

The Elect's Appearance
Before the Judgment Seat of Christ

**The Elect's Appearance
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by Chris McCann

Electronic Bible Fellowship
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Preface

Perhaps the date of May 21, 2011 has faded from your memory? It should not have. The Bible and its Biblical calendar continue to insist that that day was indeed the beginning of Judgment Day for this world.

E Bible Fellowship and many of God's elect people have spent a great deal of time searching the Scriptures to find our error or to find correction regarding the date and declaration that was proclaimed to the world: "May 21, 2011, Judgment Day!" Despite all of our searching and questioning, we cannot find any fault with the timeline of history and the Biblical calendar that directed us to arrive at that date with such confidence that we dared to boldly share it with the world by using an exclamation point.

Since our diligent study of the Scriptures continues to show that the Bible will not budge or move off the date May 21, 2011 as the Day of Judgment, this can only mean that the Bible is still insisting that the final judgment of mankind *did* begin on that day.

Because God's elect people believe the Bible above all (even over what our own physical eyes tell us), we have returned to the Word of God with the understanding that it is Judgment Day. Knowing this, how then can we explain certain things that have been going on since May 21, 2011? For instance, why was there no *physical* earthquake or any *physical* destruction of any kind? The answer to these questions is that God often brings *spiritual* judgments to pass. As a matter of fact, some of the most important and major judgments recorded in the Bible were all *spiritual* judgments: man's fall in the garden of Eden, Jesus' drinking of the cup of wrath while in the garden of Gethsemane, and God's judgment on the corporate church, are all examples.

Next, we searched the Bible with the question in mind: if May 21, 2011, was Judgment Day, then why are we still here several years later? Is it possible for Judgment Day (singular) to be more than one day? And again, the Bible provided an answer that permitted us to

move forward. Indeed, there are times when God does speak of long periods of time as a single day (see Hebrews 3:8-9).

This led us to a very important question—one that personally impacted each person that God had saved—if God has brought the world into (spiritual) judgment and its Judgment Day (although a prolonged and drawn out judgment period), then how is it possible that the elect are still living and functioning on the earth? Should they not be raptured before the judgment? That's what we have long been taught by reformed theologians: that God will remove His people out of the world before proceeding to judge and punish its unsaved people.

Yet, again, if May 21, 2011 began the final judgment process, and since the elect were obviously not raptured out of the world, would not that mean that they were going through the judgment?

This booklet has been written in order to answer this very interesting question. We will find that the Bible has long taught, and in many Scriptures, that it has always been God's plan to bring all the elect people before His judgment seat, and to do so for a very special reason and purpose. At this time, the people of God are alive and remaining on the earth while God works out His end-time judgment program.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Our hope for the reader is that you will, ultimately, be comforted by the information found in this booklet and realize that no mistake was made concerning the date of May 21, 2011 as the beginning Day of

Judgment. And because no mistake was made we can be sure that each one of us is exactly where God wanted us to be.

Chapter 1: The Elect's Appearance Before the Judgment Seat of Christ

The Bible presents to us an incredible truth in the second epistle to the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ...

We are filled with questions after reading this statement. The first thing we wonder is: who are they which must make this appearance before Christ's judgment seat? The plural pronoun "we" seems fairly ambiguous. It seems like it could be referring to anyone at all.

However, a closer look at the context of 2 Corinthians chapter 5 reveals something very interesting and helpful to us in our desire to identify exactly who is in view by the use of the plural pronoun.

The Word "We"

Let's begin by reading all the verses leading up to verse 10:

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4) For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5) Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6) Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

The plural pronoun “we” is used 14 times in the above passage. The 14th time, in verse 10, the statement is made that “we” must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

The 13 times the plural pronoun “we” is used leading up to verse 10 can all be shown to point exclusively to God's elect:

v.1 “we know...we have a building of God...”; v.2 “we groan...desiring to be clothed...with our house...from heaven; v.3 “we shall not be found naked”; v.4 “we do groan...not that we be unclothed, but clothed upon...”; v.6 “we are always confident, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord”; v.7 “we walk by faith, and not by sight”; v.8 “we are confident, and willing, to be absent from the body...”; v.9 “we labor, that, we may be accepted of Him.”

After reading all of the statements made in this passage, it becomes obvious that the plural pronoun “we” can *only* refer to God’s elect in each case. It is certain that the unsaved people of the world are NOT groaning and desiring that their earthly house (their body) be clothed from heaven (i.e., to die and go to heaven). And it is certain that the unsaved people of the world have no confidence in the Biblical truths concerning life after death. And it is absolutely certain that none of the unsaved people of the world “*walk by faith and not by sight.*”

It quickly becomes apparent to the reader that each and every statement made in verses 1 through 9 applies exclusively to God’s elect people. This means that all 13 instances that the plural pronoun “we” is used in the first nine verses identifies only with God’s elect.

Therefore, we can rightly conclude that the reference to “we” in verse 10 is also directed solely to the elect people of God:

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ...

This observation is correct but nonetheless astounding to us. The people of God have long thought that they would be raptured out of the world before the Day of Judgment began. For over a millennium, theologians have taught that those people that God saved would NOT remain on the earth to go through the final judgment.

Of course, many of the same theologians also taught us that the elect people of God would not go through the Great Tribulation period. Commentaries have laid out elaborate scenarios in which the people of God are raptured out of the world and then, at that point, the Great Tribulation begins.

Yet we now know absolutely that that teaching is incorrect. In fact, we have already gone through the entire 23-year Great Tribulation period. The Lord foretold this would be the case in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8) And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

...

10) He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

In Revelation chapter 13, the Lord is discussing the loosing of Satan (called “the beast”) during the time of the Great Tribulation period. Notice that in the context of Satan’s loosing and overcoming of the saints (churches), God takes special care to let us know that that will also be the time of the “patience and faith of the saints.” Obviously, if the saints (elect) were raptured prior to the Great Tribulation then their patience and faith would not be a point of emphasis. The reason the patience and faith of the saints are highlighted here is only because they remained on the earth to go through the Great

Tribulation period. The use of the word “here” in the context of the loosing of Satan (the beast) and his victory over the camp of the saints serves to illustrate the point that God’s elect are indeed present in the world at that terrible time of Great Tribulation.

