

The Judgment

Query:

Romans 14:

[Paul wrote to some Christians:]

7 For none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live to the LORD; and whether we die, we die to the LORD: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the LORD's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD both of the dead and living.

10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you set at nought [criticize] your brother? For we shall all stand [together] before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, “As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God”. [Isaiah 45:23.]

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. This message to Christians does not deal with our every-day salvation, but an event AFTER our death – something we have to look forward to! Maybe we should check it out now?

Response:

We are told in a letter that Paul wrote to Timothy that, “Some men's sins are open beforehand [are public already], going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. [After what?] Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid [forever, for they will also come out in the judgment]”. 1 Timothy 5:24-25.

The fact of a judgment-to-come is considered to be one of the six foundation principles of Christian teaching, so it is good that we be very well acquainted with it, for it is written: “Therefore leaving the [six basic] principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection [maturity]; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works [the old life], and of faith toward God [the new belief], of the doctrine of baptisms [the picture of the change, and the persecutions], and of laying on of hands [being recognised as being sent to teach], and [the certainty] of [the] resurrection of the dead, and OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT.

And this will we do, if God permit”. Hebrews 6:1-3.

Jesus told us about this:

***** (Begin Quote)

John 5:

21 For as the Father raises up the dead [for Me], and quickens them [today]; even so the Son quickens [makes alive] whom He will [in the future]. 22 For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son: 23 that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honours not the Son honours not the Father which has sent Him.

24 Verily, verily, I say to you, He that *hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me*, has everlasting life [already], and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from [the second] death to life.

25 Verily, verily, I say to you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live [again]. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and has given Him authority to execute judgment also [in the future], because He is the Son of man [and can empathise with them]. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth;

they that have done good, to the resurrection of life [in the first resurrection]; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation [in the second]. I [as the Son of man] can of My own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not My own will, but the will of the Father which has sent Me.

******(End Quote)*

“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Master, we would see a sign from You [for they needed more than just His word]’. But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation [for all shall be judged together], and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south [Sheba] shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.’”
John 12:38-42.

Another time He explained what He meant by that. Speaking of the third and last part of the judgment, He said;

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Matthew 25:

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in His glory [at the third advent], and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: ³² and before Him shall be gathered *all* nations:

and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: ³³ and He shall set the sheep [the loyal ones] on His right hand, but the goats [the rebels] on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you *from the foundation of the world*:

³⁵ for I was a hungry [person], and you gave Me meat [food]: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: ³⁶ naked, and you clothed Me: I was sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me”.

³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, “LORD, when saw we you a hungry [person], and fed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink? ³⁸ When saw we You a stranger, and took You in? Or naked, and clothed You? ³⁹ Or when saw we You sick, or in prison, and came to you?”

⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say to them, “Verily I say to you, Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these My brothers [and sisters], you have done it to Me”.

⁴¹ Then shall He say also to them on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels [but you have joined him]:

⁴² for I was a hungry [person], and you gave Me no meat [food]: I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink: ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you took Me not in: naked, and you clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and you visited Me not”.

⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer Him, saying, “LORD, when saw we You a hungry [person], or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to You?”

⁴⁵ Then shall He answer them, saying, “Verily I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me”.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment [the second death]: but the righteous into life eternal.

***** (End Quote)

First, let us be sure of when this judgment will begin.

It is written: “And as it is appointed to men once to die, but AFTER THIS the judgment” . . . Hebrews 9:27. Although we are judging and being judged continually [“going beforehand”], the final verdict cannot be pronounced till we have stopped (sinning, or doing good works, as in our first quote above)! So the judgment is an event of the future, and it will convene (for us) AFTER our death.

But there is a problem there! Because it is also written, “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun [i.e. on earth]”. Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.

The dead are “asleep” as it is written in another place: “Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death”. Psalm 13:3. And Jesus backed it up when His friend was sick. “These things said He: and after that He said to them, ‘Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep’. Then said His disciples, ‘LORD, if he sleep, he shall do well’. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead’.” John 11:11-14.

This would have to mean that we will not be present at the first part of the judgment! So it behoves us to prepare for that occasion while we can! Paul tried to tell that to one of his listeners, but was repulsed again and again. “And after certain days, when Felix [the local governor] came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. ²⁵ And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment-to-come, Felix trembled, and answered, “Go your way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for you”. ²⁶ He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. ²⁷ But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room [political position]: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound [when he left]”. Acts 24:24-27.

We are told an alarming truth regarding the time of the judgment:

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Hebrews 10:

For if we sin wilfully [deliberately and consciously] after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins [for we will have turned down the “way out”], ²⁷ but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries [the enemies of God].

²⁸ He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three [earthly] witnesses: [Deuteronomy 17:6].

