***Judgment Based Upon One's Deeds
RO13-01***

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Please open your Bible to Romans 2:6-8, which deal with the subject of "Judgment Based upon One's Deeds."

Let's just have a little brief review of the book of Romans from Romans 1:1 through Romans 3:20. This contains the portion in which the apostle Paul is establishing a very important fact. This is something that every living human being has to sooner or later come to understand, and that is that every person born into the human race needs a personal righteousness which he receives from outside of himself. It is the basic fallacy of human thinking, when a person looks at himself, and thinks about his relationship to God, that he automatically thinks in terms of the righteousness that comes from within himself. The apostle Paul, from Romans 1:1 through Romans 3:20, is seeking to establish this one main fact – that everybody needs a righteousness that comes from outside of himself if he's going to stand before God and be qualified to enter heaven.

Until a human being understands that he has to have a righteousness outside of himself, he will forever be groveling around within the production of the old sin nature, trying to make it with God that way. If he dies in that condition, he will spend eternity in hell in spite of his most sincere efforts. So, unless a person has the absolute righteousness which is received from God, he is doomed to hell.

The practice of human good is evil because it comes from the old sin nature. So, actually, Romans 2:5 has told us that the more good you do, the more you have stored up God's wrath against you, because everything that is human good comes from the old sin nature. That's evil, and that brings judgment of God upon us.

We're going to look at three verses, which generally have caused a lot of problems for people who just read them, because on the surface, these verses seem to imply that a person's works are going to be the basis upon which God is going to determine whether he goes to heaven or hell. In other words, it seems to be contradicting everything that Paul is trying to establish in these opening verses – that a person cannot bring anything that God is going to do value relative to his eternal life. Rather, a person has to be given something from God Himself, that God will value, to get that person into heaven.

So, first of all, I will just summarize for you that this passage teaches a general principle, and that general principle is that God punishes evil, and that He rewards good. God will hold you accountable for your works; He will punish your evil works; and, He will reward and bless your good works. That's all the apostle Paul is trying to establish here. He is not talking about how a person is saved. Now he is going to talk, in verse 7, about how a person acts, and he is going to talk in verse 8 about how an unsaved person acts. But he is not presenting to us these things as the vehicles or the means to eternal life. We know that already just because it would contradict other Scriptures which tell us that man is not saved by works.

So, God has a way of evaluating human conduct. God has a basis upon which a person is going to be judged. We've already seen, in Romans 2:2, that God is going to judge everybody according to the truth. Everyone possesses some truth from God. He possesses it from creation. He possesses it from the Bible that he hears. He possesses it from information that people give him that permeates a society where the Word of God is present. This truth that he has is the basis upon which God is going to judge him. This is the basis of judgment for the unbeliever. What this means is that God is going to judge a person for what he knows of divine viewpoint truth, and what he did with it.

The ultimate ground of evaluating a person and his works is the divine viewpoint of God, not the human viewpoint rationalizations. Human viewpoint rationalization says that I can come up with something for myself which I may please God. Divine viewpoint says, "You cannot come up with anything. It has to come from outside of yourself."

There's a second criteria now that's given to us, in Romans 2:6, by which God is going to judge people. First He judges them by His divine viewpoint truth; and, secondly, it tells us that He judges them on the basis of their works. Again, this verse is not meant to teach salvation by human good works. That, of course, would contradict such passages as Ephesians 2:8-9, which tell us that we are saved not by works, but by the grace of God. It would contradict Romans 4:5, which also tells us that we are not saved by works, but we are saved by faith apart from our works.

Romans 2:6 says, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds." The word "who" is the Greek word "hos." This is what we call a relative pronoun, and it refers to God, who was mentioned in Romans 2:5. The final phrase, "judgment of God," is picked up in verse 6 with the word "who." That refers back to God. It refers specifically, as a matter of fact, to the Lord Jesus Christ – that person of the Godhead, because it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is going to be the judge at the great white throne judgment of all unbelievers. We find in John 5:22 and John 5:27 that all judgment against all human beings has been delivered to God the Son.

