

JUDGMENT DAY



Jerry D. Ousley

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by
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CONTENTS

Two Resurrections	6
The Judgment of the Believer's Sin	15
The Judgment of Self in the Believer	24
The Judgment of the Believer's Works	33
Judgment of the Nations	39
Judgment of Israel	49
The Judgment of Fallen Angels	57
The Judgment of the Wicked Dead	65

CHAPTER 1

TWO RESURRECTIONS

What do you think of when you hear the words “judge” or “judgment?” Of course, right off the bat, most of us think of standing before a man or woman who has the power to decide our innocence or guilt, and then to declare the punishment for our wrong-doing. Most of us dread the thought of facing a judge simply because our future lies in their pronouncement upon us. We want to think that they will fulfill their obligation and do their job without bias or personal agenda. But what if they don’t? What if they make a decision concerning us based on their own belief.

That’s why it takes a special individual to do such a job. It takes one who can decide without partiality and based only on what the facts have proven. Once they have pronounced sentence, it takes a series of appeals to alter that decision, if in fact, it can be altered.

Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the words interpreted as “judge” or “judgment” both mean “to make a decision regarding one’s actions based on the facts presented.” That decision is made by an individual who has been trained to sort out presented facts and arrive at what is actually the truth. In many cases, because we are all flawed, the actual decision as to whether one is innocent or guilty is decided by a jury, made up of men and women who, supposedly, are capable of making a decision based on the facts and not by their own pre-determined opinion. Once that has been decided, then the job of the judge is to pronounce the suited punishment.

When it comes to Christianity, many have come to believe that judgment will be dealt out by God on a certain day when every man, woman and child stands before Him Who is pictured as sitting on a giant, white throne as each person is passed before Him, in order for Him to decide whether they have been good enough to gain access into Heaven or whether their past deeds have condemned them to Hell. That’s what most of us think of when we are reminded of the judgment of God.

But in reality, nothing is farther from the truth. You see, the Bible outlines seven different judgments which we will discuss one by one. Before we talk about those judgments, however, we need to first establish the truth of the Resurrection. The truth

is that there will be two resurrections: The first will be the resurrection of the just and the final is the resurrection of the wicked – Those who have refused the gift of salvation through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Concerning the first resurrection, the Bible records in Revelation 20:4-6 – “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” These verses plainly tell us that the first resurrection will take place towards the end of the tribulation period. It is the resurrection of those who have committed their lives to Christ. It is for those who have become Christians by believing that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead after His crucifixion as the sacrifice for the sin of the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 gives us the order of this first resurrection. It says, “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have

fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” In summary, when that day arrives, those who have died in Christ will be the first to go up. Their graves will be opened and they will be given a new glorified body that will immediately be caught up to the Lord. This is followed by all those who are alive and remain on the Earth at that time. They will be instantly changed into a glorified body and caught up with the dead in Christ and so they will all be joined with Christ in the air.

Jesus acknowledged a resurrection of the just when He said, “. . . And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Note the words “resurrection of the just.” It means those who have dedicated their lives to Jesus Christ. It is made up exclusively of those who have been saved and justified by Christ.

Our Lord also said, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (John 5:28-29).

Paul taught in Acts 24:15, “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” He also wrote: “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (1 Corinthians 15:21-23).

The judgment most think of is the judgment of the wicked dead. We’ve already quoted Revelation 20 regarding this second resurrection. This resurrection consists only of those who refused Christ as their Savior and stand before God to face what they have done. Because they have not believed, their punishment is already decided. Yet, they must stand before God, who will somehow remind them of just why they didn’t make the first resurrection. It is to show them why they deserve Hell. In Revelation 20 we are told that the rest of the dead, both unknown and well known, will stand before God. The books of Heaven are opened. In one of those books it is recorded everything that they have done through-out their lives. Assumedly their

life-work is read before them so they can see as to just why they are deserving of Hell and then (apparently as suggested in verse 15) another book, The Book of Life is opened and if their name is not found in that book, then, well – It isn't good news. Apparently having one's name written in The Book of Life nullifies all the evil deeds done and we are qualified to become the children of God. But if your name isn't there, then the only alternative is eternal torment. News flash – Since all those in Christ have already been resurrected in the first resurrection, that means all those in this second resurrection who stand before God are not going to have their names in The Book of Life.

It may seem cruel as to why God would do that. Why would He read back your life's failures and then show you that you aren't listed in The Book of Life? It seems like rubbing salt in a wound. But He does this so that there is no question about one's actions and why they are deserving of that punishment.

This second resurrection takes place one thousand years after the first one. During that thousand years Christ will reign as King of the Earth. All will be subject to His authority and rule. Only at the conclusion of this period will the rest of the dead – Those who did not accept Christ as Savior, be judged and condemned.

