

The Last Day **5-30-21**

What will the end look like? For some of us, it will come at our death. But perhaps for some of us, it will be with the return of Jesus Christ our Savior. The New Testament tells us much about that day. In 1 Corinthians 15:23-24 Paul tells us that the order of events is this: Christ was raised first, then the dead will be raised, then we all will be taken back to be with Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:2 we are told that the last day is the day of resurrection, when all people (good and bad, John 5:28-29) will be raised up from the dead and transformed into bodies incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:43). 2 Peter 3:10-13 tells us that this is the same day that all things, all of the creation, down to the fine elements of all things, will be destroyed. Matthew 25:31-38 tells us that this last day is also the day of Judgment, when the rewards of righteousness and the wages of sin are paid out. Finally, Revelation 20:11-13 reveals that this is the day that we enter eternity.

These passages reveal to us that no one has entered these places yet. Since Jesus has not returned, No one is in heaven except Jesus (John 1:18). At the same time no one is in hell (2 Peter 2:17, 3:7), not even the Devil (1 Peter 5:8). These are places prepared for that last day.

One of the important points to consider is to ask ourselves if we are ready to enter that day. There are a great many things that we can consider about our preparation. First, there are many things we are told will not benefit us on that day. Our wealth and success will not help, as we see in Luke 16:19-23 and James 5:1-4. Our popularity and power will mean nothing (Matthew 16:26). But perhaps more surprisingly is what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23. There we see that people who “knew” Jesus would not enter, nor would people who had done “good” works. It does not matter that we know Jesus; even demons know Jesus. It matters that Jesus knows us.

So then what does matter? First, consider that we are told in Revelation 16:15 that what matters is that we remain clothed (in Christ) when Jesus comes. We put on Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27), and we remain in Christ through obedience to the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). Second, it matters that we have served others, particularly Christians. Jesus declared that if we have served the least of our brethren we can enter into His rest in Matthew 25:31-46. We must remain pure and undefiled (James 1:27). We must be a worshipper of God (John 9:31).

The Last Day will come like a thief breaking into a house in the middle of the night. The thief does not want to be caught; he breaks in when least expected. So it is with the last day; you will not expect it, and there will be no signs or wonders. The last day will be a day like any other. Therefore, being ready means you are ready NOW.