"Who will render." The word "will render" is the Greek word "apodidomi." "Apodidomi" means "to give back;" "to recompense;" or, "to return something to a person on the basis of what he has coming to him." The word simply means "to reimburse a person for something that he has done." It is in the future tense, which means that it is looking ahead to the time that God gives every person what he has coming to him relative to eternal life or eternal death. It is active, which indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the second person of the Godhead, is Himself going to recompense the person, and the recompense will be either heaven or hell. It's in the indicative mood, which indicates that here is a statement of fact.

This recompense, we are told, will be to every man. In the Greek, it has the little word "hekastos." "Hekastos" means "each" or "everyone," and it covers male and female. What this is saying is that the Lord Jesus Christ will judge every person who has ever lived. No one is going to escape coming under this judgment of the Son of God, and then to be recompensed, according to his works, for heaven or hell.

The word "according to" is the preposition "kata." This indicates the basis of the divine judgment which every human being will face. Human reasoning comes up with its own conclusions as to how God should judge a person relative to heaven and hell. But God says that He has His own way, and it is going to be according to that person's deeds. This is the Greek word "ergon," which is a word which simply means works. The basis of God's recompense to every person is that persons works.

There are, of course, two kinds of works that a human being can come up with. There are works which are in obedience to the truth of Bible doctrine. These are divine good works. There are works which are in disobedience to the truth of Bible doctrine are human good works. So, every person is indeed producing works of one kind or another and do not think for one moment that what you do does not matter with God. It does very much so. If you are an unbeliever, your works will be pure human good production, and God will look at your works; He will see they're human good production; and, then the Lord Jesus Christ will give you what you have coming. He will recompense to you. He will reward you, so to speak, with hell, if it is human good; or, with heaven, if it is divine good. God is going to pay attention to our works. Consequently, there is a division of humanity. This is the second criteria by which God judges people: first, according to the truth. If you don't know the truth of doctrine, you're out of business, and you're in a lot of trouble. But once you know that God holds you responsible for that, then God says, "I will judge you, secondly, according to your works, which reflect what you did with that truth. You may possess divine good; or, you possess human goods.

The possession of salvation is evidenced by the presence of the divine good of Jesus Christ, which expresses itself in certain specific ways. These are describe for us in Romans 2:7. If you have the divine good that begins with Christ as Savior, there will be certain expressions of that divine good which will be evidenced within your life, and within the things you do. The lack of salvation, on the other hand, will be evidenced by a totally different expression that you have in Romans 2:8. This, again, will indicate which category you are in.

So verse 7 says that the second way that God is going to judge people is on the basis of their works: human good works; or, the divine good of Jesus Christ and the working of God the Spirit through a person. When we come to Romans 2:7, we read of the first division of humanity – the first type: "To them, who by patient continuance and well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Let's break down this verse. Let's look at the exegesis first.

The expression "to them who" is the simple little Greek word "ho," and it is in the plural, so it refers to a certain group of people. Then, in the Greek, we have a word which is not exactly translatable. It's the little Greek word "men," but it's an important word because it's a signal word to us. We have this in verse 7, and that usually indicates that there is going to be a contrast set up with something else. God the Holy Spirit is going to show you two sides of something so that you get the total picture. So, He signals it by putting in this word "men."

Then, a little later, comes the other side of the picture, and that's signaled by the word "de." We could translate it with the idea of: "On the one hand (that's 'men'); and, then on the other hand (that would be 'de')." So, actually, this is what really happens. The Greek text in verse 7 has the word "men." That signals: here comes one side of a contrast. Then we get to verse 8, and sure enough, there is the word "de" which shows us the other side of the contrast. So, God is going to show, in a very distinctive way, two sides of human works – these two kinds of words upon which God will judge people.

So, on the one hand, he is contrasting a certain type of person who is seeking. And the word "seek" is the Greek word "zeteo." "Zeteo" refers to the desire to obtain something. It is a present tense, which indicates that this particular class of human being continually seeks these things. It is active, which shows that this person's own volition is being exercised. He is positive toward something, and this is being reflected in what he is seeking. It is participle. This mood indicates that a principle is being stated to us.