It is important that we first establish these two resurrections before we speak of the judgments. We will see that there are actually seven judgments. The ones we sit under are all decided by our own life-decision concerning Christ.

Now you can see the urgency of believing in Jesus Christ. This is why we write over and over about the importance of coming to know Christ as our Savior, why we must repent of our sin, and why we must make a conscience decision to follow Him.

Will you? Will you follow Him? Will you accept Christ as Savior right now? If so, simply repent – make the decision to turn your life around not by some promise to do better but by allowing Christ, by way of the Holy Spirit, to take up residency in your life. It is the most important decision you will ever make. Decide now that you are going to be a part of the first resurrection.

CHAPTER 2

THE JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER'S SIN

***T*here** is so much confusion when it comes to the Judgment. Most people, even Christians, believe that there is coming a single day when everyone will stand before God and hear their life rehearsed after which God pronounces whether they have lived a life worthy of entrance into Heaven, and if not, then they are cast into Hell.

However, a study of the Bible reveals a much different picture than that. Yes, of course there is coming a Great White Throne Day of judgment as found in Revelation 20, but the scene, when viewed in the right context, paints a very different picture. The Bible does in fact, outline seven different judgments. Three of these are executed on those who are believers – those who have believed on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and have accepted Him as their Savior.

The first judgment on Christians is that of sin. I feel we must start this by looking at a “nut-shell”

view of the Old Testament. God always knew that man would need a savior – One to be the substitute for the rebellious sin man did in the Garden of Eden. When Adam disobeyed God by eating of that forbidden fruit, he began to die that very moment. He was created to live forever. But God had told him in Genesis 2:16-17, “And the LORD God commanded the man saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” We may want to blame it all on Adam, but human nature tells us that no one dictates what we can and cannot do. Had we been there instead of Adam, we would have done the very same thing he did. When Eve was tempted by the serpent to eat, and she in turn tempted Adam, he gave in very easily. I believe he did this because in his heart he had always wanted to know what that fruit tasted like. Eve’s temptation seemed to be a good excuse.

But just as God had said, the moment Adam swallowed that first bite, he began to die. It took him 930 years, but he did die. So did everyone after him. They lived very long lives at first, then, before the flood, God said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” (Genesis 6:3). That didn’t take place immediately, but life-spans gradually began getting shorter and shorter until what used to be a young age, now became a very old age. Then later, in Psalm 90:10 we read, “The

days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away." I am, as of this writing, 71 years old. I try every morning to thank God for another day past my "three-score and ten." The point is, that man began to die, and so far, only two have escaped life without dying – Enoch and Elijah. Look it up.

Beginning with Moses, God gave laws to His Chosen People – The descendants of Abraham – the Israelites. A careful reading of the books of Moses will reveal that God promised that if they would perfectly live and fulfill these laws that they would see a day when no poverty would exist and they would have peace with their enemies. That day never came. Why? Because they couldn't do it. No one could. Even with the provision of animal sacrifices to atone for their sins and failures, they still couldn't do it. And we can't either. By the way, the law wasn't a failure on God's part. He knew man couldn't do it. But He had to prove to stubborn mankind that he would always fail and come short of God and His glory (Romans 3:23). We had to have a savior, one who could step in and reverse the curse God was forced to place on this world because of our sin and failure. Jesus was God in the flesh. He was more than man. He was, of course completely human, but He was also completely God – God in the flesh. He allowed Himself to be sacrificed on the cross, thus becoming the last blood sacrifice for sin. He then went a step beyond by raising from the dead

on the third day thereby proclaiming victory of that curse, death, sin and Hell. Only Jesus Christ was worthy to do it. No one else could claim a sinless life.

For that reason, when we come to Jesus it is as if we have died with Him and have been resurrected with Him, and we share His victory over the curse, sin, death and Hell. Read the words of 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." There it is. Jesus became our once and forever sacrifice and all who accept Him are saved from the curse.

So, the question arises, if we cannot save ourselves, and we are only saved by the grace of God and the free gift of salvation given by Jesus Christ, why would we need to be judged in the final Great White Throne Judgment? Jesus Himself said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24). Did you see it? He said that those who hear and believe shall not come into judgment!

In Romans 8:1 we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Our sin has been forgiven. Jesus Christ has become our righteousness. We no longer depend on being good. Our works have become as dross. When we die in Christ and are resurrected into a new life in Him, then we are forgiven. We are not just changed people, but recreated people. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Our old self is dead. We are resurrected a new person. That's exciting. That's a miracle of miracles. That is death turned into life. Paul also wrote in Galatians 3:13, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us..." He took our place. He died in our stead. Can't you feel the excitement of

that truth? Realize that we are doomed to death – not just non-existence but a forever death – dying forever, but never ceasing to exist. That is Hell. But Jesus made the way to be free from that.

