

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST - Part II

■ *A Study in II Corinthians 5:10 by Dr. John DeBrine* ■

The credibility gap that once alienated the public from people in high places now seems to separate us from one another in all walks of life. Americans lie on their income tax return to the tune of millions of dollars a year. Doctors fake reports in order to profit from Medicare patients. Prize athletes at great universities are kept eligible for competition through bogus credits and forged transcripts of academic records. Children soon acquire the cynical assumption that lying is the normal tack for TV advertisers. In the words of a *Time* magazine essay, ours is a 'huckstering, show-bizzy world, jangling with hype, hullabaloo, and hoey, bull, baloney and bamboozlement.' After a while, people tend to expect not to hear the truth anymore; in 1976, a national poll showed that 69% of Americans believed that the country's leaders had, over the last decade, consistently lied to the people. (From What God Expects from Ordinary People, pg. 211)

The unacceptable standards just outlined will not mark a believer if they keep in mind that ahead of them is the Judgment Seat of Christ. Last month we noted:

I. WHAT THIS TEXT CANNOT MEAN

(it can't lessen the Gospel of God) and,

II. THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THE TEXT APPLIES

The key is the pronoun "we" and it is a reminder to check the context for the details. The pronoun "we" takes us all the way back to II Cor. 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." Who are the "we"? The answer to that is II Cor. 5:1-9.

1. "We" refers to the people who have a house in heaven. (vs. 1-4)

2. "We" refers to the people who have the Holy Spirit. (vs. 5) "Now he that wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

3. "We" refers to the people enhanced by their hope. (vs. 6-8) "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

4. "We" refers to people who are stirred by the hope. (vs. 9) "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

The issue is clear – when you have the Holy Spirit, you are sure of Heaven! Are you among the "we"? If you are not sure, ask for the cassette Explaining Christianity.

What is the meaning of the text? One of the several key words in the text is the word "bad". It is the Greek word *phaulos*. This is not the word used for evil as found in Matthew 21:41 where you read: "They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." The Greek word there is *kakos* and it means "wicked". But in II Corinthians 5:10, the word means "useless" (*phaulos*). At the Judgment Seat of Christ we'll be examined as to how much of our activity here on the Great Planet Earth had eternal value and how much did not; i.e. how much time

and effort was wasted and how much was invested? I use this message while on the road preaching and I also use the video Seven Signs of Christ's Return to prove how close we are to I Thess. 4:16-18. I then make a list of activities that are not necessarily wrong but they don't have eternal value. For example, I used to be a Red Sox addict. Baseball is not wrong but it has no eternal value and letting sports become your life is wrong. I

"HOW MUCH INVESTING FOR ETERNITY WERE YOU OCCUPIED WITH THIS PAST WEEK?"

learned that one the hard way in 1986 when I had emergency surgery at NE Baptist Hospital with World Series tickets in my brief case! Some of you will remember that because you didn't call to check on my health – you called to ask if I'd give you my tickets! I learned much in 1986 about friendship and priorities! Instead of listing those things which have no eternal value let us **know** what does have eternal value.

Study I Thess. 2:19-20: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." This is a reference to those people who will be in heaven because we shared the Gospel. I have been on the air in New England for 35 years. We have never seen any effort during that time which equals our use of the cassette Decision Determines Destiny. (Be sure to ask for it and give it to an unbeliever and send us the name of that person so we can pray along with you.) To show how God is using this

Continued on Next Page

cassette let me share some E-mail that was placed on my desk:

"Dear John, Dave and Dave..

Good news!! We gave the tape to 4 people. Two have become Christians. They are a Japanese couple – Tetsuro and Maki. Thanks for your prayers and for the tape. Also Tom has started attending church – we'll continue to pray for his conversion. Your programs are great. Thanks for all your efforts."