In verse 7, we have the expression "to them who seek." That is the same as what we have in verse 6: "every man:" "To them who seek." God is going to be deal, he says, in verse 6, to every man a certain judgment. That "every man" in verse 6 is covered by the expression "to them who seek."

**Seeking**

These seekers are described in a certain way. This is the choice of a certain group. It says, "To them who seek, by patient continuance." The word "by" is the Greek word "kata." You may have learned by now that this little preposition means "according to" or "in keeping with;" that is, we have a group of people who are seeking something which is in keeping with a certain standard. And that standard, as you shall see, is the standard of divine good works. And they are seeking this, we are told, in a certain way. He calls it "patient continuance." In the Greek, this is one word: "hupomone." This comes from the preposition "hupo," which you see in the first part of the word. That means "under. And "mone" comes from the verb "meno," which means "to abide." So, the idea here is "abiding under." Or we would say "perseverance" or "patience enduring."

These people are seeking something in a persevering way. They are acquiescing with their will, and they are pursuing it with a certain determination. This is a study thing, not a sometime thing. But it is a persistent, consistent pursuit. These people are looking for something: "in well-doing." The word well-doing is two Greek words. The word "well is the Greek word "agathos." "Agathos" means good. This is good in character so that its effects are beneficial. Here it's good in character because it's the divine good of the Lord Jesus Christ. The beneficial effects of this divine good is eternal life. The works is the Greek word "ergon" again. And the works (or the deeds) are good deeds because they divine good deeds.

So what verse 7 is talking about is, first of all, a group of people who are persisting in a divine good pattern of works. We could translate it this way: "To those who, as is shown by their perseverance in good works, seek." This particular group reveals that they are divine good seekers, and they are divine good producers. When God looks at that, He recognizes this pattern of divine good as signaling something concerning these people, and that is that they are born-again believers. We have many such patterns in the Bible. What is divine good production in the case of people in one situation or another?

**Divine Good Production**

Well, we think back about Abel. For Abel, well-doing meant approaching God as a sinner through a blood sacrifice. For Noah, well-doing meant building an ark to save the family and the animals from the flood while undergoing the ridicule of society. For Abraham, well-doing meant leaving his relatives, and going to a country that had promised to give him. For Job, well-doing meant faith-resting in God in the midst of his suffering. For Moses, well-doing meant suffering afflictions with the people of God, rather than enjoying the pleasures of the sins of Egypt. For Joseph, well-doing meant going to prison rather than commit adultery with Pharaoh's wife. For Matthew, while doing meant leaving his business and his wealth, to follow Jesus Christ. For Paul, while doing meant leaving his position of honor among the Jews, and becoming an object of their persecution. For Cornelius, well-doing meant seeking the true God, and believing the gospel that Peter brought him. For Lydia, well-doing meant waiting in prayer by the riverside, and receiving Paul's message concerning the grace of God.

There is one thing you will notice about all these people in Scripture, and we could multiply many other examples, but these will give you enough of an idea. You will notice that all of these acted in response to what God had told them to do. That's the key. Across all of these people is positive volition to the truth. First of all, God says, "I'm going to judge you by My divine viewpoint truth." Secondly: "I'm going to judge you by your works – what you have done with that truth." Positive volition truth brings one result. Negative old sin nature the truth brings another result.

All of these people, because of their positive volition response, and thus the well-doing that they performed, indicated regeneration. These are examples of well-doing that merited the blessing and the reward of God because they were produced by the Holy Spirit, and not by the old sin nature.

**Seeking**

So, it is this type of person that he's speaking of verse 7, such as has been represented historically by believers who are functioning on divine good production under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and who are patiently continuing in this kind of well-doing, and they are seeking something. What are they thinking? They are seeking three things:

1. **Glory**

They are seeking glory. That is the Greek word "doxa." "Doxa" refers to the transformation of the believer into the image of Christ. In other words, the glory that they seek here is sinlessness. That's the first thing they are looking for. Such a transformation will indeed reflect glory to God. The condition of the saints in heaven is going to be one of splendor because the saints in heaven will all be absolutely sinless. So, glory is the first thing that people who are operating on divine good will see.