Because of Christ the judgment we were to face at The Great White Throne, which would certainly end with our eternal death, has been nullified because Jesus took our place. We don't have to worry about that day because when we accept Christ, and I'm not just speaking of repeating a few words, but actually meaning those words from the depths of our being, our life-judgment has taken place at the foot of the cross on Calvary. Jesus took our punishment for us. He paid the price to reverse what we were once doomed to receive.

You too can escape the final judgment. Will we be there at the Great White Throne Day of Judgment? Perhaps we will. Not as convicts but as spectators. When we come to Christ we have been judged at Calvary. When we come to Jesus asking forgiveness for our sinful nature, not blaming it on Adam but owning up to the fact that we would have sinned just like he did, He will forgive us.

That brings up one more point. What if I fail after I have accepted Christ? We aren't given a license to sin. Sin still carries the hatred of God. Sin still makes God to frown and turn away from us. But John wrote in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if

anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” That doesn’t mean that we can come to Him, confess Him as LORD then turn around and do anything we want to. But it does mean that when we do, we aren’t automatically rejected because of our sin. Jesus is our Advocate. He is our go-between. He is our lawyer, if you will. Because of His sacrifice, when we sin, we can acknowledge that we have sinned and ask for forgiveness, not to re-crucify Christ, but simply to say we know we have sinned and we are truly sorry. His blood covering extends to that sin too.

Without Jesus Christ, we all stand in dread, danger and horror of The Great White Throne Judgment. But what a difference when we accept Christ. Our sin is judged at the cross and we are made free, a new person, and we no longer have to fear death!

CHAPTER 3

THE JUDGMENT OF SELF IN THE BELIEVER

I ***had*** a brother-in-law now deceased who was also a very good friend. We kidded with each other so much that those who didn't know us would certainly be convinced that we were fighting. But we weren't. I miss him.

But early on I figured out how he took the pressure off himself. Let me explain. We attended many family dinners and church related dinners. I confess, I was a big eater. I was thin in those days and I suppose the weight I carry now is a result of those big meals. My brother-in-law would always make a big deal in pointing out to others the size of the plate I would fix for myself. I admit that it was full. After all, there were a lot of good cooks present, and one doesn't want to insult any of them by not eating some of what they brought. So, yes, my plate was usually as full as one could get it.

He would immediately bring that up to nearly everyone's attention, "Look at Jerry's plate! Did you

leave some for anyone else?" I know he was kidding but with almost every eye looking at me and my plate, it usually succeeded in turning my face red. This happened at just about every dinner we attended together, which was most of them.

But one evening, as we filled our plates with wonderful culinary excellencies, and as my brother-in-law began his usual habit of pointing mine out to all who would look, I took notice of his plate. It was fuller than mine was! Now I knew what he was doing and I called him out on it. As he was getting ready to rib me for my portions I exclaimed, "Look at his plate!" That stopped his habit, for a time anyway. What he was doing was calling attention to me in order to keep the attention off himself.

Looking at the various judgments found in God's word, we come to the second one, which is again a judgment upon the believer. It is the judgment of ourselves. There isn't a set day when this judgment takes place. In fact, for the believer it really takes place every day.

While we can never hope to be saved by our own works or good deeds, and we are only saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, as a result of the Holy Spirit in us, we are constantly striving to live our lives to please God, or we should be at least. This is not a requirement to salvation but we should have an inward desire to please the God Who has saved us.

One thing that sidetracks many believers is the practice of comparing ourselves with others. Just like my brother-in-law, he could justify his plateful of food by putting the attention on someone else. When it comes to judging ourselves, we often do the same thing. We try to be “holier” than another brother or sister by comparing our convictions to theirs. What we need to realize is that regardless our comparisons to others, it never justifies anything. The fact of the matter is that we are to judge ourselves and let others do the same.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 says, “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” Paul was writing to the Corinthian church teaching about the communion – the Lord’s supper. Specifically he was talking about examining ourselves before we participate in that event. But it also extends to our daily lives. If we would judge ourselves before we attempt to pass judgment on someone else, we would be ahead in the game. He said that it would keep us from being judged.

Jesus spoke of this same subject when he told the parable about the man with the beam in his eye. He said, “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,’

when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye." (Luke 6:41-42). It sounds funny to think of a guy walking around with a plank sticking out of his eye trying to get a speck of sawdust from another's eye. That over-exaggeration was intended by our Lord. Even though it sounds silly, it completely illustrates the situation of one brother trying to judge the salvation experience of everyone else based on his or her own experience.

