



## Matthew 27:51-53

# Saints Go Marching Into Town Alive!

Carl F. H. Henry correctly observes, "Hollywood aggressively probes immortality as the ultimate horizon. Afterlife films leap over AIDS and senior citizenship, death, funerals, and grief to concentrate on a world beyond—which often amounts to nothing more than postmortem out-of-body hanky-panky. The movies increasingly banner that death is not final. They tell us that a spirit-world is in store for us—without God, without judgment, without need of grace, without bodily resurrection, without fear of hell. Take it from Hollywood and movie producers, our personal psyche survives the crematory and grave. Feel better about this worldly licentiousness and greed, for a pleasant Karma awaits us in the long future—on the authority of Hollywood script writers who become our generation's Scripture rewriters ('Christianity and Resurgent Paganism,' in *Gods of This Age or God of the Ages?* pp. 4-5).

What is the truth about our spirituality and our future? Where do we turn for authentic answers about our future? You may be surprised, but in a realistic examination of death you find the answer to our future life.

## THE SETTING

Amazing supernatural events took place at Calvary the day Christ died. The miraculous three hours darkness in the middle of the day was as if God put His hand over Calvary to block out the intense spiritual agony of His Son on the Mercy Seat from profane eyes of sinful man. The veil of the temple between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was torn from the top to the bottom pointing to God as the One behind the drama opening a way into His holy presence for all who believe on His Son. God caused the curtain that was hanging in the temple to tear in two from the top to the bottom. God opened a way into His Holy of Holies for all who call upon the name of Jesus. It is through Christ's sacrificial death for us that we are given access to God with all the barriers of sin permanently removed (Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 4:16; 10:19, 35). Shortly after His own death, Jesus took the penitent thief on the cross with Him to heaven (Luke 23:43).

Jesus actually tasted the pangs of spiritual death, in addition to the physical crucifixion, as a payment for the penalty of sins for you and me. Jesus bore the full brunt of the complete abandonment by God for guilty sinners. The innocent Substitute became sin for us and died in our place. The spotless innocent Lamb of God, who never experienced personal sin, for the first time in eternity, was separated from the Father to pay our debt. In His innocent death, He saved us from the horror of being eternally abandoned by God. Jesus endured the same horrors and punishment that you and I will escape by putting our faith in Him. God the Son was separated from God the Father because of our sins.

## **Strange events**

Jesus Christ was in complete control of His death. He shouted with a loud voice, "It is finished! Father into Thy hands I commit My spirit. He voluntarily yielded up His spirit and died. Augustine said, "He gave up His life because He willed it, when He willed it and as He willed it. "

Christ died with a loud voice, demonstrating that He did not just allow His life to ebb away like most crucifixion victims in absolute exhaustion at the end. The victorious shout of a Conqueror in full strength, "It is finished, " shows He did not die as a result of physical exhaustion, but voluntarily. The gospel writers say He gave His life, poured it out, laid it down or yielded it up (Isa. 53:12; John 10:11, 15). He was in absolute control of His life and death. Jesus knew exactly what He was doing when He offered Himself as our vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice for sin. This was no martyr's death. He was no victim of the circumstances in Jewish politics. Jesus completed the work the Father had given Him to do. He was giving His life as a ransom for sin (Matt. 20:28).

When the darkness at Calvary lifted the substitutionary atoning death of Jesus, He brought the light of eternal life to a world lost in sin.

## **The earthquake**

"And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many " (Matthew 27:51-53).

The earthquake that shook Calvary is the one referred to in contemporary Jewish history that damaged the temple about A.D. 30. The Jewish historian Josephus tells of a quaking in the temple before the destruction in A.D. 70. (*Wars*, VI, 299). The Jewish Talmud tells of an earthquake forty years before the desolation of the temple that caused the doors of the temple to be opened by themselves (*Yoma*, 39b).

The graveyard was probably near Jerusalem because after Christ rose from the dead those who were also raised from the dead that Sunday walked into Jerusalem.

The graves were sepulchers carved into the rocks with their entrances made secure by very large boulders. The rocks were split and the graves were opened at the instant Christ died. It was a powerful earthquake to split open rocks. It was the result of the victory shout of Jesus on the cross. The moment He died, the earth shook and the graves split open.

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Judaism would never be the same after Jesus the Messiah died for sinners and rose from the dead. In deed, the world would never be the same again. The event was earthshaking.

The great earthquake that shook Calvary synchronized with the death of Jesus Christ.

At that moment great masses of rock split open and the graves were opened.

The timing is too arresting for this to have been a natural phenomenon. It happened when Christ shouted, 'It is finished!' The veil in the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom.

