

The Judgment

Just as death is a certainty, so too, is a future day of Judgment. *“As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* Hebrews 9:27. As this verse shows, for the dead Judgment is to occur after death and resurrection, and because the dead *“know not anything”* Ecclesiastes 9:5, it is obvious that this subject of the Judgment must be considered along with that of the Resurrection. [See pamphlet 11. The Resurrection]

A dead person’s body and consciousness must be restored so that Judgment can take place. This is exactly what the Bible teaches. *“There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”* Acts 24:15. and *“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [the living] and the dead [those restored to life by resurrection] at his appearing and his kingdom;”* 2 Timothy 4:1. So, the Judgment is to take place when Christ returns to the earth and immediately before the Kingdom of God is established. Notice that the “living” are included in the above passage.

Who will appear before Christ and be subject to Judgment? Not everyone who has ever lived will be raised and brought to Judgment. There are many, but not all, who will be alive at the time of Christ’s return who will face judgment. It will however, be confined to those who have known the will of God whether they have obeyed it or not, both dead and living. *“The man that wandereth out of [not in] the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.”* Proverbs 21:16.

“And many [but not all] of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” Daniel 12:2.

The criteria, then, that makes us eligible for appearance at the Judgment is the knowledge and call of the Gospel message. The Apostle Paul, writing to those who had this knowledge and call, said

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10. Jesus calls this light. John 3:20-21: *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Christ is the great Judge, and God, his Father has appointed him to do this work. *“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”* John 5:22.

Jesus will not judge as human judges do, taking evidence of witnesses and relying on a jury who sometimes take weeks or even months to try and determine who is guilty. Jesus will know instantly, by the power of God, who his true followers are. *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels [motives] of the hearts;”* 1 Corinthians 4:5.

In the Bible, the Judgment scene is sometimes presented to us in the form of parables. In one of them, Jesus spoke of the two classes of people appearing before the Judgment as being “sheep” and “goats”.... *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory... And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”* Matthew 25:31-46.

So, what is the reward and what is the punishment? These outcomes are clearly stated ... *“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23). How wonderful it would be for those accounted worthy, by God’s grace, at the Judgment to be granted a place in His Kingdom and to live forever with Jesus on the earth! How terrible for the others!!!