Of course there are things clearly spoken of in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, that apply to all believers and we all need to base our lives on those things. But then there are gray areas – things not clearly defined, that are left to individual application. That's what Paul meant when he wrote, ". . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12). He wasn't saying that we don't have to conform ourselves to the word of God but he was inferring that we listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives as to what is acceptable to us but perhaps not to another. We need to understand that, and it will save us a lot of grief.

Don't get me wrong. We are told that we will know our true brothers and sisters by their fruit. Jesus also said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they

are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” (Matthew 7:15-20). Jesus was using the analogy of fruit from trees. You will know what kind of tree it is by the fruit that grows on it. Just so, you will also know if the tree is good or bad if the fruit is good or bad. That isn’t the same as passing judgment on another because we aren’t trying to make them conform to our individual convictions. Instead we can easily know if another is true to Christ or is in error by the fruit that comes from their lives.

There is something else that we need to consider when looking at this subject, and that is what we should do when in the presence of a weaker brother or sister. Paul wrote about this very subject when talking about eating food that had been offered to idols. Here’s what he wrote: “However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have

knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble." (1 Corinthians 8:7-13). He had already established that there is only one true and living God. Because of that he also said that just because something had been offered to a dead idol that it in no way affected the food.

However, if another brother or sister in Christ who may not have come to this knowledge and realization, feels that it is wrong to eat it, then we should not tempt him or her by insisting on doing it. He also said that if it offended another that much that he would never eat meat again. By his example he was saying that we are to respect those who feel it is wrong to do something God may have given us the freedom to do. When we are in their presence, we respect their weaker belief and refrain from what may be offensive to them. By doing that, we don't tempt a brother or sister who may be weaker in the faith, into doing something that might hinder their Christian experience.

This second judgment is one that we perform upon ourselves. We first must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and we also must study

God's word to know what He expects from us. We can inspect other's fruit but only after we have inspected our own first. When we realize this and live by this, then we can work towards passing this judgment – one in which we judge ourselves.

CHAPTER 4

THE JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER'S WORKS

***T*here** are many who believe that if they are just good enough, if they can fill their lives with good things, like giving freely to others, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, providing shelter to the homeless, establishing clean, fresh water supplies for the thirsty, giving hope to those in prison, and overall doing good things for others, that they will somehow earn the right to live in Heaven when this life is over. After all, Jesus said it didn't He? In Matthew 25:34-36 Jesus spoke these words: "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'" So it would seem that good works do open the door of Heaven for us. Or does it?

In contrast, Paul wrote, "... not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-7). He also wrote, "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Does the Bible contradict itself as skeptics claim? Is it full of opposite teachings that are so confusing that we are helpless to understand?

Of course not. So, what's going on here then? Was Jesus right or was Paul right? First, how could we say that our Savior, Jesus Christ could ever be wrong? He is not. And neither was Paul. You see, there is absolutely nothing we can do to save ourselves. The one thing we must do is to accept the free gift that Christ died and arose, in order to forgive us. When we do, and we mean it, then we are saved. We are saved from the curse of eternal death in hell.

But then we are called to good works. They do not save us. We do them because we want to be witnesses of Christ and to show that He does care for all of humanity. We will be rewarded for them.

But the lack of them will not keep us from going to Heaven.

We will one day face what the Bible calls “The Judgment Seat of Christ.” This is different from the “Great White Throne Judgment.” This judgment takes place when we meet Jesus Christ in the air on the day of the first resurrection. Here are some scriptures about it:

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 says, “Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

Then we read in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

So, our works do matter. We will receive a reward for what we have done for the kingdom. But they in no way save us. They do not determine whether we will enter the Kingdom or not. But we

should have a desire within us to help others, to be a blessing to those around us, and to relieve human suffering and pain. We do this to help but to also show the love of Christ. James said it this way, “But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” Good works are a result of our faith in Christ. Good works testify that the love of God is in us. Good works prove that there is a loving God in this world. They testify of God Who wants to save us by the free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

We want to have a life of good works because we want to hear “well done” from our Savior. But we aren’t given a greater place in Heaven than our brother or sister just because we have done more. We do what we are called to do in Him and for Him. Our good works are for Jesus, not for us. We serve as an extension of our Master, not just to win an “Atta boy!”

Do good works. But do them for the right reason. Not to be seen of men. But to glorify the great God of Heaven.

CHAPTER 5

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

We don't hear much from the pulpits of our day about judgment. We don't like to think about that. In fact, the cry of many is "don't judge me." We don't want to be judged. Why? I think mostly because we know we are guilty of at least something, but then, we all are, aren't we? If we are honest with ourselves, yes, of course we are.

We have discussed the judgments upon those who have come to Christ acknowledging Him as Savior. Our sin, when we confess Christ and come believing to Him, was judged at Calvary. When Jesus died as the final sacrifice for sin, then arose from the grave the third day, victorious over sin, death, hell and the grave, our belief and commitment to Him frees us from the final judgment for sin. We have been forgiven.