The timing of the events is important. Matthew connects this entire strange phenomenon at the cross directly with the moment of Christ's death.

The exact coincidence of the earthquake with the death of Jesus is inconceivable on mere naturalistic grounds.

God's hand was shaking the earth violently.

Certain rock-hewn tombs were shaken open at the hour of the death of Christ. But not all of the tombs were opened.

### ***Which graves opened up?***

Imagine the profound affect these opened graves had on family and friends. Those graves were opened on Friday around 3 p.m. and remained open. People were busy with Passover celebrations. No believing Jew would desecrate himself by touching an open grave that weekend. Imagine for a moment how the word spread like wildfire through Jerusalem. But not all the graves were opened. It had been obvious that a certain group of people's graves were opened. The strange thing was that only those who had looked for the coming of the Messiah were opened. These saints must have been those who in life had looked for the hope of Israel and seen in Christ that hope fulfilled. Simeon and Anna at the birth of Jesus were longing for the Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25-38). Why this person's grave and not that grave? Why not the graves of others near by in the same location? It was as if someone selected specific graves to be opened and others left alone. It sent a powerful message for every believer in Him of the coming glory of the Lord Jesus.

The opening of the specific graves was by design. Selective graves opened up. These were the graves of believers in Christ. No tomb was opened up whose soul did not have an interest in the death of Christ. The opening of the grave was in response to Christ's victory shout.

There was discrimination in the graveyard. Only certain graves were broken up when Christ died. The bodies of those in them came to life after Christ rose from the dead. Saints of Jesus Christ who had believed on Him and fallen asleep in death before His crucifixion were raised from the dead, and after His resurrection they appeared to many in the city of Jerusalem.

The King James and New American Standard Bible place the timing of the saints rising from the dead after Christ rose from the dead on Sunday morning. The NIV gives it at the time of Christ's death. It would be more consistent with other Scriptures to take the position of the bodies in these opened graves did not rise until after Christ rose from the dead on Sunday.

The whole person came alive that Sunday morning. We are not to think that a group of unanimated bodies came floating up out of the ground. These individuals were raised from the dead after Christ rose. No names

came floating up out of the ground. These individuals were raised from the dead after Christ rose. No names are given of who these saints were. In fact, many bodies of the saints that were asleep were raised. ”

They were not given life on Friday afternoon and told to wait around three days in their tombs until Christ rose on Sunday as the NIV suggests.

Christ is the first-fruits of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:23), therefore their resurrection does not occur until He was raised. The tombs were broken open at Christ's death by the earthquake. However, the saints were raised to life after Jesus' resurrection and then came out of the tombs.

### ***Who opened the graves and gave life?***

Who gave those dead bodies life? Remember those graves were opened at the precise moment Christ died. The dead bodies, however, were not revived until Christ rose from the dead. This is not something that an earthquake can do.

George Buttrick said, God watched His Son on the cross; God wrote in darkened sky and torn mountains His judgment on our wickedness, and His love for Christ, and God proved Himself then and there the Lord of death and life. ”

The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The earth and the rocks are in passive form implying that God Himself is the actor in these supernatural events. God had His hand on the earth and caused it to shake. He split the rocks apart. He opened up the tombs.

Matthew tells us there was a very close connection between the earth shaking, rocks splitting and the tombs opening up.

The bodies of saints who had died sometime before Christ's crucifixion came to life. The full meaning is were raised to life. God raised to life many of His chosen people who had died and were in their graves.

### ***Eye witnesses!***

There were hundreds of people who witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus. When they returned to their homes from the crucifixion, they were full of remorse, smiting their breasts in sorrow.

Can you imagine the effect upon them when they saw these risen living saints who appeared to many in the city of Jerusalem? The construction can be translated they appeared to many people, or were seen by many people. Yes, again there were witnesses to these supernatural events.

Matthew is probably an eyewitness to what he is recording since he alone mentions the saints coming alive and giving witness in Jerusalem.

We know nothing about the life of these saints after they appeared in Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection. Everything is pure conjecture as to whether they were taken to heaven after Christ's ascension. It is probably safer to assume that they later died like Lazarus who was called back into his former natural body. In John chapter eleven Jesus commanded the stone entrance at his tomb to be removed by the men. It would appear also that the resurrection of the saints in Jerusalem was the resuscitation of the natural bodies and not their final resurrection bodies when Christ returns. There is no clear teaching in other passages for a different resurrection of these individuals. They were revived from the dead like Lazarus. These dead men and women came alive, walked out of their tombs and entered Jerusalem. And coming out of the tombs after His

came alive, walked out of their tombs and entered Jerusalem. And coming out of the tombs after His [Christ's] resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. Matthew does not give us any additional information. The assumption then is they lived for some years and died as Lazarus and others whom Jesus raised from the dead in His ministry later died.