This is an illustration of that which has eternal value. Are you reaching people? Vision New England recently issued a report noting that fewer than 8% of New Englanders are evangelicals. That horrifies me and motivates me to get Songtime USA throughout New England but I must turn to people all over the world for support because you won't get sacrificial support from the mission field. Believe me – New England is a mission field!

SUMMARY:

Think ahead to the day when **YOU** will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What will be introduced – wood, hay and stubble plus a bonfire to eternally remove your non-qualifying efforts or will there be that which has Eternal Value?

There once was a rich man who was near death. He was very grieved because he'd worked so hard for his money, and

he wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him. An angel hears his plea and appears to him. "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you." The man implores the angel to speak to God to see if he might bend the rules. The man continues to pray that his wealth will follow him. The angel re-appears and informs the man that God had decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man chooses his largest suitcase and fills it with pure gold bars and places it beside his bed.

Soon after the man dies and shows up at the Gates of Heaven to greet St. Peter. Peter seeing the suitcase says, "Hold on, you can't bring that in here." But the man explains to Peter that he has permission. Sure enough, Peter checks and comes back saying, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag but I'm supposed to check it's contents before letting it through." Peter opens the suitcase to inspect the worldly items that the man found too precious to leave behind and exclaims, "You brought pavement?!!!"

How much investing for eternity were you occupied with this past week? What are you taking to Heaven -souls redeemed by the blood of Christ or pavement?

We Love to Get Letters!

"I enjoy listening to Songtime every morning over WVNE on my way to work. I can't tell you the countless times I'm brought to tears because of joy or conviction from your ministry. I especially enjoy the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir."

-Quinebaug, CT listener

"I recently bought a walkman as I hadn't been listening to Songtime because of the strain of listening on the radio. Now I can put my radio in my pocket – put on the headphones and get my breakfast while listening to Songtime. I'm so excited about it, I'm telling everyone I know who has a hearing problem. Then I got challenged – am I that anxious to tell everyone that I have a Savior?"

-Raynham, MA listener



**TOUR TO BRANSON, MO
October 21-27**

Call Marge today to receive an itinerary and registration form for this wonderful trip. We have **16 openings** and we'd love to have you join us. We'll arrive in Kansas City and spend the night in the "heart of America". *Day 2:* We'll head to Eureka Springs, Arkansas where we'll visit the Precious Moments Chapel and that evening we'll attend the Great Passion Play. *Day 3:* After a morning of shopping and sight-seeing we'll head into the Ozarks to Branson nicknamed "The Music Capital of the World". We'll see The Promise, a musical based on the gospel, enjoy a dinner cruise on the paddle wheeler, Branson's Belle and have a beautiful cruise on Table Rock Lake. Cost is \$1199 pp/dbl occ (incl. Airfare, 12 meals, hotel, motorcoach, admissions per itinerary). Reservations deadline for this trip has been moved to July 15th.

SONGTIME

**35TH ANNIVERSARY
RADIO CELEBRATION**

Plan to join with us on Friday evening, June 25th at First Baptist Church in Weymouth, MA as we celebrate 35 years of Songtime being aired in New England and 50 years of ministry for Dr. John. We will begin this evening at 7 PM with some clips from the video "Seven Signs of Christ's Return" and at 7:30 PM we'll begin our evening service with music by one of our Songtime listeners "favorite artists" - Diane Susek. Message will be brought by Prophecy Today host, Jimmy DeYoung. There will be an opportunity at the end of the evening to ask questions of Dr. DeYoung.

**THE CELEBRATION
CONTINUES...**

September 10-12

The Songtime Corporation invites you to a weekend Bible Conference on Cape Cod at the Four Points Hotel on Rt. 132 in Hyannis, MA. We're pleased to have Steve Brown as the speaker for the weekend. Susan Cymbala – along with a mixed quartet from the Brooklyn Tabernacle – will provide the special music. Conference will begin on Friday night and will conclude on Sunday morning with a Worship Service. On Saturday afternoon, we'll enjoy Craigville Beach, Whale-watching and visiting many Cape Cod landmarks. The cost for the weekend is \$290 for a single room and \$340 for a couple. This cost includes 2 nights at the hotel, Saturday & Sunday breakfasts and Saturday banquet. A \$100 deposit by June 15th will assure you of a room. The remainder will be due by August 10th. Come and join Dr. John, the staff, and Corporation members for a weekend with a purpose!