Then we must begin a daily judgment of ourselves, thus conforming to Christ – Allowing Him

to be formed in us. That's a daily thing that we must do. Finally, when the trumpet sounds to call those in Christ to Him, first those who have died then we who are yet alive, our works will be judged. That is not a judgment of whether we are worthy to go to Heaven or not because that, again, was decided when we accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. This judgment will determine our reward in the coming kingdom but not restricting admittance into that kingdom.

Now we look at those final judgments that will come upon the world. The first of these is that of the nations. Jesus spoke about this in Matthew 25:31-46. He said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will

answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Yes, I know that this is a lengthy quotation. We have heard this before, mostly in reference to our giving by various charitable organizations. I agree that we are to feed the poor, provide medical attention to the sick and do whatever we can to alleviate the pain, distress and need that exists in the world today. It is, after all, what Jesus did when He was on the Earth and what we should do as Christians. We are to have compassion on those less fortunate. We are blessed to bless others.

A quick look at the nations in the world today, will reveal those who are using their resources to help those in need, as well as those who don't and

who, frankly, house the majority of those who are in need. Take a moment and quickly look at something in light of this: Those nations who are blessed enough to have the resources to help the needy are, for the most part, nations considered to be Christian nations, while those who house the poverty stricken greatly needing relief, are, by and large, pagan nations. It doesn't take a professional mind to realize this if you just think about it.

In the passage, Jesus said that all the nations will be gathered together and required to give an account of how they have treated those oppressed, poverty stricken, and in great need. Joel predicted this judgement as well, even telling us where it will take place. He prophesied, "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink." (Joel 3:1-3). Now, in its full context it is speaking specifically about how the people of Israel have been treated by other nations. But God is also concerned about all those who are in need. The Law of Moses said that we should love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. Then, when asked, Jesus defined who our neighbor was with the story of the good

Samaritan. That makes all in need to be our neighbors.

This judgment will occur after Christ has returned claiming the Earth once again as His. He will set up the thousand-year reign during which those who have come to Christ will aid Him in judgments. This is one of them. All nations will be gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat where Christ Himself will pass judgment on all the nations. They will be separated as a shepherd would separate the sheep from the goats, and how each one has treated those in need, both Jew and Gentile, will determine the fate of those nations.

We will help with this. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:2, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" This is when those saved by the blood of Christ, those of us who call ourselves Christians, will judge those nations. Now this is my take on the matter. To be clear, what I am about to write is my opinion and not in the Bible. But I believe that Christ will be the judge and we will be the jury. It will be our responsibility to decide from the obvious works of the nations, which will be included with the sheep and which will be included with the goats. Again, my take, not the Bible.

One more passage of Scripture supporting the judgment of the nations and then I want to give a

comparison proving that this judgment is separate from that of the Great White Throne. Jude quoted the Book of Enoch in verses 14-15 saying, “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’” This judgment was predicted by Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, and it will take place.

Okay, here is the scriptural comparison that the Judgment of the Nations is different from the Great White Throne judgement:

MATTHEW 25:31-36

REVELATION 20:11-15

No resurrection

Resurrection of the wicked dead

The living nations judged

The dead are judged

Takes place on Earth

Takes place after the heaven and the earth fled away

No books opened

The books are opened

Three classes, sheep,

One class – the dead

goats, and brethren

When Christ appears

After the thousand-year
reign

Think about this. Which one of these judgments do you want to participate in? We will be present for them. In that of the Nations, we will be part of the jury or at least part of the judgment passed on the nations – but only those who are believers in Christ. But in the judgment taking place at the Great White Throne, only the wicked dead will be judged. I think that I'd rather be part of the judgment process of the Nations rather than being judged at the Great White Throne. Why? Because taking part in that of the Nations means that we have been born-again as Jesus said in John 3, while being judged at the Great White Throne means certain eternal destruction in the Lake of Fire along with the devil and his demons.

You can decide right now, today which of these you will be a part of. All you have to do to be a part of the Judgment of the Nations is to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised Him forever more from the dead. You see, when we accept Christ, it is as if we too have died and been buried with Him, and resurrected to eternal life with Him. What a great deal! And it is a free gift, not earned or purchased by us. Jesus purchased it with His own blood and offers it to us.

On the other hand, participation at the Great White Throne means that you have not believed on Christ and you have not made Him your Savior. There is no choice on that day. It is only eternal death.

You must choose – but choose wisely.

CHAPTER 6

THE JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL

Israel has always been a nation chosen by God. His promise of a great nation began with Abraham. He told him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the grains of sand on a sea shore. He promised them wealth, prosperity, freedom from sickness and disease, and peace with all people.

