

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

*Matthew 13:47-50*  
*Lesson #7*  
*Good and Bad Fish*  
*11/10/2019*

## Three rational challenges to the Christian Faith

### 1. Is God there?

(the challenge of **naturalism**)

### 2. Does God care?

(the challenge of **deism**)

### 3. Is God fair?

(the challenge of **pluralism**)



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### 2. Is God fair?

(the challenge of **pluralism**)

Does a person have to believe  
in Jesus as their personal  
savior in order to go to heaven?

Is it fair and consistent with a  
God of love to exclude those  
who do not respond to him in  
a prescribed way?



2

### *Matthew 13*

“47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and **gathering fish of every kind**; 48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the **good fish** into containers, but the **bad** they threw away.

49 So it will be at the **end of the age**; the angels shall come forth, and **take out the wicked from among the righteous**, 50 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

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### Background Context

- ✓ **Jewish Law** identifies some fish to be “unclean”.

*Leviticus 11:12* “Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.”

- ✓ Dragnet fishing **catches both clean and unclean** fish.
- ✓ The fish are separated in the end **after the fishing is over**.

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### In what sense is the Kingdom like a dragnet?

- ✓ One of the functions of the kingdom is to **gather and judge all people**.
- ✓ Both the gathering and the judging will take place **at the end of time**.

### The POINT

At the end of time  
every person will  
give a moral  
accounting to God.



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## 1. No one can escape the final judgment.

*Acts 17*

“<sup>30</sup> Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup> because **He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.**”

## 2. This court should intimidate everyone.

*Romans 3*

“<sup>9</sup> we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; <sup>10</sup> as it is written, **“There is none righteous, not even one;”**”

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## How have Christians **reconciled** two seemingly contradictory messages?

Saved  
through faith  
apart from  
works



Judged  
by works



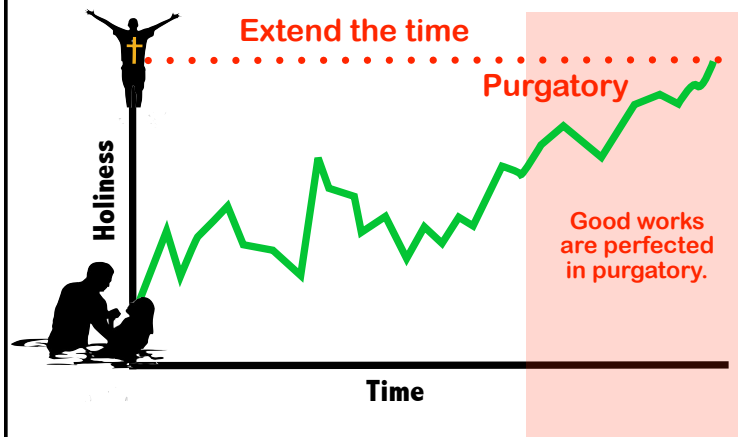
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### Three possible sources of hope at the final judgment:

1. **Dismissal** - Remove the standard of holiness so that there is no offense.
  - A loving God would never condemn anyone.
2. **Empowerment** - Enable believers to meet the standard by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - The Holy Spirit empowers true believers to fulfill the Law.

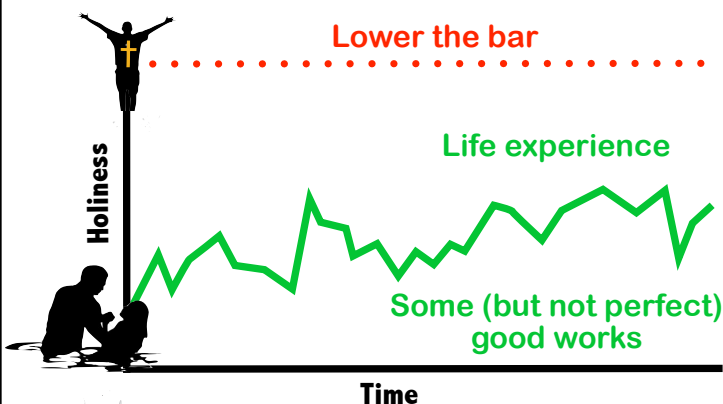
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### The Roman Catholic solution to the judgment of believers by works



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### The Protestant solution to the judgment of believers by works



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## Can our security rest in what Christ does **THROUGH** us?