Our trip to Germany, Austria & Switzerland June 4-12, 2000 will be an exciting event as we conclude the tour by attending Oberammergau's Passion Play. We need to know by June 15th if you're planning to join us.

Reaching Our Teens

Pastor Steve Butts - MILLERSVILLE BIBLE CHURCH

When I was fifteen years old, I chose to leave my home and take to the streets of Philadelphia. I was fully absorbed in the fast life of the big city. My family tried to help me. My parents loved and disciplined me but I rebelled against their efforts. My negative influence on my six younger brothers was not something they were willing to allow. I can still remember the day my parents gave me the ultimatum. After repeated efforts to help me turn my life around, they realized that I had no intention of changing. They offered to take me to a youth program to get help, but I arrogantly rejected their offer. It was such a

painful time for them and it saddens me when I think about how much I hurt them.

It wasn't long after leaving home that everything in my life began spiraling downward. I repeatedly got in trouble in school, and was finally expelled. I was a confused, selfish and angry teenager. I am certain that my teachers would have voted me least likely to succeed. Yet within a year, my life was turned around. My parents faithfully prayed for me and God answered.

Today, almost 25 years later, I continue to believe that troubled teenagers need to know about God's love and salvation. God graciously rescued me from

a destructive lifestyle during my teen years and he is still rescuing teens today.

When I hear about tragedies like the events at Columbine High School in Colorado, it grieves me deeply. Yet it also re-energizes me to continue to minister to teens. Teenagers can be greatly encouraged by knowing that we care about them. We need to connect with them in a meaningful way. We need to spend enough time with them to win their respect and positively influence their lives.

Although I am the senior pastor of a large church, I have chosen to teach the 9th through 12th grade teens Sunday School class. I gratefully welcome opportunities to encourage teens to stay on the right path through what might be one of the most difficult times of life.

We also need to encourage the parents of teens. I now know by experience that parenting teens is not an easy assignment. This knowledge motivated me to start a small group for parents of teens. We just completed our first year and have found the group to be mutually encouraging. There are many helpful books available for parents of teenagers. We simply study some of these books chapter by chapter and apply them to our homes. Perhaps someone reading this article could start a similar group.

The violence we are witnessing in our schools is alarming and discouraging. Yet we need to be motivated by it to find solutions. Do you pray for the teenagers, parents of teens and youth workers in your church? We should also pray for organizations like Youth for Christ and other effective ministries to teenagers.

I was once the type of teenager that people could easily "write off" as hopeless. Thankfully, God never gave up on me. I am still amazed at God's great love. I am also moved to action by His words through the apostle John. *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers....Dear children, let us love not with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."* -1 John 3:16,18 NIV

A "HYMNSTORY"

■ *Bill Dagle* ■

We live in a time when it seems that tragedy can strike anywhere - sometimes in the most unlikely of places. In our life here on earth, sadness and heartache knows no boundaries. Even for the Christian, there is no immunity to the pain that tragedy can bring. The challenge for the believer is in learning to trust that God is in control and knows what is best for us. We then have the responsibility to act on what He's teaching so that others might prosper from our instruction. An example of one who took that responsibility seriously was Pastor Luther Bridges.

This 26 year old preacher had promised his wife that when they saved enough money, they would visit her parents in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. It took some time, but when the day finally came, excitement filled the hearts of their three children in anticipation of seeing their grandparents. The hugs and kisses at the end of the day-long trip made the long dusty trail all worth while. As the sun set over that loving family's home, in 1910, joy filled the air at the grand reunion. Then tragedy struck.

