**The Judgment Seat Of Christ**

*by Jim McDonald*

“For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

The word “for” in this passage is the Greek word gar signifying “therefore” or “because” and in the previous verse the apostle had written, “… we make it our aim to be well pleasing unto him.” Paul’s desire to be “well pleasing” unto God was because he (and all) is to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. Of course (as the apostle will show) he did not serve God solely because of the terror (prospect) of having his life bared before all at Christ’s judgment seat; he was also moved (constrained) by the love of Christ: the love Christ has for us.

The warning that we will appear before God’s judgment seat, that we will be held accountable for the things we do in the body is not simply the teaching of the New Testament. The wise man wrote, “This is the end of the matter: fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or bad” (Ecc. 12:13f). A future judgment is certain for all. The Hebrew writer said, “It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this, the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Paul warned the Romans that they should neither judge nor set at naught their brethren: “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10-12; Isa. 45:23).

Note, please, that it is before the judgment seat of Christ that we will been made manifested. We understand that “God” will judge us, but Jesus is God and He said God had given all judgment into His hands (Jn. 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31). When Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem and then of the end of the world (Matt. 24, 25), He spoke of Himself as setting on the throne of His glory, gathering all the nations before Him and judging them (Mt. 25:31-33). Therefore when one reads in Revelation 20 of a great white throne and of one sitting on that throne, he knows that the One on that throne is Jesus although John did not specifically identify Jesus as such. Today Jesus is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2) — our Mediator. He is the One to whom and through whom we address our intercessions and prayers. But in the day of reckoning, He will no longer function in those previous relationships; He will then be our Judge.

In the judgment will manifest the things we have done in the body, whether good or bad. The words we speak; our feet for the places they carry us; our hands for the things they do — all these things will be laid bare before the throne of Christ. And, we need also to remember that God will not only hold us accountable for the things we do; He will hold us accountable for the things we fail to do. To those on His left hand at judgment He will say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison and ye visited me not …” (Mt. 25:41-43). Need we be reminded that James wrote, “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Can that faith save him?” (James 2:14).

At the judgment we will not only be held responsible for our deeds; we will answer for the thoughts and intents of our hearts. In 1 Cor. 4:5 Paul charged brethren, “Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart.” In Jesus’ sermon on the mount He said, “Ye have heard that it was said, thou shall not commit adultery; but I say unto you, that everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart” (Mt. 5:27f). And not only can we commit adultery without actually doing so; we can kill without doing so. All we need to do to be held responsible for murder is to hate (Mt. 5:21-24).

We must be diligent to see that all our service to God is from the heart. We are commanded to sanctify Christ in our hearts (1 Pet. 3:15). We should “keep our heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life” (Pro. 4:23). Let us always remember God’s words to Samuel: “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature … for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

**Did Alexander Campbell Start the Church?**

*by Jarrod Jacobs*

When discussing the subject of the church of Christ, we sometimes hear the comment made that the church of Christ was started by Alexander Campbell. Mr. Campbell was a well-known preacher in America in the 1800’s; but did he start the church of Christ, or any other church for that matter? The answer is no. Yet, the teaching that Mr. Campbell established a church is made because people do not know the simple teaching of the New Testament concerning the church.

To begin, Alexander Campbell could not have started the church of Christ. This is because folks like Mary, Peter, James, John, Phoebe, and Paul were among the members of it (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:28; Rom. 16:1, 16; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9). Saved people were added to the Lord’s church beginning in Acts 2:47, and continue to be added to it to this day. Alexander Campbell did not live in the first century. Nor did he die to purchase a church (Acts 20:28). Mr. Campbell lived from 1788 to 1866. In other words, he was born almost 1800 years after the Lord’s church was established in Acts 2.

Have you ever been to Paris, Kentucky and visited the Cane Ridge meeting house? If not, you need to go there and look at one of the grave markers in the cemetery. In the cemetery you will find the grave marker of William Rogers. Mr. Rogers’ headstone looks like many others of that era except for the inscription found upon it. William Rogers’ headstone reads as follows: “Born in Campbell Co., Va., July 7, 1784, removed with his father to Cane Ridge, Bourbon Co., April 1793. United with the Church of Christ at Cane Ridge in 1807.”

A significant date mentioned on the headstone is 1807. This is because 1807 was two years before Alexander Campbell came to America from Ireland, and three years before he preached his first sermon in America. How could Alexander Campbell have started the church of Christ if William Rogers was already in it in 1807? Further, in Celina, TN, there is a church of Christ who can trace the congregation’s beginning back to 1805. How could this be possible since Mr. Campbell wasn’t even in America at the time? The answer of course is that it is possible because Mr. Campbell didn’t start the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). The church of Christ began in this country when Christians came here simply preaching and teaching about the church found in the Bible! As was noted above, such things happened long before Alexander Campbell was in this land.

Mr. Campbell did much in his life to spread the gospel, but there is nothing the church of Christ does or practices that had its beginning with Mr. Campbell, or any other man (Gal. 1:6-9). The church of Christ follows what Christ has revealed in the New Testament (Jn. 12:48).