SOME SURPRISES AT THE JUDGMENT

The apostle John describes the scene of the judgment shown to him in a vision; “The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophets and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever ... The dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works... And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire” (Rev. 20: 10-14).

There are many surprises in this life, some good and some bad. A bonus, a tax notice, a bill we hadn’t expected, a gift from a neighbor, some criticism or compliment – these are part of life. But when life is over, there will still be some surprises for many people. These are surprises at the judgment. Many people don’t believe there will be a judgment. The atheist; who does not believe in God, obviously does not believe he will face God in judgment. The universalist, who believes that everyone will be saved, surly doesn’t believe there will be judgment. People who are living for this life are saying by their lifestyle, “This life is all”.

The final judgment is one of the most basic teachings of both the Old Testament and the New. Solomon wrote, “God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil” (Eccle. 12:14). Jesus pictured that judgment in Matt. 25:31-46, when He will “separate them one from another”. The apostle Paul wrote, “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.... For we must all be manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath, whether it be good or bad” (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). The conclusion is inescapable; it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). The illustration of the physical death of man illustrates what Jesus did on the cross for the salvation of men. As men die once, so He died once. The sacrifice is sufficient because He had to die only once in order to activate the redemption of God for the sins of men (10:10,12,14; Rom. 6:10; 1 Pet. 3:18). We must not assume that there is a great deal of time between one’s death and his final judgment. Once one dies, he is individually and finally judged (Luke 16:19-31). There will be a final judgment at the end of the world, but that judgment will be the last of all judgments of God and thus, will apply to those who are alive at the time of the final coming of Jesus. Since one is judged in his final judgment at the time of death, there will be no changing of that judgment. One does not rest in the bosom of Abraham with Jesus after death, while at the same time he is anxious about another final judgment that is yet to come in the last day. Once one faces final judgment at death, there are no more final judgments’ for that person.

John Kombo

Nakuru Kenya