Thinking it was the rising sunlight coming through his bedroom window, a neighbor across the street soon realized it was not the rising sun, but the rising blaze of fire. The house in which the Bridges family were sleeping was a mass of flames. The alarm sounded allowing Luther and the two grandparents to escape to safety. But the efforts to rescue his wife and three children were in vain. As the sun rose over the ashes on that fateful day in 1910, sadness now displaced the joy of the day before. In the days that followed, as the deep waters of sorrow flooded over Pastor Luther and the darkness of that night surrounded him, he remembered that the Lord had promised "Songs in the Night" and that He would never leave or forsake him.

It was during this period of heart searching and sorrow that he wrote:

*There's within my heart a melody,
Jesus whispers sweet and low.
Fear not, I am with thee, peace be still
In all of life's ebb and flow.*

The lessons from that tragedy have been passed down to us in the hymn: "He Keeps Me Singing". Through it we can learn to trust God in life and death. Romans 8:28 contains both laughter and tears, as those who trust in Jesus know that

■ Questions & Answers ■

Dr. Bob Burrelli - GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

Q: Can you explain the apparent contradiction between 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1? Who incited David?

A: These two parallel passages tell the same story and use the same words with only one major difference: the one doing the inciting in 2 Samuel 24:1 is God and in 1 Chronicles 21:1 it is Satan. This difference does not, however, support a contradiction, but two very important truths: 1) sometimes God and Satan are both involved in the trials of believers; and 2) when they are both involved, the reasons for their involvement are very different.

Both passages paint David in the twilight of his years as king and teach that he is unquestionably harboring an unhealthy amount of pride and self-esteem, for which he repents later (2 Samuel 24:10). Pride over what? Over his accomplishments, abilities, and military strength. David? The man after God's own heart? Yes. And don't be surprised. After all, he has become almost a legend to his people, the boy giant killer and, later, soldier par excellence. It was a reputation King Saul could kill for! You can imagine the occasions when David could be tempted to think more highly of himself than he ought. And David had his sinful moments, just like the rest of us. The census taking was one of them.

Taking a census was not evil. God commanded Moses to take two of them for good reasons. The reasons David took this census are unclear,

but clearly bad ones. The fact that he counted only military men suggests that he wanted to know the extent of his military power. But that is inconsequential when God is fighting for them. David apparently forgot that, and wanted to boast, to revel in human strength.

From the vantage point of 2 Samuel 24:1, we see God lovingly acting in the best interest of his own and replies, "Go ahead!" "Take the census!" "You'll be sorry." Often, God brings his own into trials to develop their character (James 1:2-4; Hebrews 12:11) and utter dependence upon his all-sufficient grace alone (2 Corinthians 12:5-7).

From the vantage point of 1 Chronicles 21:1, we see Satan implicated in inciting David too, but his motive was to collapse David's faith. Satan will try anything to get us to deny our God, and he can be very aggressive about it (Luke 22:31).

When we read each scene with the other in mind, we can see that David sinned against God because of a prideful heart. Both God and Satan played a part, as the same word, "incite," is used of both of them. God plays the tester, who wants to teach his beloved David a lesson. Satan plays the tempter, who wants David to forsake his God. Both participated with different goals, only to have God's be

reached.

We can praise God that his is always the outcome. Often, Scripture shows God working right alongside evil men, and Satan himself, to bring about his good and perfect will. This was true for Job, Peter, and even the Lord himself, during his temptation, betrayal, and crucifixion. God works for good and Satan works for ill in the same situation. In the end God's plan is always accomplished.

The *Songtime Newsletter* © June 1999.
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by Songtime, Inc., 131 Old Route 132,
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In the Songtime Bookstore...

- ☐ **Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire** by Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. As you read this book you'll see what happens when a handful of people humble themselves and take the Gospel seriously and discover the life-changing reality of the Holy Spirit. The congregation has grown in the past 25 years from 20 members to more than 6,000.

Hardcover book - Cost \$18 (includes P&H)

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