1. **Honor**

The second thing they seek is honor. This is the Greek word "time." This refers to the praise that God can give a person. This is not praise for men, but it is the, "Well done" by the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the honor that the divine good oriented person would seek. Satan and his world heap dishonor on the godly. One of the greatest ways to heap dishonor on a godly person is to ignore him, and thus to seek to insult him, and thus to seek to silence him, because that way, you might be able to make him think that what he is saying is not of any value, and not to esteem that he has been called to do so. So, each of us is confronted with the fact that we seek an honor from God, and that is the statement (the declaration) by the Lord Jesus Christ, "Well-done, you good and faithful servant."

1. **Deathlessness**

Then they seek "immortality" ("aphtharsia"). "Aphtharsia" really means "deathless." It means incorruption – the desire for a resurrection body, or the desire to be free from death. Every time you have to attend a funeral; every time you have to look at someone that you once knew, and who is now dead; and, every time you have to see a casket being lowered into the grave and dirt being thrown on it, you are very much aware of the fact that it is characteristic of those who operate on divine good to look forward to the day when their bodies will live again, and they will be completely free of death. They will never be subject to death again. Many unbelievers do not seek this.

However, God says, "If you're operating on divine viewpoint, because you have regeneration through the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be capable of producing divine good works. And I'm going to judge you on the basis of your capacity to produce divine good works or not. And if you can produce divine good works, then you'll be looking for glory. You'll be looking for that transformation into the image of Christ (sinlessness). You will be looking for honor. You'll be looking to see that your life has pleased the Lord Jesus Christ when you stand at the "Bema." You'll be looking for deathlessness – for the resurrection of your body so that you'll never have pain; no more tears; no more sorrow; and, no more death.

**Eternal Life**

We understand the words, "He shall give: He shall give eternal life." "Eternal" is the Greek word "aionios." This is an undefined duration of time. There is no duration specified. "Life" is "zoe," which refers to the principle of life – life as God has it. What it refers to here is the life of a regenerated person in heaven with God.

You may translate verse 7 in this way: "To those who, on the one hand, as is shown by their perseverance in good works, seek glory, honor, and incorruption, He shall give eternal life." On the one hand, there is a category of people who are born again, and they reflect this by their determined, continual perseverance of divine good works. And they seek, in the process of living, for glory; for honor; and, for incorruption. These, fall into a certain category. God says, "You may be assured that what you are headed for is eternal life in heaven."

Now we have the contrast. Along comes Romans 2:8: "But." Now, there is the "de" that we told you was coming. We had, on the one hand, the "men," which showed us that there was a contrast to be coming. Now we have the word "but," right from the beginning, and that's the Greek word "de." That's our signal that here is the other side. God is contrasting a second group of humanity. Remember that He's not talking about how you saved. God is talking entirely about how people act who are either going to heaven or going to hell. They act in a certain way. They respond in a certain way.

So, here's the contrast now that we've been looking for: "On the other hand, unto them." "Unto them is the little word "ho," indicating, again, that same group that we found in verse 6: "Every man who, according to his deeds, is going to be judged:" "Unto them that are contentious." "That are contentious" literally means "those out from strife." This is two words in the Greek. First, it has the word "ek," which means "out from;" and, then the word "eritheia." "Eritheia means "strife." So, we could translate it as "those of strife," or "those out from strife." Now what's he referring to?

What he is referring to here is the person who rejects the idea that he needs a righteousness which comes from outside of himself in order to please God. This word describes unbelievers who are operating in conflict with the Word of God. They are operating in conflict with divine viewpoint concerning how a person is related to God. In other words, this word tells you that there is a group of people who is bucking God. They are resisting God. They are contending with God. They are arguing back to God. This is just like a child argues with his parent. He wants to know why, and he gives them another way that something should be done.