These saints returned to Jerusalem where they were recognized by friends, neighbors and family.

Now in heaven they await the great day when Christ returns. The final resurrection will come at the second coming of Christ.

## **THE SAVIOR IS RISEN**

The reviving of a limited number of saints sent a powerful message of the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am the resurrection and the life, Jesus said. These people who were alive walking around in Jerusalem the morning of Christ's resurrection were additional evidence of the truth of His claim to be the giver of life.

### ***Jesus conquered death***

The open graves and the appearance of these saints declare to us that Jesus has once and for all conquered death. In His dying on the cross and rising from the dead, He destroyed the power of death. He has opened the grave once for all. The tomb has lost its power because Christ is alive. Death is no longer a tragedy. The grave has lost its terror. Because Christ lives, we too shall live.

The death of Jesus Christ blots out our sins and defeats the power of sin and death. It opens up our access into the presence of the Lord God. His resurrection promises to us the final resurrection of those who die in Him. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees our resurrection when Christ returns.

The death and the resurrection of Jesus go together. Jesus died for sinners. His substitutionary death would be meaningless without His resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ brought these saints to life. The message is clear. Death has been conquered.

The resurrected saints went into Jerusalem and appeared to many declaring with conviction that Jesus is Lord over the living and the dead.

Jesus said, All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. . . . No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. . . . He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:37-40, 44, 54).

At the tomb of Lazarus Jesus told Lazarus' sisters, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this? ” (John 11:25-26).

Here was one of those additional pieces of evidence of the authenticity of the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son

Here was one of those additional pieces of evidence of the authenticity of the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the seed of David according to the flesh who was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:3-4).

### ***First fruits of the resurrection of believers***

Christ's resurrection was different from the resurrection of the saints in Jerusalem that Sunday morning. Upon the resurrection of Jesus, He left the sealed tomb *before* the door was opened. The opening of His tomb came *after* He had already risen and left the tomb. It was opened to allow the disciples and probably the soldiers to look in and see that the body of Jesus was already gone. The departure of Jesus from the tomb was not dependent upon the splitting open of the grave. When Christ rose from the dead, His resurrection body was not limited by the stone walls. When the angel came down and rolled away the stone at the entrance to the tomb of Jesus, it was obvious He was not in there. He had already left.

The Jewish people at the time of the sowing of seed would mark off certain barley in the field. When the time the harvest season arrived, men would carry a sickle and basket and on command reap the specially designated grain. The men would march to the Tabernacle bringing a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest to the priest. The priest would wave the sheaf accompanied by burnt and meal offerings. "He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the Lord" (Leviticus 23:11-12).

This first fruits offering represented the whole harvest yet in the field. Men gave thanks for the harvest while it still stood in the field. God still claims first fruits of everything. It belongs to Him, even before it is harvested.

The apostle Paul saw the resurrection of Christ as the first fruits of a greater resurrection day in 1 Corinthians 15:20-25. Jesus' resurrection was the first fruits of the victory over death (v. 20). But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. His resurrection is the first fruits of those who die in Christ and are raised when He returns in glory. Christ rose from the dead as the first fruits of the resurrection on the third day after His death.

Christ is the first representative of the whole resurrection harvest that will take place when He returns. On the day in which He rose from the dead, Jesus said to Mary, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord,' and *that* He had said these things to her" (John 20:17-18). Our Great High Priest was waving the first fruits of the resurrection harvest!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is in the presence of the Father in heaven as the representative of the whole church that is still in the field waiting the harvest. The first fruits are a living testimony to God's sovereignty and says to a watching world, "Because I live, you shall live also."

The tomb is empty! Jesus rose from the dead! He is alive. He is the first to rise from the dead in expectation of a greater harvest.

The resurrection of these saints in Jerusalem, occurring after Jesus Himself was raised, is a sure indication of the coming harvest when all the saints of God will be raised.

The first fruits were a sign of the greater harvest to come. The resurrection of Jesus was a sign the

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The first fruits were a sign of the greater harvest to come. The resurrection of Jesus was a sign the resurrection of all believers to come in the future. It was a pledge and proof of the resurrection of His people. These bodies we live in now will be dissolved in death, but they are going to be changed by the resurrection when Christ comes. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). God will give us a specially equipped body fitted for the resurrection life.

The resurrection of Jesus is the seal of all His claims to be the Son of God and the Messiah.