But as we have mentioned several times in our writings, though they came near to that promise under the reign of King Solomon, they never quite arrived to its completion. Why? Simply because they could not obey the law God had given to Moses for the people.

They were rebellious from the start. After God had brought them out of Egypt – a nation of slaves – He delivered them finally out of Egypt's hard rule when He parted the Red Sea, allowing the Israeli people to cross on dry land, then releasing the walls of water to come crashing down upon the army of

Egypt. Before they had let the people leave, God had destroyed the land with plagues, culminating in the death of the firstborn in each Egyptian household, from the poorest in the land to the very palace of Pharaoh.

Once across the sea, when they complained about food, God gave them Manna from Heaven in the morning, and then later, quail in the evenings. When they were out of water and complained again, on two different occasions God brought enough water out of a rock to quench the thirst of more than a million people and all their livestock.

Had not God shown them His love for them? Had he not displayed His mighty power to protect and provide for them? But it seemed never enough. God called Moses to the top of Mount Sinai in order to give Him the law. Now consider this for a moment; if you read Exodus carefully you will discover that, although God wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone while Moses was on Mount Sinai, before he went up, God spoke from Heaven in the hearing of the entire nation gathered at the foot of the mountain (Exodus 19-20). Each and every Israeli heard the voice of God as He spoke the ten commandments in their presence. You would think that this experience would have sealed their worship of God and their obedience to Him forever. But when Moses had been up on Sinai for forty days, the people began to complain to Aaron that they felt like he was dead. "We don't know what has become of

him,” they said. Pressing Aaron to do something about it, he gathered the golden jewelry they had and made a golden calf, proclaiming it to be God. Only forty days after they had heard God actually speak to them, they were worshipping a false god. They had broken the very first commandment.

Yet God loved Israel. He was determined to fulfill His promise. After years of serving Him and then falling into idolatry, then having a leader rise up to bring them back to God, finally God allowed them to be taken into captivity for a period of seventy years. Once again, after that period of time, they were brought back into the land. You would have thought that they would have learned their lesson, but they didn't.

Then, after Jesus had lived, been crucified and resurrected and the Church had been established, they were taken and dispersed again, this time under Roman leadership. All this happened over several centuries. But the point is that they could not obey the law of Moses, and the nation, by large, rejected Christ as their Messiah. Of course, the first leaders of the Church were indeed Jewish. So some were both Jew and Christian. But the nation, as a whole, rejected Him. It wasn't until 1948 that they were once again proclaimed a nation and they have been in constant conflict ever since.

After this concise history of Israel, we consider Ezekiel 20. Ezekiel was a priest who was

also a prophet of God. They were in Babylon and some of the elders came to Ezekiel to seek God. But God had grown tired of their self-righteousness and told Ezekiel to give them words of judgment, not comfort. He did. You can read for yourself what God told him to say to those elders in that chapter.

Yet even in His disappointment with Israel, God still intended to bring them back to their Promised Land, and He did. But He told Ezekiel to say something regarding judgment in verses 33-35. Ezekiel wrote, “‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face.’” The fifth judgment I would like to discuss is that of the Nation of Israel.

But before we go into this, I want to go on record as saying that God still loves Israel. There are those who teach that the Church replaced Israel and that God has rejected His chosen nation. That is not true. God still loves Israel. Careful reading of the New Testament reveals this implicitly. Israel is still God’s Chosen People. The Church is grafted in with Israel, but we have not replaced Israel.

Yet, because of their rebellion and disobedience over the centuries, they will face a unique judgment. This passage tells us that it will take place in the wilderness of the peoples. It isn't so much of a judgment of each Israeli citizen standing before God as will happen at the Great White Throne, but still it is one of inclusion and exclusion.

It will take place at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ. Those who have been true to God will be a part of that Kingdom and those who continue to reject Him will not be allowed into it. But, unlike the nations who were judged, the Nation of Israel, as a whole, will be a very important part of that thousand years with Christ. Jesus will be the king of all the world during that time and the chosen ones, both from Israel and the Church will reign with Him.

Once again, whether you are a Jew or of other nationality, the key to being a part of that glorious time will be our acceptance of Jesus Christ. This will be the time when the Nation of Israel accepts Christ as the Messiah. They will see their grave mistake in not crowning Him as their Messiah and they will remedy that.

We talk much about peace. The whole world longs for peace. Unfortunately, despite all the peace talks between nations, even with the great organization of the United Nations, peace on this

planet will never come until Christ returns and sets up His kingdom. Under His leadership, the world will indeed finally have peace, and Israel will be a large part of that.

But we, as individuals, regardless of our nationality, whether we are Jewish or not, only by accepting Christ as our Savior can we be a part of that kingdom. If you hope for peace, you will never find everlasting peace until you find Christ. If you hope for the end of war and conflict, that is never going to happen until Christ returns.