**Negative Volition**

So, here is a category of human being who is so mentally deranged that he is actually taking that truth, for which God says he will be held responsible, and he is rejecting that truth, and he is arguing with God. The consequence, because of their contention, is, of course, that they do not obey: "But until them that are out from strife and do not obey the truth." The word "do not obey" is "apeitheo." "Apeitheo" actually means to refuse to be persuaded. It's a very significant word. In other words, they refuse to believe the truth that God brings them. Another way of describing this is, of course, simply negative volition.

Now this refers to an obstinate rejection of divine viewpoint. Hence they disobey it. It is in the present tense, which means they just will not be persuaded, no matter what you say to them, and no matter how God warns them. They have done this by their own personal choice. This is their personal will being exercised. It is a participle – a principle of truth. What it is that they will not be persuaded by is the truth (the "aletheia"). This word "aletheia" in the Greek refers to whatever is the reality at the basis of a thing – not its appearance. This in the Greek has the definite article, so it is *the* truth. Thus it is referring to a specific body and a specific expression of truth. That specific expression is, of course, the totality of Bible doctrine. This specific truth begins with the gospel, and then it goes on to the glorification of the believer in heaven. It covers the whole gamut of a person from the threshold of hell to the entrance into heaven itself.

**Bible Doctrine**

Psalm 138:2 tells us something that you must never forget concerning how God looks at the truth; how God looks at Bible doctrine; and, how He views His Word. Psalm 138:2 says, "I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name, for your loving kindness, and for Your truth. For You have magnified Your world above all Your name." What this verse is declaring to us is that God has placed His Divine viewpoint revelation, which we have in the Bible in propositions of truth, above His name. This means that He has placed that above what He is when He calls himself Jehovah, the Great Savior God. He has placed this above what He is when He calls himself Elohim, the Mighty Creator. Above all the names that you can think of that God uses concerning Himself, He says, "While you may respect Me and all that My name connotes, about My name, there is one thing that I esteem (I, the living God), and that is My revelation, the Bible." Doctrine is God's life, and He has made it all right.

So, knowing the Word of God, and how you respond to the Word of God, is a clear indication concerning the category of humanity that you're in, whether you are headed for heaven, or whether you are headed for hell. Refusing to be persuaded by the living and powerful Word of God is in effect to fight God. These people begin, first of all, He says, in contrast to the verse 7 group, the group in verse 8 are contentious. They are fighting the Word of God. They are bucking God, and naturally then, they do not obey the truth. They reject it. They will not be persuaded, the Greek says, by what God has said in the Bible.

There certain tests which every one of us might want to apply to ourselves, because this is a very serious thing. If God says, "I put My Word above My own name," then you better believe that there's nothing more important in all the universe than doctrine. And you may want to check to see whether you yourself have the spirit of strife, and whether you yourself are a rebel against the truth. One test is how you view Jesus Christ. Do you see him as a God-man? Do you see Him as one who is supernaturally born without a human father? Do you see Him as one whose substitution upon the cross has made atonement for our sins? Do you see Him as one who has been resurrected, and who is now alive, and who lives in heaven at the right hand of God the Father?

I remember when Bishop Pike, who was so involved in the spirit world upon the death of his son, one time on television, in talking about major doctrines, scoffed at what he called such an idea of Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Boy, did he get a surprise after he died out there in the desert in Palestine? Did he get a surprise? Do you think that Jesus Christ was just a good man, and that somehow He was a martyr; and, in some Syrian tomb, we may someday discovered the bones of Jesus Christ – that He has not anywhere near gone to heaven, and that His only return is going to be some spiritual return in the hearts of people? If you think that, you're contentious against the truth.

**How do you View the Bible?**

How do you view the Bible? Do you see it as a revelation of God given through men that He led? Do you see the Bible as inspired? Do you see the Bible as inerrant? Even a lot of fundamentalists in the neo-evangelical camp will shake their heads: "No, I don't believe the Bible is inerrant." I don't believe when the Bible is written that it didn't have a single mistake in it." Even they equivocate on that. Do you believe that the Bible is historical truth rather than a series of myths, and that it must be used literally for its meaning? Or do you view it as simply a good book from which God may talk to you. Do you believe that the Bible is *the* Word of God as it claims to be, or do you think it simply contains the Word of God? That will show you whether you are contentious for the truth or not.