Without the resurrection anyone can say he is god, or a messiah. However, without the resurrection He could not be the Savior.

Christ is authentic. Christianity is true because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection is the great central fact to Christian faith and experience. . . . If Christ be not raised, that invalidates the whole Christian message, and the whole Christian experience, notes G. Campbell Morgan.

The raising of the bodies of the saints after His resurrection is further evidence of His resurrection and a foretaste of our resurrection in the future.

## **THE SAINTS ARE ALIVE**

The open graves and the appearance to many people in the holy city was a glorious message that death is not the end. It was a message that said there is life after death. Because Christ is alive, you too shall live. There are no obstacles to the resurrection of Christ, and there are no obstacles to your own resurrection. If God can raise these saints to life He can and will do likewise for you on the great day of the resurrection. There is a great day coming when I too shall live again. My son, my father, my mother and friends will come to life and live!

Mark it down, these dead men still speak. Christ is alive. Christ is coming again. Christ will give life to the dead!

### ***Everything is now ready for our resurrection.***

Christ destroyed the power of death. The power of sin is death and Christ has dealt with the source of our problem. Death entered into the world by sin. Death is the penalty for sin, and Christ died to pay the penalty in full. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).

Christ dealt with the penalty of sin when He died on the cross. When Christ went to the cross and died, God exhausted the penalty of sin on our behalf. Christ has paid the condemnation of sin in full for all who will believe on Him. The power of sin was broken. The penalty was paid and therefore has no more power over those who believe on Christ. God's wrath was exhausted on Christ in those three hours of darkness. Death had no more power to condemn. Christ is therefore the victory over sin and the grave.

William Nicholson said, Christ's death is our judicial deliverance; His resurrection is our actual deliverance. His death is our sin pardoned; His resurrection the receipted certificate of that pardon. His death was Hades opened; His resurrection, Hades made empty. His grave is the grave torn asunder; His resurrection is the dead

opened; His resurrection, Hades made empty. His grave is the grave torn asunder; His resurrection is the dead bodies of His saints walking forth from their graves in the life incorruptible and eternal! ”

## ***Our redemption will be complete with resurrection bodies***

Read again the words of the apostle Paul as he reminded believers of the blessed hope of Christ appearing and our transformation in 1 Corinthians 15:50-57.

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, **DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP** in victory. **O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ”

When Christ returns we along with all those in heaven will receive our glorious resurrection bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44, 51; Philippians 3:21).

Christianity is different from all the other religions of the world because of the resurrection of the body.

The body is not in heaven awaiting our arrival there, nor is it to be brought down to us *from* heaven, writes Charles Hodge. Our permanent dwelling place is in heaven. We will receive a resurrection body when Christ comes. He rescues our bodies from the grave, and fashions them like unto His glorious body by the power that He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3:21).

The graves were opened. Nothing now remains to be accomplished because Christ has set you free from all obstacles to His resurrection power. The believer has already passed from death to life, and it is now only a matter of God's perfect timing when He shall change this body into a glorious resurrection body! We shall all be changed. ”

## ***What happens when we die?***

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 Paul tells us what would take place even in case he should die before Christ comes. If his old worn out earthly tent would be dissolved before Christ returns, he knew he would have a permanent house in heaven. He compares this earthly body to a temporary tent that we now live in which will be exchanged for a permanent dwelling place in heaven when we die. When this earthly tent perishes we have an everlasting habitation in heaven (John 14:1-3).

Even if he has to wait until Christ returns for the resurrection body, he would still have a better habitation in God's presence in heaven. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1). Paul speaks of his being absent from this human body and immediately being present with the Lord. The soul of the believer goes directly into the presence of God when we die. We do not go into some dreamy state of semi-conscious existence. Jesus said, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. ”

For the apostle Paul dying before Christ returns is not his first desire, but if it should happen he will be at home with the Lord until the time when believers receive their new resurrected bodies. His focus is on the



home with the Lord until the time when believers receive their new resurrected bodies. His focus is on the resurrection when Christ comes. Paul knew his future is secure in the Lord regardless of what happens to this earthly body.

The individual who dies and who has trusted in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior goes immediately to heaven to be in the presence of the Lord. Though his or her body is deposited into the grave and decomposes, the soul and spirit, i.e. the immaterial part, the real person, goes immediately into the presence of our Savior. At the return of Christ for the church the dead in Christ will return with Him and their bodies will be raised so that their souls and spirits are joined with their resurrected, glorified bodies. At the same time, those who are in Christ and remain alive until Christ returns are simply transformed into their glorified bodies that will be like Christ's. This is contrary to the false ideas that the soul sleeps in an intermediate place. The Bible teaches that when the believer dies he goes to heaven to be with our Lord and is very much aware of His presence and those about him.