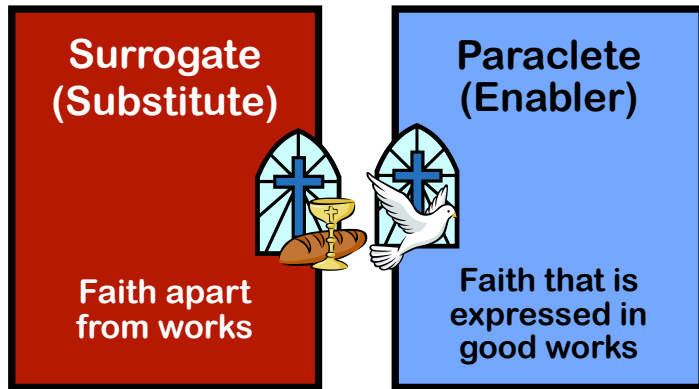
Does God grade on the curve?

How holy must we be and for how long?

Only Christ has ever been holy enough.  
The good news of the Gospel is that only Christ had to be.

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Justification before God  
is not by the Spirit but by the Cross.



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Two aspects of Christian holiness:

“me in Christ” “Christ in me”

Positional holiness

Practical holiness

**FAITH**

**LOVE**

A child of God  
complete

A disciple of Christ  
in process

Free from law Bound by love

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Two types of righteousness



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Three possible sources of hope  
at the final judgment:

1. **Dismissal** - Remove the standard of holiness so that there is no offense.  
• A loving God would never condemn anyone.
2. **Empowerment** - Enable believers to meet the standard by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
• The Holy Spirit empowers true believers to fulfill the Law.
3. **Redemption** - Fulfill the requirements FOR the believers (outside their personal behavior).  
• Jesus righteousness is imputed to the believer.

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**“Sanctification”**  
takes two distinct forms.

Our Position in Christ  
by faith

Our Practice in this life  
as disciples

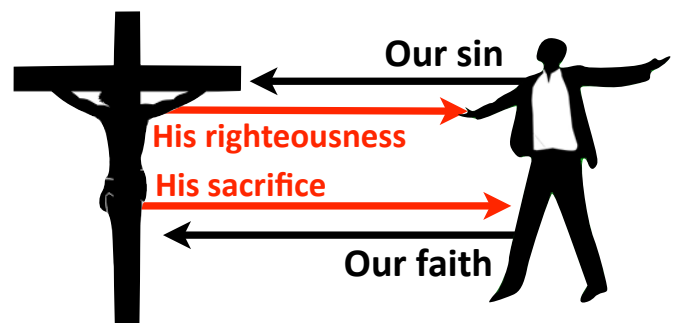
1 Corinthians 1:2  
“To the church of God  
which is at Corinth, to  
those who **have been  
sanctified** in Christ  
Jesus, **saints by  
calling,**”

1 Corinthians 3:3  
“**for you are still  
fleshly.** For since  
there is jealousy and  
strife among you, are  
you not fleshly, and  
**are you not walking  
like mere men?**”

16

2 Corinthians 5:21

“He made Him who knew no sin **to  
be sin on our behalf**, so that we  
**might become the righteousness**  
of God in Him.”



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## Positional truth

- ✓ It is not experiential.
- ✓ It is not progressive.
- ✓ It is not related to human merit.
- ✓ It is not related to moral reform.
- ✓ It alone satisfies the demands of a perfectly holy God.
- ✓ **It must be learned through teaching & applied by faith.**

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## Our salvation rests with our positional holiness not our practiced holiness

### 1. Positional holiness in the Old Testament



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The temple priest was ceremonially sanctified with water before he performed his sacred duties.

**This had to do with his official position not his personal character.**

Water baptism is our “positional” washing as believer priests.

**This has to do with our union with Christ not our meritorious good works.**



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### Revelation 20

#### John's version of the Final Judgement

“**11** And I saw a **great white throne**, . . . **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and **the books were opened**: and **another book was opened, which is the book of life**: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. **13** And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. **14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**”

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### Romans 3

“**26** for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and **the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**”

“**28** For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**”

### Romans 4:5

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him **who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,**”

22



**Positional holiness makes us fit for heaven.**



**Practiced holiness makes us fit for earth.**

23

## Will God's judgment be fair?

- God will judge each of us **fairly** on the basis of righteousness.
- God's standard is simply to be **true to ourselves** as "image bearers" of God.
- For those who fear that they may fall short of God's image, He has provided a **surrogate (substitute)** who bears His image.
- God's provision is a gift to all who will accept it in **faith**.
- We are invited to **accept** that gift and stand before a holy God clothed with the righteousness of Christ.
- We are also free to stand before God **on the basis of our own righteousness**. We do not have to accept Christ.
- We are not free to **set the terms of the judgment** nor are we to claim that God will not be just in His judgment.

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## *1 Corinthians 1:30*

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.**"



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