**How do you View Salvation?**

You can test yourself on how you view salvation. Is salvation to you something that the grace of God gives you from outside of yourself? Or do you see it as something that you work for and contribute to? Do you see this righteousness as absolutely having to be the equivalent of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, or do you see it as something where a human being is doing the best he can? Do you see this is a permanent both from which you can never again be lost? Do you see human beings totally depraved without one iota of merit that they can use in approaching God? If you don't, then you are contentious for the truth.

So, there are many major areas of the Word of God that will reveal what a person is. There are many preachers who indeed are talking about the Bible when they are in the pulpit that are contentious against the truth. They are in the category of verse 8. There are many cultured, refined, educated people who are contentious against the truth. They are in verse 8.

**They Obey Unrighteousness**

These people, while they do not obey the truth, they do obey something else. Because of who they are as unbelievers, and because their destiny is what it is to the lake of fire, interestingly enough, they obey something else. We are told they do not obey the truth, but they obey unrighteousness. The word "obey" is "peitho." This means "to be persuaded." Before, toward the truth of God, they would not be persuaded. But toward something else here, they are persuaded. This is present tense. This is their constant mental attitude. Interestingly enough, it is middle voice this time – not active as it was before. It is middle voice because horrendous consequences come to the individual when he obeys this particular thing called unrighteousness. It is a participle – a principle stated.

What he obeys is unrighteousness "adikia." "Adikia" refers to everything that pours out of the old sin nature. It can be, as you remember (please be sure you understand this), out of the old sin nature can pour human good and sins. Both in the sight of God are declared evil. But from the old sin nature comes human righteousness (human good), and that's what these people are specializing in. They obey unrighteousness. So, I don't want you to think that when it says they obey unrighteousness, that you're thinking of a bunch of vile sins. Back in Romans 1, near the end of the chapter, the truth of the matter is that you do see a series of vile sins. But you notice that God the Holy Spirit doesn't name any sins here. He doesn't name any crude, horrendous sins. So, in other words, God is making it clear to us that he's talking about all of those educated college professors who are obeying unrighteousness; all of those preachers who graduated from seminary; and, all of the liberal preachers who are obeying unrighteousness. He is talking about everybody down the line. He is talking about the people in government who are great men of morals, but unbelievers, and who are obeying unrighteousness.

Again we see the consequences. We understand from verse 6 the words "He shall give." Just as we understood them in verse 7, so, in verse 8, we understand the words "He shall give these who represent this kind of obedience to unrighteousness, the opposite of truth." What shall He give them?

**Indignation**

First: "He shall give them indignation." The Greek word is "orge." This means "anger," but an anger of a certain kind. This is an anger that is of a subtle type upon the mind. It is something within God, and it just sits there in God's mental attitude. God is in angry indignation. This is not a momentary outburst. This refers to God's judgment against evil works (against these human good and sins), with a view to His vengeance which is coming. It's a mental indignation. This develops and develops to a climax as God deals with the rebel who is deceived into thinking that all is well within.

**Wrath**

The other thing that he gets is called wrath. This is the Greek word "thumos." "Thumos" is another anger, but this is an emotional anger. This is the explosive outburst – that which has been welling up and building up in God toward those who have rejected the truth, and have obeyed unrighteousness, then explodes at a certain point in time against these individuals. And then they feel the anger of an infinite God. The blaze of God's divine anger seers them, and sends them right into the lake of fire. This kind of anger, this explosion of anger, is used elsewhere in the Bible. This is the feeling, we we're told, that Pharaoh had when he was told that Moses had left Egypt (Hebrews 11:27). This is the feeling that the crowd had when they got indignant at Jesus Christ, and wanted to push over the cliff to kill him in Luke 4:28. They just exploded with blaze of anger. This is what the Ephesians showed, when they ran through the streets saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," in the explosive anger against the apostle Paul that you have in Acts 19:28.