²⁹ Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he [she] be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God [i.e. His offer], and has counted the blood of the covenant [His “death”], wherewith he was [once] sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite to the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him that has said, “Vengeance belongs to Me, I will recompense”, says the LORD [Deuteronomy 32:35]. And again, “The LORD shall judge His people”. [Job 36:31; Psalm 50:3-6.]

³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God [for we will reap exactly as we have sown].

******(End Quote)*

That sounds bad, and if it was all there was to it, then we would nearly all be doomed, but, the “Mercy Seat” is above the law, and the goodness of God is always trying to lead us to repentance, so if we should respond and come humbly to Him admitting that we **CHOSE** deliberately to go against His advice, then we can be forgiven, for we have also been told: “So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of Liberty [the Ten Commandments]. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that has showed no mercy; and [but] mercy rejoices [triumphs] against judgment”. James 2:12-13.

Here, from our Saviour, is what these words mean:

“Wherefore I say to you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven to men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come”. Matthew 12:31-32.

that will have been answered by the way in which they responded to the persecution which must necessarily follow those who claim to be walking in His footsteps. Because of the nature of sin, there will always be conflict between those who follow the LORD and those who reject Him.

However, the first priority with us as Christians is to give a good account of ourselves before the peoples of the universe.

Peter tells us that, “(For that righteous man dwelling among them [Lot in Sodom], in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day today with their unlawful deeds.) [We need to believe that] the LORD knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the Day of Judgment to be punished [with the RESULT of their behaviour]: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise [God’s] government”. 2 Peter 2:8-10.

And Jude mentions: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [heaven], He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness [of wilful ignorance] to the judgment of the great day”. Jude 1:6. He also tells us, “And Enoch also, the seventh [generation] from Adam, prophesied of these [the rebels], saying, ‘Behold, the LORD comes [at the second **AND** third advents] with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him’.” Jude 1:14-15. He comes for ONE generation at the Second Advent, and for ALL the generations at the third.

So, we should “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete [give out], it shall be measured to you again. And why behold you the mote [small speck] that is in your brother's eye, but consider not the beam [large piece] that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Let me pull out the mote out of your eye’; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then shall you see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye . . .

“But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned [as well as by your actions]”. Matthew 7:1-5; 12:36-37.

So, in the first part of the judgment (there are three parts) there will be names accepted, and names rejected, for in the last book of the Bible Jesus tells us; “He that overcomes [him or her self], the same shall be [permanently] clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels”. Revelation 3:5.

A vision of this event was given to a prophet of God many centuries before it began.

***** (Begin Quote)

Daniel 7:

⁹ I beheld till the thrones were cast down [placed, as in Oriental cushions], and the Ancient of days [the Father] did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. ¹⁰ A fiery stream [of life] issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands [of angels] ministered to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him [more angels as spectators, for humans are not present]: the judgment was set, and the books were opened . . .

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven [His angel attendants], and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ And [by this part of the judgment] there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all [the surviving] people, nations, and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

¹⁵ I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. ¹⁶ I came near to one of them that stood by [a leading angel], and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

¹⁷ [He said] “These great beasts [animal symbols], which are four, are four kings [and their kingdoms], which shall arise out of the earth [during history].

¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom [in the end], and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever”.

¹⁹ Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse [different] from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

20 and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up [the eleventh], and before whom three fell [leaving seven + one]; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

21 I beheld, and the same [eleventh] horn made war with the saints [the people of God], and prevailed against them; 22 until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom . . . [and he answered] “and they [the saints] shall be given into his [the horn’s] hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

26 “But [at the end of that time] the judgment shall [begin to] sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him”.

*****(End Quote)

In the reality, as the books of record of all the professed Christians were opened in the first part of the judgment (for it began in 1844), the lives of all the dead who had believed on the power of the Son of God came in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate has been presenting the cases of each successive dead generation to the Father and the watchers and the holy ones, and will eventually close with the living. Every name has been mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names have been accepted, names have been rejected. When any had sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven after their death, their names were blotted out of the Book of Life, and the record of their good deeds erased from the Book of God's Remembrance. (He doesn't need printed books, of course, but we get the idea of what He is doing by their mention.)

But all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood (the death) of the Son of God as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven. As they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins are ready to be blotted out, and they themselves have been accounted worthy of eternal life. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world”. 1 John 4:17.

Conclusion:

One of the apostles warned us that not many would accept this:

***** (Begin Quote)

² Peter ³:

³ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”.

⁵ For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: ⁶ whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: ⁷ but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved to fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day [earthly time is not important to God]. ⁹ The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the LORD [a period of time] will come [commence] as a thief in the night [quietly and unexpectedly]; in the [end of] which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness, ¹² looking for and [even] hastening to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. ¹⁴ Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace [in the judgment], without spot, and blameless.

***** (End Quote)