In Philippians 1:22-24 Paul clearly implies that as soon as he departs from the flesh he expected to be present with the Lord. Since the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from every sin, there is no process of expiation or purification to be endured or experienced in a kind of purgatory by believers after death.

The apostle Paul was confident that to die meant to be with Jesus Christ in heaven which was far better than being here in this body. Soul sleeping was the farthest thing from his mind.

The resurrection of the body is a future event, to take place at the second coming of Christ. However, the house of permanent dwelling, in which we enter at death, is eternal. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). The apostle is speaking of the change we believers will experience at death.

The Christian's heaven is to be with Christ, for we shall be like Him when we see Him as He is. In His presence the believer passes as soon as he is absent from the body, and into His likeness the soul is at death immediately transformed; and when at the resurrection, the body is made like unto His glorious body, the work of redemption, is consummated. Awaiting the consummation, it is an inestimable blessing to be assured that believers, as soon as they are absent from the body, are present with the Lord, writes Charles Hodge (2 Corinthians, p. 123).

When the soul leaves its earthly tent, it will not be lost in immensity, nor driven away homeless and houseless. It will have a house and home in heaven with Christ. The soul does not cease to exist at death. It does not sink into a state of unconsciousness. It does not go into purgatory; but, being made perfect in holiness, it does immediately pass into glory. As soon as it is absent from the body, it is present with the Lord (Hodge, p. 112-13). The he adds, The soul therefore at death enters a house whose builder is God. . . . Being made by God it is *eternal*. It is to last forever; and we are never to leave it. . . . Heaven is an abode which, once entered, is retained forever. ”

When the apostle tells us that to be absent from the body, he is referring to his physical death. To be present with the Lord was like going home and therefore to be with the Lord in heaven. When the apostle says in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope he is using a metaphor for death which compares physical death to sleep.

For the believer in Christ, death is somewhat like sleep. Sleep as a metaphor for death is used only of the

For the believer in Christ, death is somewhat like sleep. Sleep is a metaphor for death is used only of the believer in Christ in the New Testament. Death is like sleep to the believer. The person in a deep physical sleep does not cease to exist and neither does the dead person cease to exist. Therefore, the grave is like a deathbed for the body. But the believer's soul and spirit are awake and enjoying the wonderful blessed presence of God.

Furthermore, as sleep is temporary so is the death of the body. Sleep is a beautiful figure of speech for death and therefore anticipates our resurrection. There is no suggestion of soul sleeping. All those who are dead in Christ are *now* in His presence in heaven including the Old Testament saints (cf. Matt. 17:3). Those who are dead in Christ now and those who die before Christ returns will all receive resurrected bodies at that time (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Moreover, there is going to be a new heaven and a new earth which apart from Christ's atoning death would not have been possible. Calvary's earthquake answered Sinai's as if to say the Law has been fulfilled in the death of Christ. The penalty has been paid in full. Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead. The believer is no longer under the law, but under grace. The one sacrifice of Christ sanctifies the believer forever. God does not impute to the penitent believer his sins unto condemnation. God treats the believer as one for whom all his sins, past, present and future are infinitely satisfied and has a perpetual claim to the sacrifice of Christ.

### ***Are you ready?***

The sacrifice of Christ avails for the sins committed from the foundation of the world to the final consummation. It affords a permanent and all-sufficient reason why God can be just and yet justify the ungodly, writes Hodge.

William Nicholson reminds us: At the instant of Christ's death the graves were opened. Remember that. At the instant of His death all our sins were completely answered for. The graves were not merely partly opened; the obstacles not merely partly done away. "

There is nothing left for us to achieve in the matter of our pardon and acceptance with God. We can add nothing to the work of Christ. Our salvation from sin is in Him at this moment, and it is perfect. What you and I must do is to receive Him, and enjoy Him forever. Remember, he that believes not shall be damned. "

Those who die without personal faith in Christ are shut out from the presence of the Lord in *Hades*, the current abode of the unsaved dead, and are conscious now of their punishment (Luke 16:23). In Luke 16 Jesus emphasized that it is a permanent place of suffering and not a temporary purgatory. They are waiting for the Great White Throne judgment and eternal punishment in Hell in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:4).

There is a judgment day coming for all mankind. Christ will judge and only those who have experienced the mercy of God in Christ who died for us can have confidence as we approach His day.

John 3:16-18, 36 reads, 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. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 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. . . . He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. "

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Series: Life of Christ

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