So, this is indeed God being described in a way in human terms. It's going to be a frightful thing, as the Scriptures say, to fall into the hands of a living, angry God. So, the God of forbearance and long suffering, which was described in Romans 2:4, now becomes the God of unrestrained anger in Romans 2:8. Verse 8 does not describe the unbeliever with a list of sins such as you have in Romans 1:24-31. The description is of a person who is negative to the truth of doctrine, and it is positive to the evil of the old sin nature.

This description fits any kind of person. The moral person is counting on his works. He has a false sense of acceptance with God. But God says, "I look upon you and I see you. I see you as a person who is, by patient continuance in well-doing (in divine good doing), seeking for glory, honor, and immortality – to you, because your production is divine good, goes eternal life. But to you, whom I see as being contentious; who are fighting God; who are not obeying divine viewpoint truth of the Word of God; who are being unrighteousness and the evil production of the old sin nature – to you is going to come my mounting anger, finally exploding in a blaze of searing judgment upon you.

The more unbeliever judges himself by his own standards, and therefore he seems to be acceptable to God. The works that the moral unbelievable counts on are the kind of works that God judges. The only good that God accepts from a person is what God Himself imputes to that person from outside of that individual. The self-righteousness of the moral unbeliever is a very dangerous thing because it causes him to reject the divine good of Jesus Christ, which is his only hope. When the moral unbeliever dies, his soul goes into Hades into punishment. When he gets there, he has the same feeling that the rich man had in the story of rich man and Lazarus. When the moral unbeliever, this man in verse 8, finds himself in Hades, wishes desperately that anyone else he knows would not come to that place. We, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have a love that He gives for human beings, and that's why we want to tell them the gospel, because we don't want them to come to that place either.

The unbeliever goes to Hades. His next stop is at the great white throne judgment, and the next stop after that is the lake of fire. Every stage of the way is on the basis of his works. That's interesting. Every step of the way, God says, "I judge you on your works." Verses 7-8 are trying to tell us two kinds of works that will be evidenced. And God judges on that basis.

So, in other words, good people do not go to heaven automatically. Saved people go to heaven automatically, apart from their goodness. The human good of the moral unbeliever keeps them as far away from God as the sins of the immoral person do. The moral person trusts in his self-righteousness rather than the righteousness of Jesus Christ at the Cross, that 2 Corinthians 5:21 offers us. Rejection of the gospel creates a great illusion in the minds of the moral person that blinds him to the implications of grace.

So, when and unbeliever gets to the great white throne judgment, the issue primarily is not your sins, because those have been judged and paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ, as 1 Peter 2:24 tells us. When you get to the great white throne judgment, the primary issue is another part of evil, and that is the human good that you are counting on. This human good is not going to stand you in good stead. Because of the doctrine of unlimited atonement, it is a fact that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all the world, and even for those who reject Him. He died for them. Sin is not the primary issue of the great white throne. I wouldn't say that it is not entirely uninvolved, but it is not the primary issue. The record books are primarily going to look for what this individual is bringing to God, and saying, "Here's why you should take me into Your heaven." On that basis, he will be condemned because all that he can come up with is human good production. He can come up with the things that are the consequences of a person who is in the condition of verse 8. So, the main issue is going to be the record of one's good works, and that is going to be completely rejected. Read through Revelation 20:11-12 once more, and you'll find that no matter how much good a person can claim there, if your name is not written in the Lamb's book of life, you're doomed.

So, verse 7 are people who are in the Lamb's book of life. These are "the whosoever who came." Verse 8 are people who are not written in the Lamb's book of life. These are "the whosoever" that did not come. God will judge every human being on the basis of his works. If they are human good works, they reflect that you are doomed. If your works are divine good works, they reflect regeneration, and you will indeed receive glory and honor and a body that never dies again. If you have not received His Son, the Jesus Christ, in order to receive that kind of a destiny, today is the day, friend, by all means, to do it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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