

Investigating the Judgment

As we studied the book of Daniel we saw many references to judgment.

We noted how the great time prophecies in the Bible were tied to the theme of judgment. Daniel 7-9 showed that to us, and then swept us down through time to Daniel 12 which has those solemn and exciting words of Judgment.

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

We saw how that throughout the Bible, judgment is something that is to be welcomed by God's children, and feared by his enemies.

Now let's read a key text on judgment:

Revelation 14:6-7 (KJV)

⁶ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

This passage tells us that the judgment is His judgment, that is the judgment of God.

How can God be judged? Who can judge him? Why does he need to be judged? What does that have to do with us?

Lets look at our questions. First, how can God be judged?

Let me remind you of something that I have said before. It's about God. We are living inside of an insane experiment, in which the mad scientist has declared that there is no god but himself, and anyone who believes otherwise should be eradicated. We are evidence in this struggle for the minds and bodies of the creatures that God has made.

If you will permit me, I would like to use a bit of deductive reasoning for a moment. Does God know the end from the beginning? The Bible says that He knew everything from before the foundations of the earth.

Does God know if you will ultimately be saved or lost?

Does God need records to help him make up his mind?

If there are records outside of God's mind, what purpose might they serve?

If I had a perfect memory I wouldn't need written records to help me remember things.

Now, remember we are talking about the hour of God's judgment. The plan of salvation greatly affects us, but it is about God!!

If we take the focus of judgment off of ourselves, and place it on God, we suddenly get a much larger picture of the great controversy.

God has declared himself to be a loving God, and draws us to him. The enemy declares that God is arbitrary, and is just after slaves. He has no compunctions about lying, cheating, and deceiving God's creation into turning their backs on the one who loves them.

At the cross, God was judged before the unfallen worlds. It was shown to them the real character of sin. It was demonstrated to them that the result of sin, should it be universal, would result in the collapse of the universe. Remember that even the physical world was affected when Christ died on the cross.

This is still evidence to the Christian of Jesus' worthiness to be our king and elder brother. But it goes beyond that.

Which brings us to the next question. Why does God need to be judged?

Anytime there is a conflict between two parties, a decision has to be made on who is right. When the stakes are the universe, and what all beings will become, the need escalates astronomically. If the question is whether Joe is right or Erik is right, it is not earth shattering. But when two beings each claim the title of God of all Creation, it affects everything and every being literally.

When this all winds down in the end, there can be no doubt left in any mind of what would happen under the leadership of the enemy. It has always led to death, decay, and destruction. He has never created life. He has altered it. He has never created a world, but he has just about ruined one.

As awful to us as the consequences are, we just recognize that what is happening right now is the playing out of that first choice against God's way in the Garden of Eden. Mankind, led by Satan, doing what he presumes to be his own thing, is bound straight for destruction.

So, for the sake of eternity, God's way needs to be judged to be the right way, for every being alive, or this chaos could go on forever.

And the judgment will happen. Or, is happening.

Who can or will judge God? That one's easy. Every body. By the way we live, and by our faith we demonstrate to the Enemy that God's way is fair and just. We can worship him. We can live lives that reflect his goodness. We can overcome sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can be loyal to God when things seem to be too tough.

Those who reject his goodness by their actions declare that they judge God just as the Enemy does.

. Every being in the universe who has not decided for or against God, will do so before time is over.

And eventually everyone declares that God is the sovereign ruler.

Phil 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So what do we do with passages like:

▶▶ 1 Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Hebrews 10:30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

What does this have to do with us?

When every knee has bowed and every tongue confessed that God is ruler, there will be some who will not honor God as supreme. It is quite one thing to declare Jesus, Jesus, and quite another to make him the Lord of our lives. There is a vivid example of this in the book of Acts.

Acts 19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Matthew 25 has several telling passages about judgment. The first is the parable of the 10 virgins, 5 of whom were ready and 5 of whom were not. The difference in this case was that 5 had prepared and 5 had not. Both groups were taken by surprise. Both groups had been sleeping. But one group had gone the extra mile, so to speak, in preparation.

The next parable is of the parable of the man who gave each of his three servants some money, according to the abilities that each one had. Two of the servants used their talents to increase the money for their master. The third, whether out of disloyalty for the master, or because of laziness, or whatever, refused to work to increase what he was given.

Matthew 25:24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

In his own words he admitted his disloyalty.

In the third parable of the sheep and the goats, where they are divided (judged) we find an interesting twist. Those who were sure that they were doing the things that would merit them salvation, were the ones who were rejected.

Those who did not keep track of their actions to present them as meritorious, were the ones who Jesus accepted.

One of the fascinating things I see about these parables is this: in essence, each person judges himself by the way he lives or the actions that he takes. What the mouth says is not the criteria. All of the virgins were waiting for the bridegroom. All three of the servants were servants. All of the sheep and goats professed to be sheep. We are not talking about haters of God here. The difference in the saved and the lost in each case is the actions that they took and the motivation behind those acts. We take sides by our actions. If we side with Satan and he wins, we lose. If we take sides with Satan and he loses, we lose. If we take sides with God and he wins, we win. And he has won. It is all over but the formalities.

Maybe I can make it a little clearer. Some of you have heard me describe this. This is the way that I understand the legal system in ancient Israel. It has some similarities to our system.

And some very important differences.

First, there was an accuser. We today would call that a prosecutor. That person would present the facts as he saw them to the judge. Then there was the defendant. The defendant would try to present his side of the case. But there was no defense attorney. Not as we think of it, anyway. The judge was to be the defender!! Particularly in a capital case,

the judge had to find you not guilty unless there were testimony from 2 witnesses that went against the defendant.

Let's play this out. You are accused of committing a murder. In actuality, it was an accidental death. You declare your lack of malice and plead for mercy. The accuser presents his side of the case. But no one else is able to testify as to the facts of the case. The judge had to find you not guilty. The judge had to protect you unless there were evidence from 2 witnesses.

I picture the heavenly judgment in a similar fashion.

When our names come up before Jesus, the Accuser of the Brethren pops up and says quickly, "He's mine. He has sinned, stumbled and fallen. He must die."

And sure enough, Satan's records show every shortcoming, every fault. This is a capital case. The death penalty is involved. So Jesus looks at his record. He looks up at the accuser and says, "This man says that he has no sins because he let me take them. Therefore, he is found not guilty, and can pass into the kingdom."

Do you see what has happened here? When you confess your sins, take Christ as your substitute and example, you declare that you agree with him that your record is blank. Two agree to your innocence. No sins. No punishment.

Now what if you have not let Jesus be your sin bearer? When the accuser comes before him and presents his case, and the record books are opened, there it is. You agree with the accuser by your own actions. Therefore the penalty is death.

Remember, in the sanctuary service, which is all about judgment, it was always the lamb that was inspected. It was the lamb that had to be perfect. And it was the lamb that had to bear the sinner's sins. Once the lamb bore the sins of the sinner, the sinner was free!! A sinner could only die if he bore his own sins.

The only thing that the sinner did to be worthy of forgiveness was to let a lamb stand in his place.

And brothers and sisters, today, and for eternity, it is the lamb that takes the sins of the world upon himself so that he might have a church. A bride fit for eternity.

Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

Have you let that lamb stand in your place?

Do you want to let the lamb stand in your place?

Do you live as a guiltless person?

Have you let the blood of that lamb turn your record spotless?

Do you want to do that today?