He is returning. Signs are even now pointing that the time is near. But to participate in it we must be a part of the kingdom now. Right now, His kingdom exists in the hearts of those who have accepted Him. He reigns right now in the lives of those who have truly and completely accepted His lordship. As we have already taught, when we come to Jesus making Him our Lord and King and accepting His sacrifice as the only way to be saved, we have been judged. And we have been accepted.

Believe on Him today, right now. Make Him your king in your heart. And whether you are Jew or Gentile, regardless of your race, skin color, or nationality, you can be saved and made a citizen of Christ's thousand-year kingdom.

CHAPTER 7

THE JUDGMENT OF FALLEN ANGELS

In the first letter Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church he addressed the matter of judging. In fact he was speaking about brothers in Christ going to court in lawsuits against each other. His teaching suggested that for our witness's sake, we should seek to settle these matters among ourselves instead of fighting over our disagreements, as a witness to a world that desperately needed Christ. He first asked the question, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2). He then proceeded to say, "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:3).

In order to understand this judgment of fallen angels, we go all the way back to the war in Heaven (read Revelation 12:1-4, Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12-15, and Luke 10:18). It seems that when the devil, who was the angel, Lucifer, was lifted up in pride and desired to take the very throne of God. In

doing so, a war in Heaven broke out that culminated in the casting out of Lucifer who also took with him one third of the angelic host. These became the fallen angels.

Jude 6 tells us, ““And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day...” In other words, they are awaiting their final judgement. Peter also mentions this in 2 Peter 2:4 where he writes, “...For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...”

We spoke about the judgment of the nations. During that discourse Jesus told them that the wicked nations would be cast away mentioning the everlasting fire that had been prepared for the devil and his angels, “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...” (Matthew 25:41).

A part of these fallen angels became the demonic spirits that tempt us and try to bring ruin upon God's people. Take note, we say that the devil tempted us, and so he does but not in person. God is eternal, omniscient, and can be everywhere by His spirit at the same time. The devil cannot do this. He is limited in that he can personally be only in one

place at a time. But he can seem to be in many places at once because of the demon spirits at his command and control.

These demonic spirits – fallen angels – both those who have been bound in the Earth and those who roam as demonic spirits, will be brought to judgement. Jude tells us that it will take place on that great day. That refers to the day of judgement at the Great White Throne. It will take place either before that event or immediately after. I'm not sure which time and we are not told. What we are told is that believers in Jesus Christ will be the ones doing the judging.

Of course, that judgment can only be met with a single verdict and proposed punishment: That of guilty and punishment by exile into that lake of fire that has been especially created for the devil and his angels. That will be the fate of the fallen angels. So the job for us, as believers who will be their judge, is an easy one, although also very tragic.

While we have addressed this judgment, the point Paul was making in speaking of the judgment of these fallen angels, is that we, as believers, actually do have the right to pass judgment. However, that right and responsibility is a very serious and grave one.

Returning to the passage Paul spoke concerning taking a fellow believer to court, his point

was that, because God has entrusted the responsibility of judging these angels, we have the right to make responsible and correct judgments along with our fellow believers.

This does not give us the right to judge others based on our own biased opinions or preconceived ideas. When we do so, we are actually causing a rift in the body of Christ. It isn't our duty to try to make all believers small versions of ourselves, and what some call "judging" in an offensive way is exactly an attempt to do just that.

Some think that because of what Paul wrote, that we have the right to determine what is sin in the lives of others and some even go so far as to pronounce the verdict of "you are going to hell" on the life of those who don't conform to our own strict and biased opinions.

When it comes to passing judgment on fellow believers, we should always first remember what Jesus said about that very matter when He said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to

remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1-5). He was telling us that judging in this manner is hypocritical. We all are guilty of having a plank sticking out of our own eye while trying to correct a brother or sister who has a minor speck in their eye. That is the type of judgment that will bring condemnation, not to our brother, but on our own selves.

Also know that you and I have no right to determine where another will spend eternity. It is our duty to warn of the curse of hell, death and the grave, and share the gospel – the good news – of how we can escape that curse through the free gift of Jesus Christ, but not one of us knows the final conversation that an individual has with our Lord and Savior. No one who stood at the foot of the cross knew the condition of the thief who defended Jesus. In his final moments he asked Jesus to remember him, and our Lord responded with, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise," (Luke 23:43). As far as the crowd was concerned the man was guilty of death. And, yes, he was a thief and by law deserved his punishment. But in his soul, he had asked for forgiveness from our Savior, and Jesus gave it to him. So I reaffirm, we have no right to pass judgment as far as where one will spend eternity. That is a private matter between that person and God.