Here is the Patience of the Saints

Amazingly, in the very next chapter of the book of Revelation, we find a similar statement to what we read in chapter 13 concerning the saints. To begin with, we see that the context in view in chapter 14 is the final judgment of mankind. The language found there is clearly depicting Judgment Day:

Revelation 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11) And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Everything about these verses points to the Day of the Lord’s wrath. It even says so in verse 10, “...the wine of the wrath of God.” The verse also mentions “the cup of His indignation” and “tormented with fire and brimstone.” The next verse (11) goes on to speak of “the smoke of their torment” and “they have no rest day nor night.” It is all terrible language that anyone familiar with the Bible will soon recognize as the language often used in connection with the Day of the Lord, the final judgment of the unsaved people of the earth.

“Okay,” someone may say, “I see that, but so what? What’s your point?”

The point comes into view with the very next verse:

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Wait a second. That's very similar language to what we read in the previous chapter, in Revelation 13. In that chapter dealing with the Great Tribulation, God told us of many awful things that the beast was going to do during that time period, and then inserted the Scripture that declared:

Revelation 13:10b ... **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**

Once again, we realized that this statement was made to indicate the presence of God's elect on the earth during the Great Tribulation period. But this passage in Revelation 14 isn't addressing the Great Tribulation period at all, it has to do with the final judgment of mankind at the end of the world. Why would God insert a statement concerning the patience of the saints in the context of the end of the world?

Is the Lord insinuating that the elect will be in the world at the time the final judgment of the wicked is taking place? Is it possible that by explicitly saying, "Here is the patience of the saints," right after discussing the torment of fire and brimstone, that God is letting us know that the elect will be left on the earth while it is happening? And that this shocking experience will try their patience?

What an amazing thing for God to say in that awful context. What are we to make of this statement? Is there any other Biblical evidence that might support the idea that God's elect (saved people) would be present in the world during the outpouring of the wrath of God upon the ungodly?

The answer is, "yes." To our surprise, as we search the Bible we find quite a bit of additional Biblical support for this conclusion. In the next chapter, we will take a look at some other Scriptures that tie in with this incredible information that we are beginning to learn from the Bible.

Chapter 2: Isaiah 24

We discover, in the book of Isaiah, that God has moved His prophet to record a chapter which is completely focused on the final judgment of this world. It is Isaiah chapter 24. As we read through the chapter numerous statements confirm that the object of God's wrath is indeed the whole world:

Isaiah 24:4 **The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.**

5) **The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.**

In just the two verses shown above, the word "earth" is mentioned three times, and the word "world" once. The emphasis on the judgment of the world cannot be missed. The next verse, though, tells us something astounding in regards to this final judgment of the earth:

Isaiah 24:6 **Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.**

Twice more we find the word "earth" is used. The language of God's wrath upon the earth is unavoidable: "the curse devoured the earth," "they that dwell therein are desolate," and "the inhabitants of the earth are burned." Awful, ugly language. This verse is surely telling us that something horrific has happened to the inhabitants of the earth in the Day of Judgment. There is no doubt that it is all bad for them (cursed, desolate, burned) and yet, incredibly, we also read something that stands out in a remarkable way at the end of verse 6:

"... and few men left."

Immediately our mind fills with questions. How is it possible that all the rest of the inhabitants of the earth are burned and yet these few men remain? Why weren't they burned? Who are these few men? And why are they left?

First, let's try to identify exactly who the "few men" are. We don't have to look too hard in the Bible before we find that God provides Scriptural confirmation regarding their identity.

Matthew 20:16b ... **for many be called, but few chosen.**

The *few* who are chosen are God's elect. Out of mankind, God chose (elected) a certain number to become saved. They are only a tiny remnant out of the whole. The "few men left" in Isaiah 24:6 must be God's elect.

Therefore, we can know the following things about Isaiah chapter 24:

1. Isaiah 24 goes into detail describing the final judgment of the world.
2. We are told the inhabitants of the earth (most) are burned.
3. We are also told that few men are left. These few men are God's elect.

These conclusions are very interesting to us because they agree with the information we learned from Revelation 14:10-12 and from 2 Corinthians 5:10. Isaiah 24 offers strong support for the idea that God's elect will be left on the earth at the same time God is pouring out His wrath on the wicked ("the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left").

Additional Biblical Evidence

The idea we're examining is brand new to us. Theologians of the past, even the few faithful ones, did not present the teaching that God's elect would go through an intense period of spiritual judgment as they made an "appearance" before the judgment seat of Christ. This is something never previously understood. Therefore, we want to look at everything we can possibly find that relates to this question. Is there anything else in the Bible for us to look at?

Yes, there is. The Bible also makes a curious reference to God's people being *left* in the book of Zechariah:

Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

9) And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

To begin with, the word “land” in verse 8 is also translated as “earth” from time to time. Actually, it is the same Hebrew word translated as “earth” 13 times in the chapter we were just looking at (Isaiah chapter 24), which means that this verse could legitimately say, “that in all the earth.”

Also, the figure of two-thirds is used in the Bible to represent the unsaved. We see this in the following passage as David (a type of Christ) shows mercy to one-third (picturing the elect) and pronounces judgment to two-thirds (the unsaved that experience the wrath of God):

2 Samuel 8:2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

There's no question that the one line (one-third) that are spared point to those that Christ has saved, and the two lines (two-thirds) point to those that never do become saved.

Likewise, Zechariah 13:8 tells us that in all the land (earth) two parts are cut off and die (experience death), while one-third is LEFT THEREIN.

Yet again we find a reference to the elect (one third) being left. Where are they left? The answer is: therein! That is, in the land, which can only be the earth. They have been left in the same location where the two-thirds have been cut off and died. We can quickly see how Zechariah 13:8 fits in with what we read back in Isaiah 24:6. We find both unsaved and saved going through a similar experience. Only the

unsaved do not survive it (they are burned, or cut off and die), while the saved do survive it (they are not burned and they are not cut off – but somehow endure it and are left alive).

Does this idea of being left, or remaining, while others are destroyed, sound familiar to our ears? Where else in the Bible have we read language concerning God's elect people being left and surviving an awful judgment?

We Which Are Alive and Remain

The book of 1 Thessalonians records one of the most straightforward passages found in the entire Bible regarding the return of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the world:

1 Thessalonians 4:15 **For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.**

16) **For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**

17) **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

Significantly, in this well-known New Testament passage, God makes a point of emphasizing that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns on the last day, at the end of the world, He will gather up all His people that are **ALIVE** and **REMAINING** on the earth. Immediately we wonder, why does the Lord stress this point to the degree that He does? Twice He refers to those that are “alive and remain.” Remain from what? To remain implies that you are left over from something. It implies that this group of people have gone through something. Or, more accurately, they have experienced something extremely terrible and have endured it.

The reason that God states twice that Christ comes at the very end of the world to rapture His elect who are alive and remaining on the earth is not because they have been raptured out of the world prior to Judgment Day, but because they have already gone through and

completed the judgment program of God and are being raptured out of the world at its conclusion. The fire of God's wrath has been put to them as well as the rest of the unsaved inhabitants of the world. Only, the unsaved were destroyed by the fire. These blessed souls that are alive and remain at its end point were not destroyed by it. Instead they were purified by the experience of it.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12) Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13) Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

Once more, those people found to be alive and remaining at the return of Christ at the very end of the world, will be the ones that have gone through the trying fire of Judgment Day and as a result will have proven, to the glory of God, to be spiritual gold, silver, and precious stones.

Isaiah 24:15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

Chapter 3: God's Plan to Judge Both Saved and Unserved Alike

So far, we have seen that by the use of the plural pronoun “we” in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, the Lord is letting us know that it is His plan for the elect to make an appearance before the judgment seat of Christ.

Also, we have learned through several Scriptures that the Bible reveals that it was always God's intention for the elect to be left on the earth in order to go through the experience of the final judgment of mankind.

But this information is so new to us, and it is also so enormous in its implications, that we wonder if there is anything further in the Bible that might support it. Can we find any other Scriptures to support this frightening idea that God's elect will be left on the earth in order to make an appearance before the Lord's judgment throne in the time of the world's end?

The answer is yes indeed, the Bible does offer additional confirmation. Let's take a look at some other verses that also teach this truth.

The Quick and the Dead

Acts 10:42 **And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.**

2 Timothy 4:1 **I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;**

1 Peter 4:5 **Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.**

The old English word “quick” is a translation of Strong’s #2198 (*zao*). Besides “quick,” it is also translated as “life,” “lifetime,” “live,” “alive,” and “lively.” In fact, the Greek word translated as “alive” in 1 Thessalonians 4:15,17 (“we which are alive and remain”) is this same Greek word *zao* translated as “quick” in these verses. We could correctly translate these verses by saying, Christ “shall judge the alive and the dead.”

We find that this particular combination of words (alive and dead) is also used in another very helpful Bible verse:

Matthew 22:32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

God declares that He is not the God of the dead but of the living (#2198/*zao*). It’s important for us to realize how God views the unsaved people of the world: even though they may be physically alive, He views them as being dead because they have no life in their soul. This is how we can understand this seemingly contradictory statement:

Matthew 8:22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Of course, a physically dead person cannot, in any way, bury another physically dead person. It is impossible to understand this Scripture until we realize that the Bible, at times, may speak of someone that is physically alive, yet because they are in an unsaved condition, refer to them as being dead. Once we understand that truth, we can readily understand verses like Matthew 8:22. Basically, Jesus declared, “let the (spiritually) dead bury the (physically) dead.”

We have gained insight into the possibility that God may speak of spiritually alive people and spiritually dead people, and yet give no indicator that He is referring to the spiritual condition of people, and not their physical condition—once we understand this we can begin to understand the declaration that Christ is the judge of the *quick* (those people alive in their souls, or the saved) and the *dead* (those people dead in their souls, or unsaved).

Let's put this to the test. Does the Bible speak of God judging the unsaved (dead)? Yes! Absolutely. Isaiah 24:6 says the unsaved are burned. Zechariah 13:8 says they are cut off and die.

Does the Bible speak of God judging the saved (alive)? And again, the answer is yes! Absolutely. The saved go through the fire (Zechariah 13:8) and are not burned (Isaiah 24:6). We also read that we (the saved) must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

The Biblical evidence is mounting, but is there anything else we need to look at?

One Event to All

As we study the Bible we find that God is no respecter of persons. We are told that He sends the rain on the just and the unjust. We also find that the Bible tells us that there are not one set of circumstances for the saved and a completely different set of circumstances for the unsaved. Actually, God goes out of His way to make sure that all understand the equality of His actions:

Ecclesiastes 9:2 **All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.**

3) **This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all ...**

After reading Ecclesiastes 9:2-3, let's ask a couple of questions. First, what comes alike to all? The answer the Bible gives is ALL THINGS.

Secondly, all things come alike to whom? And again, the Bible answers TO ALL. With "all" referring to the righteous and the wicked.

Let's ask a third question: is there one event to the righteous, and a completely different event to the wicked?

No, not in any way. According to the Word of God, there is ONE EVENT TO THE RIGHTEOUS, AND TO THE WICKED. This means that the same event comes to both alike.

This equality concerning events was tested during the Great Tribulation period. Were the righteous (elect) taken out of the world before the Great Tribulation period so they would not have to go through it while the unsaved were left and did have to go through it? No way. We read in Revelation chapter 13, “here is the faith and patience of the saints,” revealing to us that the elect were indeed present in the world and went through the tribulation just like the wicked. And since we know that the Great Tribulation period concluded on May 21, 2011, our very own experience testifies to the fact that the righteous (God’s elect) went through the entirety of it just as the wicked did (those not elected to salvation)

What about Judgment Day? Will the saved be taken out of the world in order that they might escape that awful day, while the unsaved remain behind and are punished? Again, the answer must be a resounding NO. “Here is the patience of the saints” is also found in Revelation chapter 14 in the context of Judgment Day.

One event comes to all. One event comes to the righteous (saved) and to the wicked (unsaved). Both experience the same thing. This is why we find that the Bible also says:

Ecclesiastes 3:16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.

17) I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

Notice that Ecclesiastes 3:17 tells us that God will judge the righteous and the wicked. That is, to say it another way, God will judge the quick and the dead.

Yet again we find this same truth is stated. How is it possible that these numerous direct statements expressing God’s intention to judge

the elect with the non-elect were missed for so long and by so many theologians? How is it possible that even God's own elect people missed the Bible's teaching on the necessity for them to remain on the earth and to go through the experience of the final judgment?

We know that God is the One in complete control of the Scriptures and the things His people understand or fail to understand. He is in complete control of the opening up of truth to the understanding of the minds of His elect people. And He is in complete control of the times and seasons in which His people are granted understanding, by the opening up of their minds to the hidden and deep mysteries of the Word of God.

For whatever reason, it has not been God's will to reveal these things to generations past. He has kept them under wraps until this present time of the final judgment of mankind. We know that the Bible has revealed and broadcast to all that the Day of Judgment began on May 21, 2011. Further, the Bible insists that the world has been operating under the wrath of God since that time. And therefore, the Bible also insists that the judgment seat of Christ was set up on that date and has been in operation ever since. This means that God's elect have also been making an appearance before the judgment seat of Christ for several years up to now, and according to mounting Biblical evidence pointing to the end of this prolonged judgment occurring in the year 2033 A.D., it is very likely we will continue to appear before His judgment seat for several more years.

Christ Prays that His People NOT be Taken Out of the World

In the gospel of John, chapter 17, Jesus prayed for His people in a very unusual way:

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

To begin with, Christ prays NOT that God should take them out of the world, but "that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." This appears to be a rather strange prayer, does it not?

This verse is interesting to us because we have spent considerable time looking at several Scriptures touching on this very same idea. We were expecting to be taken out of the world, via a rapture, to escape the final judgment, and yet, that was not God's plan. Instead, the Lord has purposefully kept His people in the world, in order for them to go through the final judgment process. Many of the things we are learning today regarding the elect making an appearance before the judgment seat of Christ and experiencing the judgment of God in a tableau, have been learned as a result of our beginning to realize that God has left us on the earth to experience these things.

In John 17:15, Jesus also prays to the Father that His elect people should be kept "from the evil." But what evil is He talking about? We don't have to look very long in the Bible before we find our answer:

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ...

The above verse is a line taken from the Lord's prayer. Primarily, this petition is a request for salvation to escape the Day of Judgment (the evil).

The book of Ezekiel equates evil with the time of the end:

Ezekiel 7:5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.

6) An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.

Judgment Day is described as an evil day because it is a time of destruction for unsaved mankind. The Bible views anything bad happening to mankind (hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.) as being evil. Of course, there cannot be anything worse for mankind than the time when God executes judgment upon them.

Now, only due to the fact that God is revealing His judgment program to us, we are able to see the enormous ramifications of Christ's prayer. "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world..."—again, this means that the elect people of God are not to be raptured out of the world and escape the final judgment — "...but that Thou

shouldest keep them from THE EVIL.” Jesus is praying for the protection and safekeeping of all of those that He saved as they go through the evil day of God’s wrath. To be *kept from the evil* is language expressing God’s intention to preserve His people from the destructive flaming fires of His vengeful wrath.

The Biblical language is becoming quite clear to us regarding the people of God remaining on the earth to go through the last judgment. The Bible is also clear that it is God’s plan to judge the righteous as well as the wicked. But we wonder why? Why is this God’s plan? Why is He requiring those already saved to make this appearance before His judgment seat?

In order to adequately answer this question, we are going to look more deeply into two things: first, what exactly is this judgment seat of Christ? And, secondly, what does God mean by His use of the word “appear” in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10?

Chapter 4: The Judgment Seat of Christ

Let's read the verse in question from 2 Corinthians chapter 5 once again:

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Due to our advantageous position of going through the entirety of the Great Tribulation period, and continuing to live on the earth in those days *after* that tribulation, we now know that the Bible reveals the following information concerning God's program for Judgment Day:

- It began on May 21, 2011
- The door to heaven shut
- The lights of the gospel were put out
- God ended His salvation program
- The Lord began to pour out His cup of wrath upon the wicked
- Christ began to rule the nations with a rod of iron
- The elect began to "appear" before the judgment seat of Christ

What exactly is the "judgment seat of Christ"? Does the Bible give us any indication regarding how it has been set up and functions in the world?

We know that the judgment throne and judgment seat are synonymous.

Daniel 7:9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

10) A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

And,

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

Also,

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

In every verse where we find reference to the judgment throne or judgment seat, we also find that an emphasis is placed upon God “sitting” during the time of the world’s final judgment.

Why does God emphasize the fact that He sits upon His judgment throne or seat?

In order to answer that question, let’s first consider the spiritual meaning of “sitting” in the Bible. The Bible relates the act of *sitting* with that of *ruling*. We see this, for instance, in those that God has saved:

Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

We sit together in heavenly places with Christ because He has made us to be spiritual kings with Him. Therefore, we rule as kings with Him:

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

When kings sit upon their thrones they exercise rule over their kingdom. The spiritual meaning of *sitting* can also be seen in the language used regarding the man of sin:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The man of sin (Satan) was given rule over the world's churches and congregations. Therefore, he is pictured as taking his seat in the temple.

Rule them with a Rod of Iron

Since *sitting* spiritually represents *ruling*, we need to consider this Scripture once again:

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;

This statement can also correctly be read this way: "For we must all appear before the judgment *RULE* of Christ."

As mentioned previously, the plural pronoun "we" is referring to God's elect. Therefore, God's elect must all appear before the judgment rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The idea of a judgment "rule" of Christ is an interesting idea for us to consider because the Bible has also shown us that the time of the final judgment is actually a prolonged period of time, encompassing several years. And a time in which Jesus Christ is said to rule over the nations:

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

2) While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

Revelation 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16) And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

This verse in Revelation chapter 19 would not make much sense to us if we had not learned a great deal more about God's judgment program. Before, we used to think that Christ came and the world instantaneously ended. Yet, how could an immediate end of the world (at Christ's coming) be reconciled with the language found in Revelation 19:15? Yes, we could understand that in an immediate judgment and destruction Christ smites the nations, and that He treads them under His feet in the winepress of His wrath. All of that would still be understandable. But how could we ever have understood the phrase that "He shall rule them with a rod of iron"?

It's only now, from our unique perspective of going through the time of Great Tribulation, and of continuing to live on the earth for quite a lengthy number of days after the tribulation, i.e., the period of years called Judgment Day, that we can clearly see how it is that Christ smites the nations, while simultaneously ruling them with a rod of iron.

Of course, Jesus' rule over the nations of the world in the Day of Judgment is not a beneficial rule in any way. He is not ruling them for their good. Rather, He is ruling them with the intent of punishing them for their wickedness:

Psalm 2:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The rod of iron is a weapon of destruction toward the unsaved inhabitants of the earth. Yet, amazingly, we also see something wonderful in view when it comes to the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ in the time of the world's judgment.

Feed them with a Rod of Iron

The Greek word used by God to describe the outpouring of God's wrath in Revelation 19:15 is the identical Greek word used elsewhere in a positive sense concerning the spiritual feeding of the people of God. The Greek word *poimano* (#4165) is the word translated as "rule" in "*rule them with a rod of iron.*" It is also the same word used in the Gospel of John, after the great catch of fish:

John 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed (#4165) my sheep.

The use of this word in these two places is highly significant. Both Revelation 19:15 and John 21:16 have the same time period in view. Revelation 19:15 is describing the awful events of Judgment Day, the day that came immediately after the 23-year Great Tribulation period. Revelation 19:15 is, therefore, referring to May 21, 2011, and all the days after until God destroys this universe and creates the new heaven and earth.

Again, John chapter 21 has the same time period in its spiritual context. The great catch of fish points to the completion of God's salvation program that was accomplished by the end of the Great Tribulation period. The great catch of fish identifies with the great multitude that were saved out of Great Tribulation.

And that means that Jesus' command to Peter after the 153 fish have been safely brought to Him also identifies with the days after the tribulation, or Judgment Day.

So, we can see how the use of the Greek word *poimano* has everything to do with the time of God's final judgment on this world. Yet, it is being used in two drastically different ways. The first way, in Revelation 19:15, involves the wrath of God. When we read that Christ will smite the nations and rule (*poimano*) them with a rod of iron, there is nothing at all good or positive about it.

On the other hand, when Jesus commands Peter, “Feed (*poimano*) My sheep,” it has nothing to do with punishing the sheep. The feeding of the sheep is meant as a helpful and good command, something that will certainly benefit them.

How is it possible for God to use the same word and yet have two vastly different meanings attached to it, dependent upon whether an individual is saved or unsaved? That’s the nature of the Word of God. And we do recognize that the Word of God is what is in view in both cases. It is the Word of God that rules with wrath over the unsaved people of the world in the Day of Judgment. And it is also the Word of God that serves to feed the sheep of God. One Word, yet it accomplishes two entirely different things for different groups of people.

The Greek word *poimano* is used one other time in relationship to the end of the Great Tribulation period:

Revelation 7:9 **After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;**

...

14) **And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

15) **Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.**

16) **They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.**

17) **For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed (#4165) them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**

We can only be astonished as we read this passage. We find similarities with John 21, in the sense that a great multitude became saved (great catch of fish), and they are said to have come out of

Great Tribulation (the great catch of fish also ties in with the Great Tribulation period), and we also read that the Lamb (Christ) will feed them (feed My sheep).

Even more astonishing is the fact that the throne of God comes into sharp focus in Revelation 7, and “*he that sitteth upon the throne*” is the One that feeds the sheep. Remember our earlier discussion concerning the judgment seat of Christ, or the judgment rule of Christ, as He rules upon the throne in these days after the tribulation.

Revelation 7 illustrates the two simultaneous and great truths of Christ ruling with a rod of iron. First, He rules with His Word, the Bible, to punish and to destroy the wicked. Secondly, He uses the very same Word to feed the great multitude that He saved and brought out of Great Tribulation. The Word of God, the Bible, accomplishes this dual purpose throughout the entire prolonged judgment period.

There is one more Scripture, in the book of Isaiah, that brings this duality into sharper focus for us:

Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

It's clear from this verse in Isaiah that God is speaking of His coming at the end of the world. “The Lord GOD will come” is fairly straightforward language describing the coming of the Lord at the time of the end. It matches what we read in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

After Isaiah 40:10 tells us that the Lord GOD will indeed come, and adds, “His arm shall rule for Him,” which reminds us that Jesus rules with a rod of iron at the time of the end, it goes on to state the following in the very next verse:

Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

We can only stand in awe when we see things like this in the Word of God. In the New Testament, we find that God ties together two English words (“rule” and “feed”) via the use of the Greek word *poimano*. God also ties them together by using them both in the same time period of after the Great Tribulation and the entry into Judgment Day. From the manner in which God uses these two words, we discover His plan to punish the wicked (rule with a rod of iron) while simultaneously provide spiritual food for His elect people (feed My sheep).

As though these wonderful truths were not enough, we now find as we turn back into the Old Testament book of Isaiah, that God foretold of a time when He would come in judgment (“the Lord GOD will come”) and rule (“His arm shall rule for Him”). Additionally, He also declared His plan to feed sheep at the same time (“He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd”). How can we stand before such a Wise and Holy and all knowing God? By putting these two ideas together in Isaiah 40:10-11, the Lord is clearly demonstrating to us His glorious omniscience. He truly does know the end from the beginning.

By seeing how God uses the Greek word *poimano*, we can also see exactly how we are to go about feeding the sheep. The very same Biblical information about judgment—information that brings utter destruction to the unsaved—provides spiritual food and nourishment to those that God has saved, His sheep. The Scriptures that teach concerning a shut door of heaven, or a darkened spiritual sun, are instrumental in Christ ruling and smiting the nations with a rod of iron. But the identical words, the identical doctrines, not only cause no harm to the true child of God, they actually serve to accomplish the reverse. These bitter words become a source of spiritual food for those that God saved and brought out of great tribulation.

We have one last question to answer: Why does God want His elect people to appear before His judgment seat, or before His judgment rule? We will attempt to answer that question in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: We Must All Appear

2 Corinthians 5:10 **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ...**

Are only the elect being spoken of in this verse? Or do all people have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ?

We have to use some caution in answering that question. While it's true that all the unsaved are brought before God's judgment throne for punishment in the time of the final judgment, it is also true that only the elect (saved) people of God make an appearance before the judgment seat.

That sounds contradictory. How is it possible for the unsaved to come before God's throne of judgment to be punished, and yet, for only the saved to make an appearance before the judgment seat?

The answer is found through careful analysis of the Greek word translated as "appear." It is the word *phaneroo* (#5319 in Strong's Concordance). *Phaneroo* is used 47 times in the Greek New Testament. Here are a few places it is found:

Mark 4:22 **For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested (#5319) ...**

The word "manifested" is the word *phaneroo*. We see from its use in Mark 4:22 that it is a word that describes revealing something that was previously hidden or unknown.

This word is also used in the Gospel of John:

John 7:4 **For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew (#5319) thyself to the world.**

Again, we see that the context is referring to things that are secret or hidden, and that the Greek word *phaneroo* is used to express its revealing or showing.

We find this word also used in relationship to Christ's resurrection:

John 21:14 **This is now the third time that Jesus shewed (#5319) himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.**

The resurrection of Christ was very mysterious. The very idea of it was strange and almost unheard of. Jesus did rise from the dead early the third day, but if He had simply gone to heaven from that point, many people would not have realized the tremendous thing that happened at His grave site early Sunday morning. Therefore, God arranged for Jesus to show Himself (*phaneroo*) to various people. We can clearly see that the point of this "shewing" of Himself was to demonstrate the fact that He had indeed come back to life. He had truly risen from the dead.

So far, we've seen that *phaneroo* is a word used to reveal things previously hidden, or things secret, or things that require further demonstration (like the resurrection of Christ in 33 A.D.).

This use of the word is fairly consistent in the following Scriptures:

Romans 16:25 ... **according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,**
26) **But now is made manifest (#5319) ...**

Ephesians 5:12 **For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.**
13) **But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest (#5319) by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest (#5319) is light.**

Colossians 1:26 **Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest (#5319) to his saints:**

Again, and again, this word is being used by God in a remarkably similar way. To show forth, to reveal, or to demonstrate something that has been previously mysterious or hidden.

The Manifestation of Jesus in History

A few years ago, serious Bible students were astounded to learn the incredible truth that Jesus Christ had actually died for the sins of His people, and made payment for those sins, at the foundation of the world. We really should not have been shocked at all by this information, because the Bible plainly stated that this was the case:

Hebrews 4:3b ... **although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.**

Revelation 13:8b ... **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

Yet it was an incredible surprise to the people of God because God did not open up the understanding of His people to this teaching until the time of the end was reached. Then, the Spirit of God showed us (through the comparison of Scripture with Scripture) that Jesus performed His atoning work from the foundation of the world. It was at that point that He died and paid the law's demands (of death) for the sins of His chosen people.

We also learned that Jesus' entry into the world, as He was born of the virgin Mary, and walked as a man among the people of the earth, was done in order to demonstrate His mysterious atoning work, or hidden work, performed before this world was ever created. Since His glorious works were finished before mankind was even created, no one could have witnessed them. As a result, these works were secret things insofar as the creature man was concerned.

However, God developed a plan to reveal the majestic atoning work of Christ to mankind, to demonstrate it to all the world. His plan included Christ, eternal God, entering the human race and becoming a man. This would produce the manifestation of the Saviour in the flesh:

1 Timothy 3:16 **And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest (#5319) in the flesh ...**

More than this, though, God further planned to demonstrate the completed work of the atonement by having Jesus illustrate the things done at the foundation of the world in a living tableau.

Hebrews 9:24 **For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:**

25) **Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;**

26) **For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared (#5319) to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**

A proper reading of this passage helps us to see that it speaks of Christ suffering once at the point of the world's foundation to pay for sin. And once in time (33 A.D.) to make manifest that suffering for all to see.

Perhaps the plainest statement regarding Christ's manifestation to showcase the atonement accomplished at the world's foundation is seen in the first epistle of Peter:

1 Peter 1:19 **But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:**

20) **Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest (#5319) in these last times for you,**

We see that verse 19 tells us that Jesus was as a Lamb, foreordained before the foundation of the world, which agrees with the statement in Revelation 13:8 that Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Additionally, we find that 1 Peter 1:20 goes on to explain:

... but was manifest (#5319) in these last times for you.

Once again *phaneroo* appears. Remember it is used to shine the light on things mysterious, or secret, or hidden. *Phaneroo* is the word that

serves almost as an illustration of whatever is being discussed. It is a word that conveys a demonstration is in progress.

Christ made payment for sins at the foundation of the world; but made manifest (shewed forth) that mysterious work in time.

Okay, you might be saying, fine. We already know these things. What does Jesus' manifestation have to do with the elect's appearance before the judgment seat of Christ?

Jesus' time of being made manifest has a great deal to do with our present time period of Judgment Day. The reason it is so significant is that God uses the same Greek word *phaneroo* (#5319) in the verse that we've been looking at:

2 Corinthians 5:10 **For we must all appear (#5319) before the judgment seat of Christ ...**

The use of *phaneroo* drastically changes our understanding of this verse. To begin with, we can immediately see why this verse can only be speaking of God's elect making an appearance and not unsaved people. We are going to take a little time in order to explain how we can know, with utmost confidence, that those making an appearance before Christ's judgment seat are only those that He has saved.

The Elect (Saved) Have Already Been Judged in Christ at the Foundation of the World

We looked at a couple of Scriptures earlier that showed that Christ died, and His works were finished, at the foundation of the world. It was at that point in eternity past that Jesus was laden with the sins of all those people (His elect) that He intended to save. The Bible tells us that God selected everyone to be saved before this world even began:

Ephesians 1:4 **According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

The Bible also reveals to us that all these chosen (elect) people are counted to have died, as it were, in Christ, at that point of the world's foundation:

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ...

When we read about baptism in the Bible it has to do with having our sins washed away. All those predestinated to salvation had their sins laid upon Christ, again, at the foundation of the world; and God then put to death God (in a way we simply cannot understand) as Christ died for the sins of His people. His death provided payment which satisfied the demands of the law of God for the many sins laid upon Him (the law's demands for transgression is death). As Jesus made that awful payment, He cleansed all those people whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life from their sins. As a result, we were baptized (had our sins washed away) in Him.

Since the demands of the law of God regarding our sins was satisfactorily met, we became free from the law. By paying for our sins, God obligated Himself to apply that salvation to each and every one of us at some point during our lifetimes as history would later unfold.

Well, if all the sins of all the elect have already been paid for, then why in the world are they making an appearance before the judgment seat of Christ at the time of the end of the world?

This is exactly the point of focus that the Greek word *phaneroo* brings to us. Remember, Jesus made payment for sins at the foundation of the world. He died and His death completely satisfied the law's demand for the sins of all those that were laid upon Him.

Nonetheless, Jesus still entered into the world and showcased the things He had done before the world was, by demonstrating them to the world in a living tableau. He made manifest His death and payment for sin by going to the cross in time and showcasing His saving work in human history.

God's elect people are said to be the body of Christ. The Bible closely identifies those that Christ has saved with the Saviour Himself. In fact, the Bible speaks of the body of Christ (the company of elect true believers) filling up the suffering of Jesus.

Jesus died twice for sin—once to pay for it and once to demonstrate that He paid for it. Likewise, the body of Christ (elect true believers) also experience a two-fold process for their sin—they are judged once in Christ as He paid for their sins at the foundation of the world, and they are also judged once in time (beginning May 21, 2011) in order to demonstrate the fact that Jesus had indeed already paid for their sins.

The Greek word *phaneroo* can only refer to God's elect because it is only God's elect that previously experienced the judgment of God (in the Person of Christ). The sins of the unsaved people of the world were not laid upon Jesus at the foundation of the world, and therefore they did not experience the judgment in Him at that point. And since the unsaved have not had any previous encounter with God's judgment upon them, their coming before God in the time of the world's final judgment is not a manifestation (that is, showing forth a previous judgment), because it is the first time they are experiencing it.

Therefore, it is only possible for the elect people of God to make an *appearance* before the judgment seat of Christ.

Chapter 6: We Shall All Stand Before the Judgment Seat

When trying to discover truth in the Bible, it is necessary to always search the Scriptures in order to find all pertinent information related to the subject that you are interested in examining. In this case, our subject matter involves the judgment seat of Christ. We've spent some time looking carefully at the statement found in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10, but there is also a similar verse recorded in the book of Romans:

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

We see some of the same language that we saw in 2 Corinthians 5, yet there are also some differences. One main difference between Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 is that instead of *appear*, we find the word *stand*. The Greek word translated as “stand” is #3936. It is a compound word—*para* (#3844), a preposition, and *histemi* (#2476), to stand—that can also be translated as “brought before” and “present,” as we find in these two verses:

Acts 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before (#3936) Caesar ...

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present (#3936) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The primary Greek word, *histemi* (#2476), has been placed by God in some very interesting passages of the Bible:

**Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.
35) For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.**

36) Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand (#2476) before the Son of man.

There's no question that the context of these verses in Luke 21 is the time of the final judgment of this world. And it is at that point in time that the Lord makes reference to those that should watch and pray, to be accounted worthy—to “*STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.*”

Since we've been studying this issue, we are now more adept at recognizing this type of language. We see right away that the context is the end of the world and Judgment Day. And yet the prayer God encourages people to make is not to escape the judgment, but instead, it is an encouragement to pray so that you can stand before the Son of man. The implication is that one cannot escape the judgment itself. Again, as we've seen the Bible stress, there is one event to all. God's plan is to judge the righteous and the wicked. The elect are not removed out of the world to escape it—they are left to go through the spiritual fire of that awful day.

The implication we find in Luke 21:36 is that it is a good thing if one is able to stand before the Son of man. Since this kind of thinking goes contrary to what we've previously thought and understood, we want to slowly consider why this is so.

Who Shall be Able to Stand?

A passage detailing the end of the world located in the book of Revelation will help us to understand why the Bible is viewing the idea of “*standing before the Son of man*” as a positive thing:

Revelation 6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16) **And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**

17) **For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

From this passage, we quickly see that the point of the question, “*who shall be able to stand?*” has to do with surviving or enduring the time of the outpouring of the wrath of God. If a man could stand and go through such a terrible experience, then He would not be destroyed—he would live. Of course, the sorrowful fact for all of the unsaved inhabitants of the earth is that none of them will be able to stand. None of the wicked will endure the great day of His wrath. All unsaved people will be utterly wiped out. This is what the Bible declares elsewhere as well:

Psalm 1:4 **The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.**

5) **Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**

The ungodly will *NOT STAND* in the *JUDGMENT*! In other words, the ungodly will not endure to the end. They will not survive its conclusion. At the end of the prolonged Day of Judgment, the unsaved people of the world will be annihilated—they will be burned up, perished forevermore.

The elect believers have always known these things insofar as the wicked are concerned. There is nothing new about that. However, what is new is that we have not known nor understood that the people of God, the righteous children, the elect people, will also stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And yet, since God says we will stand before the Son of man, He is also letting it be known that His people will endure the grievous Day of Judgment. They will go through the fire and successfully come out the other end. They will endure to the end:

Ephesians 6:11 **Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand (#2476) against the wiles of the devil.**

...

13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (#2476).

The Greek word *histemi* is found two times in the verses above. The reference to the “evil day” is a reference to Judgment Day. The fact that the elect people of God are clothed with the armor of God indicates that they are sufficiently equipped to stand, or endure, through the final judgment process the Lord has planned for this world.

Any soul that has not been truly saved lacks the necessary spiritual armor to protect itself against the incessant fires of the wrath of an angry God. As a result, they will ultimately burn up.

The Wicked Will Burn, the Righteous Will Endure the Fire

Malachi 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3) And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13) Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15) If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the

LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2) But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

3) And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

The Bible's language is remarkably consistent concerning the time of God's final judgment. The wicked will be burned up and perish. The righteous will survive. They will endure. They will stand at the day's end.

In Ephesians chapter 6, we've already seen that the reason these few will be left alive, remaining on the earth, finally to be raptured on the last day, is because they possess the proper protection or armor of God. This same truth is found in other places also, but stated a little differently:

2 Corinthians 1:24b ... for by faith ye stand.

And,

1 Peter 5:12 ... I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

We stand by faith, and we stand in grace. The people of God endure to the end only because of the great mercy, love, and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ in saving them.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

We no longer have to wonder why God says that those which endure to the end will be saved. The Bible is clear: anyone that stands and remains through the fires of this terrible, terrible time, does so only because they have had their sins paid for by Christ at the foundation of the world. God has established His end-time judgment program so that no one else but the truly saved will be able to stand. And none else but those whose sins were washed away will endure to the end.

Chapter 7: God Gets the Glory

We have come to understand God's program of salvation and its outworking in time over the course of many hundreds and hundreds of years. Actually, God has been busy faithfully fulfilling His salvation program over thousands of years. And yet, when it comes to God's end-time plan for an extended judgment being carried out over several years, it somehow seems to be too long for us. When some believers hear that Biblical evidence is pointing to a prolonged judgment period of perhaps as many as 22 years (23 inclusively), they sadly shake their heads at the thought of going through such a long period of time. It all sounds very discouraging to them.

Many of God's people hear of the things we've been discussing in this booklet and they wonder why it has to be this way. Why must this be such a long process? Why doesn't God simply destroy the wicked in an instant and be done with it? And why make the elect children of God go through this terrible ordeal?

We have tried to answer some of these questions throughout this study. But there is one aspect to this whole thing that we haven't spent enough time on, and that is that the events of this prolonged Judgment Day have been designed by God to bring glory to Himself.

For example, in Isaiah 24, in the middle of this frightful chapter wherein the Lord is describing the final judgment of this world again and again, the Lord makes this statement:

Isaiah 24:15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

The fires are the fires lit as a result of God's furious anger over the sins of mankind. It is the fires of the final judgment. In those very fires, God calls out to His people that they bring glory to Him. Glorify the LORD in the Day of Judgment.

We have spoken concerning the truly saved people of God standing before the judgment seat of Christ and enduring that awful, evil day.

The fact that the elect will endure the fire is what will serve to bring God the glory due unto His name.

Let's take a look at a verse in Proverbs that relates to this idea:

Proverbs 12:7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

After seeing several Scriptures earlier in our study, we immediately recognize that this verse is speaking of the Day of the Lord, the time when the wicked are overthrown:

Genesis 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25) And he overthrew those cities, ...

And once again, we see that in the Day of the Lord's wrath that "*THE HOUSE OF THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL STAND*," which exactly matches the many Bible verses we have previously looked at. One event to the righteous and to the wicked. One event to all.

This proverb, however, reminds us of something we read elsewhere in the Bible. It reminds us of the parable that Christ spoke in the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26) And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

As we carefully examine this parable, we find Jesus making reference to two houses: one house was built by a wise man, and another house was built by a foolish man.

We can see how the wise and foolish relate to the righteous and the wicked, or to the quick and the dead, or to saved people and to those that are not saved.

We're not saying too much when we say that the one house represents the people that God saved. As a matter of fact, that's precisely the Biblical language:

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Notice that both houses—the house of the wise/righteous, and the house of the foolish/wicked—were subjected to a vicious storm. When reviewing the passage, you will find that the destructive force of the storm was equal against both houses.

- The rain descended, the floods came—the flood of Noah's day has taught us that rain is most definitely a weapon in which God can bring judgment.
- The winds blew and beat upon that house—it was the wind that blew upon the house of Job's sons and killed them; it was the wind that stirred up the storm at sea against Jonah's ship; it is the chaff that the wind drives away. The wind is often used as an expression of God's wrath.

The storm that beat upon both houses was a picture of the outpouring of the wrath of God in the Day of Judgment. Christ's parable was given to illustrate the wonderful truth that even though the righteous and the wicked alike experience the powerful forces at work in that evil day, the final result will be that only the house of the wicked is

overthrown. The house of the righteous will be left standing at the end.

Why, though? Why does one house fall and not the other?

The Lord Jesus' parable gives us the answer:

- Wise man's house—and it fell not: for it was **founded upon a rock**.
- Foolish man's house—and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

The only reason one man's house stands, while the other falls, is because one house was built upon a Rock. Christ is the Rock. Christ is the foundation for the spiritual house He constructed. And since Jesus is their foundation they are able to withstand all that comes against them. Ultimately, at the end of the prolonged Day of Judgment, all the saved people of God will have endured before Him, not for any strength or power in themselves, but only because Christ kept them safe and secure and enabled them to endure the storm and see it through until its completion. Thus, the deep penetrating gaze of God upon His judgment throne was sent to look deeply within each one of them for the slightest bit of sin, and yet was unable to find any guilt or wrongdoing that had not already been paid in full. The Rock thus supported them through the storm until it ran its course.

As the Lord's people arise out of the depths of this judgment, and are then equipped with new resurrected bodies and souls, and are exalted to enter into the new heaven and the new earth—in that day God will receive all the glory for their continuance in the faith and endurance unto the end.

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19) This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

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