

Essential Foundations

Prepared for Eternity

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Hebrews 6:1-3 (NKJV)

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.

I. Resurrection of the Dead

Romans 10:8–10 (NKJV)

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:12–26 (NKJV)

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NKJV)

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:50–57 (NKJV)

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Death and Eternity from a Christian Perspective**A. We never die****John 11:23–26 (NKJV)**

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

B. When our bodies die, our spirits immediately pass into the presence of God in Paradise.**Luke 23:43 (NKJV)**

And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

2 Corinthians 5:6–8 (NKJV)

So we are always confident, 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 confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

C. At the return of Jesus, the spirits of those who have passed are reunited with their transformed earthly bodies that become perfect and eternal.

II. Eternal Judgment

Hebrews 9:27–28 (NKJV)

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Understanding the Two Eternal Judgments of God

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Romans 14:8–12 (NKJV)

For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

2 Corinthians 5:9–11 (NKJV)

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

1 Corinthians 3:11–15 (NKJV)

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Revelation 22:12–15 (NKJV)

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

2. The Great White Throne Judgment**Revelation 20:11-14 (NKJV)**

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Small Group Guide: Prepared for Eternity

Opening Question:

When you think about standing before God someday, what feelings come to mind? Do you feel peace, or maybe a little nervousness? How does knowing about eternity shape the way you want to live today?

Our Eternal Home

As believers, we are designed for eternity. The Bible makes it clear that this life isn't all there is—our true home is with God forever, through Jesus Christ. One of the most important truths is the resurrection: because Jesus rose from the dead, we have hope that we will also be raised to eternal life.

When our loved ones who know Jesus pass away, we're comforted in knowing they are with the Lord immediately, and that one day, we'll all be reunited with new, imperishable bodies. This isn't just wishful thinking—it's rooted in the truth of Jesus' victory over death. And because of that, we can live confidently, knowing that death is not the end.

But that's not all—there's also the important truth of divine judgment, which the Bible teaches us is coming. Every person will stand before God when this life is over. There are two significant judgments to remember:

The Judgment Seat of Christ:

For believers, this is a time of accountability—not about earning salvation, because Jesus already secured that for us. Instead, it's a review of how we've lived in response to His grace. Our faithfulness to Him matters, and we will receive rewards for how we've served and loved. This judgment reminds us that our daily choices have eternal significance.

The Great White Throne Judgment:

For those who haven't trusted in Jesus, this is the final judgment, when everyone's eternal destiny is revealed. Those who reject Christ face eternal separation from God, often called hell. But as followers of Jesus, this truth should inspire us to share His love and salvation with others, knowing how urgent and important it is to bring the good news.

Understanding these judgments encourages us to live with purpose and reliance on His grace. It reminds us that how we live today has an impact on our eternal future, and it fuels our desire to be faithful in all that we do.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the promise of resurrection help you face life's challenges?
2. What does the idea of the Judgment Seat of Christ motivate you to do differently?
3. How does the reality of the Great White Throne influence your understanding of sharing your faith?
4. In what ways does focusing on eternity help you prioritize your daily life?
5. How can you encourage someone else with the hope of eternal life and God's justice?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the hope we have through Jesus—that death is not the end and that You're coming again. Help us to live with purpose and integrity, knowing our lives matter to You and that our future is secure in Your promises. Give us courage and love to share this hope with others. Keep us faithful until You return. In Jesus' name, Amen.