On this Earth our job as judges is more of a matter of "fruit inspectors." Paul wrote about the fruit of the Spirit – things that are evident of the Holy Spirit

living in us – in Galatians 5:22-23. These characteristics should flow freely from those who know Christ as Savior. When they don't, it doesn't mean that we aren't saved, but it does mean that we aren't acting in love as Christ directs us. We can let our brothers and sisters know that our attitude may not reflect Christ in these fruit. But before we do, we must, and I should emphasize that it is **MUST**, check our own lives first.

So, we will judge angels. As Christians, we are allowed to inspect the fruit of our fellow believers. But we never have been given the responsibility of sentencing them. Always remember, when tempted to pass judgment, that we will be judged as we have judged ourselves.

CHAPTER 8

THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED DEAD

This is the day – The day we most often think of when we hear the words Judgment Day. We have spoken of six different judgments to this point. All of them are valid but the two we are most concerned about are the ones that include us. For people there are really only two that count the most and those are the judgment of the believer and the final judgment, that of the wicked dead.

Revelation 20:4-6 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no

power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

This is the picture of those who have died having known Christ as their Lord and Savior. They are those of the first resurrection. Judgment was given to them. In other words, they were the ones doing the judging. They lived and reigned with Christ for one thousand years. During this thousand years, the devil has been bound in a place called “The Bottomless Pit.” At the conclusion of that period he is turned loose for a bit. The purpose of that is to give those who have been born but never tempted to make their choice whether for the devil or for Christ. You see, that thousand years is a bit of a strange time because we have a mixture of people living. There are those mentioned in the scripture above and there are some who have not died at the conclusion of the tribulation period. Those who are still mortal will continue to marry and have children.

Those are the ones for whom the devil is loosed so that they, like everyone else that has ever lived, has the opportunity to accept or reject Christ. Those siding with the devil will be killed (read Revelation 20:7-10). The devil and his angels are cast into the Lake of Fire.

This all sets the stage for the final judgment – That of the wicked dead, the one we call “The Great White Throne Judgment.” We read in Revelation 20:11-15, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him

who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” This is the one we so often think of when we hear the word judgment.

It has been incorrectly interpreted as the day when each and every individual who has ever lived, is called up one by one to see their lives played out before them and then either pronounced as worthy of Heaven or cast into Hell. This is not what the Bible says at all. In the first passage quoted, we see that the first resurrection is that of the righteous – those who have died in Christ.

We are specifically told in this passage that those resurrected come from death and hell (or the grave). The only ones left are the wicked dead, those who rejected Christ during their lifetime. These make up the second resurrection. These are the ones who will have their lives rehearsed, not to see if they are good enough or not, but to prove to

each one why they deserve eternal punishment in the lake of fire along with the devil and his angels.

Think of the awfulness of this day. Think of the anguish and mental agony as each one is shown how they had opportunity to accept Christ and refused to believe. There is no second chance. They are going to go to eternal punishment. They are just shown why they are going there so that there is no excuse in their minds as to whether God has been unfair to them or not. We are told that death and hell (the grave) was cast into the lake of fire (verse 14). That means everyone who came from there (death and the grave), will be resurrected on that day. It pains me to think about it. It hurts to know that people will have to be eternally punished.

But we have a choice. Each one of us has to make it. We often hear the question asked, "Why would a loving God send someone to a lake of fire resulting in eternal punishment and torment?" The answer to that question is, that God sends no one there. The passage quoted clearly says that the lake of fire was created for the devil and his angels, not for man, but man's insistence on non-belief leaves God no choice but to cast them there as well. Because we each have a choice, we send ourselves there with our decision against God. Going to eternal punishment is preventable. All you have to do is to accept Christ as your Savior. When you sincerely do, and your life reflects that choice, you have assured yourself of not having to go there.

Think about it. Pray about it. Don't hesitate any longer. Make that decision for Christ. Escape that awful ending. You can. You can choose when you stand before Jesus Christ – the first resurrection or the second. You don't want to choose the second. It will be the worse choice you ever made in your life. You choose. You decide where you will spend eternity.

Some say that they will choose hell because that's where all their friends will be. Rest assured, there is too much pain, agony and disaster going on to party. There will be no parties there. Only those who have the mental anguish of the horrible choice they made. The Great White Throne Judgment will leave no question as to why they deserve to go there. There is no room for accusations, no place to make excuses. Those who are there chose to be there.

I urge you to choose wisely. Listen, even if you have doubts and unbelief, wouldn't it be better to be wrong about an eternity beyond the grave rather than take the chance of such great torment? But I know and assure you, it is true. That day is coming and I believe and fear that it is coming much sooner than most people, including Christians, know. The only piece of advice I can give you is to choose wisely.