning to end. He also shuts off two opposite errors regarding man's existence. This verse excludes any possibility of reincarnation. The point is clear; "...once to die..." not repeated deaths and repeated cycles of life here. Secondly, the passage also excludes the dark hopeless idea that death ends it all. After death and at the resurrection, those who look for Him shall see Him; He shall appear to them. God displays His wisdom profoundly in His book, the Bible. He proclaims His truth while simultaneously blocking any credible belief in errors that contradict that truth.

Occasionally Bible students will try to split hairs over the question; is the appointment in the verse referring to God's Law that warned Adam of death, the "appointed" penalty, if he sinned, or is it referring to the death that followed Adam's sin? Both points are true. The hair-split shifts the primary focus away from the passage's most important truth, the Second Coming and our Lord's glorious appearance at that day.

A study of God's judgment in the Garden of Eden will reveal that the sentence of death encompassed death in more than one aspect. God warned Adam that he would die in the very day he ate the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 2:17) Genesis 5:5 states that Adam lived 930 years, most of those years after his sin. He didn't immediately drop dead on the day that he ate the forbidden fruit. Rather than accuse Scripture of a contradiction, I suggest that God's warning judgment occurred precisely as God warned Adam that it would, precisely on the day that he ate the fruit. No, Adam didn't die a physical death; that death was delay for long years to come. However, immediately upon eating the forbidden fruit, Genesis 3 documents that a profound change occurred in both Adam and Eve, a change that marked their death to friendly fellowship with God, replaced by a foreboding fear of seeing Him or entering into His presence. If we accept the premise of death as separation, far more a Biblical idea that thinking of death as utter cessation of existence, we see the full evidences that Adam's actions broke his union of respectful and friendly fellowship with God. He died to his happy state with God immediately upon eating the forbidden fruit, exactly as God warned that he

would die. The physical death that occurred over nine hundred years later was simply the delayed manifestation of that immediate death. That first sin started a slowly advancing avalanche of degeneration that ended with Adam's physical death. And that sentence of degeneration and death fell upon all of Adam's offspring who would follow him. (Romans 5:12-17, especially Verse 14) Based on King James chronology, 1656 years lapsed from Adam's creation till the flood, and unknown centuries unfolded from the flood till God gave the Law to Moses.¹ If we accept the Biblical premise that death is the result of sin, but omit the "Adam factor," that Adam's sin imposed the consequences of his sin and death upon all of his offspring, we are left with no explanation for the death of all the people who died from Adam's sin to Moses' giving of the Law. Romans 5:14 is Paul's inspired explanation of this fact; death reigned from Adam to Moses. The people who died during this time did not live in the Garden of Eden. They did not eat forbidden fruit. They also did not yet have a written or formal expression of God's Law. Paul reasons that the one point that explains their death during this time is the imputation of the consequences of Adam's sin onto them.

Paul starts his inspired gospel in our study passage with the hopeless state of sin and the just penalty of death upon every member of the human family. Apart from the intercessory work of Jesus, we all face one and only one outcome. We shall face God in final judgment and be justly separated from Him for eternity. But Paul doesn't stop with sin and judgment. He identifies God's judgment as the just outcome of man's sin. In this point, he links this passage with Romans 5. It is this inescapable dilemma that explains why Jesus came to suffer in the place of His beloved and chosen people. He took all of their sins upon Himself, not just some of them, and not all of them except for one. He took all of our sins to Himself. With that weight of sin secured upon Him, He offered Himself to God in payment and in full satisfaction for all of our sins. In

¹ Bishop Usher's Bible chronology computes approximately 850 years from the flood till Moses. His calculations of Biblical chronology are generally accepted by Bible students as a well-researched account of the Bible's time stamps.

this full and effectual payment, Jesus freed all of those for whom He died from the damning consequences, not only of Adam's sin, but of their own sins as well. The focal point of the lesson is not sin and judgment, but Jesus and redemption.

...**to bear the sins of many**" is the same language that appears in Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus' sufferings and death.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11)

In His death, Jesus didn't offer to bear our sins. He didn't make a provision for us to put ourselves under His covering of our sins. Both Isaiah and Hebrews categorically state the fact. He bore our sins. He actually took the damning consequences of our sins to Himself, suffered for them, and thereby fully satisfied God's righteous demands against our sins. By His offering of Himself, we are now free from the eternal condemnation that our sins deserved.

...and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Do you look for Him? Remember our last study from Titus 2:12-14. It is grace that teaches us how to live now, and it is grace that teaches us to look for His glorious appearing. This context identifies God's direct and immediate teaching (Not reliant on any intermediate or human agency or instrument. Jesus taught the same truth in John 6:45. God is the teacher). Every child of grace who has been so taught by grace to "look for him" shall see Him. What a glorious truth!

However, simply seeing Him is not sufficient. Briefly after eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve "Saw" God, but in judgment, not joy. This was not a happy time for them at all. Our study passage adds the qualification that makes this passage the bedrock foundation of comfort for every child of grace. Not only shall we see Him, but we shall see Him *without sin unto salvation*. Consider two perspectives in this point.

1. We shall see Him who took all of our sins to Himself, but, when we see Him, we shall not see those sins. They have been covered by His death. Divine justice has been satisfied. He took our sins, but He also disposed of them with the Father's full and glorious satisfaction.
2. We shall see Him who took all of our sins to Himself for the first time without any of those sins on or in us. Death has been "Killed." Our sins have been wholly removed from us. We shall then stand before Him without the stain of one single sin at all remaining in us. Based on Revelation 5:9, we shall know that we sinned, but we shall also know that He has

redeemed us to God by fully paying the legal debt for those sins, wholly and effectually removing them from us. No longer shall we see Him behind a veil or faintly because of the cloud of our sins. We shall see Him in the fullness of His glory. A hymn writer rejoiced in this truth.

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me?

Refrain:

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
Death is swallowed up in vict'ry,
And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face—oh, blissful moment!
Face to face—to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so.

Carrie E. Breck

Contemporary Christians who sadly depict the Second Coming as a fearful and dreaded event do their faith and their Lord a grave injustice. Scripture consistently teaches us that the Lord's return shall be a time of indescribable joy for every child of grace. In so twisting Scripture's description, they rob believers of the joy and comfort that Scripture always associates with that Day. They strip the "Good news" out of the gospel and deform it into bad news of fear, gloom, and doom.

Do you think of the Lord's return and long for that Day? Do you "look for him"? Does the thought of His return and His final triumph over sin and all of its consequences strike joy in your heart? Take heart. Rejoice! Our study passage tells you that you shall see Him! You shall see Him without sin, either your sins laid upon Him or remaining in you. You see Him in triumphant victory. There is no bloody battle to determine the outcome of that Day. The outcome is certain. Victory in Jesus!

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church
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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor