

The Judgments

by Dr. Walter L. Wilson

"The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9).

The subject of "Judgments" is an important one. If God did not care for you and me, He never would have told us anything about these matters; He would let us go on in the dark, and slip off the brink into hell. When you see a red lantern by a ditch in the road, you feel thankful to the man who hung it there, for he did it because he cared for you. He wanted to save you from an accident.

So our Lord has hung up red lanterns because He loves us. In His kindness He tells us about the judgments that will take place, and the results of those judgments. Let us feel grateful to our Lord for telling us about these things, for He not only tells us about them, but He tells us how to escape from them. He tells us how to get ready for judgment. How kind it is of our Lord to forewarn us.

The Judgment of Sin

The first Judgment we shall consider is a judgment you and I should be very deeply interested in, because it is the judgment of the Lord Jesus at Calvary for the sin of the world—your sin and mine. In Luke 12:50 we read this significant statement of the Lord: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! "Not until it occurs," but "until it be accomplished," for He deliberately planned that baptism, and deliberately went into it. What an agony surged in His heart! Listen, I will tell you something that will help you. Do you know why the Lord Jesus was in such terrible agony of soul about that judgment on Calvary? It was because He would there go down under the waves and billows of God's wrath. The angry surges of the wrath of God were going to roll over Him. He was going to be submerged under the terrible outpouring of the wrath of God.

Do you remember how in Gethsemane He agonized with strong crying and tears, and sweat drops of blood? Why was it? Because He was soon to become what you and I are by nature. Do you think you are lovely, especially nice, sweet and beautiful? Notice the agony He went through when He looked forward to taking your place and mine. If I want to know what I am by nature in the sight of God, I need only look at Christ when He was about to become sin for Walter Wilson. It was agony to His soul. If I was so nice and so good, why should He go

through all that agony? I want you to consider that. God was going to do to Christ everything He should have done to you and to me. Notice, I'm including myself, for we are all the same in God's sight (Romans 3:22, 23).

But those who never trust the Saviour, and never receive Him as their Substitute, will have the wrath of God upon them forever (John 3:36). They will have to face a righteous God in judgment. If the Lord Jesus received such treatment when He took my place and the place of other Christians whom you know so well, what will God do to you when you face Him? I say to you that the judgment of Calvary is the most wonderful, marvelous revelation of what God thinks of sin that He could possibly devise.

I was impressed with the death of the man who was shot some days ago, because he carried diamonds on his person. This man in the hour of his need sought a shelter and couldn't find any. He was seeking shelter from the gun of an enemy. When you get before God, where are you going to hide? How thankful I am that we Christians have a blessed hiding place! In Isaiah 32:2, we read: "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Thank God for that Man, Christ Jesus. Make Him your hiding place without delay. You know not what a day will bring forth. The only opportunity you have to hide from coming wrath is now. There is no hiding place for the sinner who dies in his sins.

That is the first Judgment: the judgment of sin at Calvary when the Lord Jesus took your place, and bore the guilt of your sins. Whether your sins have been few or many, if you want to know what God thinks of them, just look at the cross of Christ. See what God did to Him, when He took the sinner's place. God treated Him with more wrath than has ever fallen on any human being in the world. You should have a saving interest, a deep interest in that judgment, for if He isn't your Substitute, you will have to go through the same thing yourself.

The Judgment of Self

The next judgment is mentioned in I Corinthians 11:31 - "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." This is the second judgment, the judgment of our own selves. We all do that to a certain extent. We look at our lives and recognize our failures. No one knows them better than we do. No one knows about your sins like yourself. But you may look right at them and then excuse yourself for having committed them. You have a very active memory, but when you look

back over the things you have done, you decide that they are not so very bad. Everyone of us excuses himself. Isn't it wonderful to be both the judge and the jury of your own case? You sit on the judgment bench, and look over the list of your sins, and say, "You can go free."

In Luke 10: 29, a certain lawyer was "willing to justify himself." Who isn't? Why aren't you fair with yourself and judge yourself with a righteous judgment? Are you afraid to? I was afraid to do it. If you find yourself guilty you will be subject to punishment. You know that you are guilty already in His sight. It is not necessary to produce further evidence. But now the Lord gives us the privilege of pleading guilty before we come into judgment, and taking advantage of the wonderful provision He has made to remove our guilt. But there are those who are like the Irishman who was brought before the judge. "Mike," the judge inquired, "are you guilty?"

"Faith, and your honour, how can I tell until I hear the evidence," Mike replied.

Are you like that? Waiting for God to bring out the whole terrible thing? Our Lord says about the sins we have committed that they are going to be witnesses, for "our sins testify against us."

Let me go with you into eternity. Our Lord is on the bench, and inquires, "Where are the witnesses against this man?" Up comes sin number one and two and three, and each one tells what you have done. In the meantime thousands and thousands of sins are lining up waiting to say, "He did it." Your sins are represented as having life, and coming before the throne of God to speak against you. Think of each one walking up—sins of omission, of commission, of presumption, of ignorance, of deceit, and of pride. Like a ghastly line each one comes to testify, "He did it."

How wonderful it is to have all the witnesses put away, never to appear against us! He says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgression, and, as a cloud, thy sins" (Isaiah 44:22). Won't it be wonderful to stand before God at the judgment, and when He asks, "Where are the witnesses against this man?" there will not be a single one? The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, wiped them out. Hallelujah, there are no witnesses against me and never will be! Are there going to be any against you?

The verse says, "If we would judge ourselves." The Lord gives you the privilege of judging yourself, finding yourself guilty, and taking advantage of God's remedy. But many do not do it. They look at themselves and decide, "Well, I'm better than some, and not so bad as

others, and a lot better than most people." We judge ourselves by others whom we think are worse than we are. "Why I'd never think of doing what she does!" some will say.

Then, too, we judge ourselves by what others say about us. They tell us how lovely we are, and we believe it.

I have seen my wife go into a store to buy cloth. She takes the material out on the sidewalk to look at it. She doesn't like the dim light in the dry goods store, so she takes it out in the sunlight to look at it, and there she finds it quite different from what it seemed to be in the dark.

I think my hands are white, but when I put them next to this white page I see that they are not.

You may compare yourself favorably with another sinner, but our Lord does not compare you with your neighbor, but with His Son, and declares, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We cannot come up to God's standard.

Do you remember the story of the two men who wanted to enlist in the king's guard in London? One said to his friend, "I'm much taller than you are, Jack. You probably won't be able to get in."

The other one was much shorter, but replied, "You may be taller, but I have a stronger body than you." Each of them was confident of getting into the guard.

When they went down to headquarters? the officer in charge said to the first one, "Get on this stand, and we'll get your height." In a moment he said, "Sorry, sir, but you are one inch too short." And when Jack got up on the box, the verdict was, "Sorry, sir, but you are seven inches too short." Which one was the most rejected? They were both the same!

You may be a lot better than somebody else. I expect you are, and I hope you are, but you have never attained to the standard of God—the highest place—the place to which God requires you to attain. I found I never could come up to His standard, so I got inside of the Man who does come up to it. I am walking in another's merits?—hidden "in Christ"—He has the height. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17).

It is wonderful to face the facts and judge ourselves now. If we do it, He will not do it. If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. You come to the same conclusion He has come to, that your sins have kept you "short of the glory of God." Why not just plead guilty, and throw

yourself on the mercy of the court? You know what He will say to you if you do: "Son, thy sins are forgiven."

The Judgment of the Saved

Now turn with me to II Corinthians 5:9-11, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences." This is the judgment of the Christian. When you read "we" in the Epistles, the author is talking about believers; and when you read "they," he is referring to unbelievers.

We Christians must appear and be exposed before the judgment seat of Christ. It is the judgment of saved people to determine what reward they will receive. It will not be a question of salvation, for you will already be in heaven. It is rather a question of whether you lived well for God after you were saved, and are entitled to receive a crown, or whether you will be "saved; yet so as by fire"—just "by the skin of your teeth." Even though you have lived a miserable, wasted life as a Christian, you will get in all right, but "knowing...the terror of the Lord," we who are Christians must report to the Lord Jesus. I wonder how many of us are of value to God and to the Church!

A friend of mine told me of preaching a funeral sermon on one occasion, during which he said, "This corpse has been a member of my church for ten years." Are you a corpse in the church? As soon as the meeting is over, do you run for home? Why don't you young people take notes when you hear a good sermon? You wouldn't go to school and neglect to take notes. There are so many corpses in the church, because people don't remember the sermons they hear, or even the points that are stressed. They sit and listen to a message, but the next day very few can tell what it was about. That is why there are so many corpses who don't endeavor to make themselves able servants of God. When I studied medicine I took notes. When I studied Latin and Hebrew I took notes. When the instructor told me anything I wrote it down, for I wanted to remember. I learned how to cut a tent when I was in the tent and awning business. I wanted to know how to cut a tent and awning, so I wrote down the instructions I received.

We are corpses because we don't endeavor to learn anything. We don't intend to remember. We go to church for ten years, and after that time

we couldn't give an outline of the judgments, justification, the Lord's coming, angels, or anything else, because we didn't try to remember. When we meet Him, He will hold us responsible. In school we try to remember because we know there will be an examination day. Beloved, there will be an examination day for you, and He will hold you responsible to know His Word,

How many of us are trying to learn His Word? We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Then we will hear the Lord say, "I gave you my Bible; did you learn it? I gave you my Spirit; did He teach you? I placed you in that church; did you take advantage of the opportunities to become really useful there?" Oh, the heartbreaks there will be at the throne. Live daily as though you were going to be judged at the judgment throne of Christ tomorrow. Don't waste any more time.

What will you say when you meet Him, and He says to you: "Sister, how long did you sit under that thing-a-ma-jig that fixed your head up in the beauty parlor, and then how long did you sit with me, letting me fix up your heart? How much time did you spend over the newspaper, and how much time over my Word? How much time did you spend talking about politics, and how much time in teaching others of my power to save?" We can live as we please here, but some day our Lord is going to ask us what we did with the assets we had, and the opportunities and privileges that were ours.

The Judgment of the Lost

We must now look at the last judgment. This is the judgment of the unsaved: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that 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, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11,12,15).

No Christian will ever go to the Great White Throne Judgment, for he has no sins against him to be judged there. When we trust Christ Jesus, He blots out every sin stain from the cradle to the grave. They are all gone. He tells us this in John 5:24, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." We shall never come to this judgment, for our sins are gone.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." These are

those who are dead in trespasses and sins; who have no eternal life, because they have never received the gift of eternal life from Christ. He saw little sinners and big sinners; those who had committed very few sins, but had never had them forgiven; and those who had committed many sins.

"Stand before God." They have to stand in judgment. "And the books were opened: . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." He'll not judge you by what false teachers have said, but by what He has said to you in His Book. Then there is another book, "the book of life," which is opened; and the unsaved are not found written in the book of life.

I have a book of life. Whenever a patient commits her life or her case to me, I put it down in this book: "On such-and-such a day, Mrs. James Cook gave herself to me;—age . . . , height . . . , weight . . . , diagnosis . . .," and I keep that name until I am through with the case. When I consider the patient well and discharge the case, I close the record.

God's Book of Life

Christ has a book in which He puts the names of His patients—all those who have committed their cases to Him; all who have turned the saving of their souls over to Him—all who have said, "I receive You as the Lord of my life. I believe You will save me, and I trust myself to You"; then down goes the name in that book. It is the book of life. All whose names He puts in there He takes care of; He blots out the sins; He keeps the name there until He is through with the one who has come to Him, and yet He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." How long is that? It is for all eternity.

When you come before the judgment throne, He gives you a fair deal. He looks all through His book: "Did this man ever trust Me to save him? Acknowledge Me to be the Saviour of his soul?" He looks in the book for your name, but doesn't find it. He doesn't find any indication that you ever came and knelt to Him. "He never came," is the verdict. "Take him away," is His command. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

That is the most terrible thing that can ever happen to you. It is called "the second death" in Revelation 20:14 - If the first death annihilated you, as some teach, there would be no "second death," for there would be nothing to die a second time. But death gives up the body, and hell gives up the soul. These are reunited before the Great White Throne, and the individual is cast into the lake of fire in his body, but he will

not burn up. This was proven when Nebuchadnezzar had the three young Jews thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3), for they were not burned. All that burned were the cords that bound them. The fire doesn't destroy the resurrection body of the sinner who is cast into the lake of fire; that is why God gave us this story in Daniel.

He raises up the body, because everything you do you do with your body. It was your body that took you on errands of mercy, or errands of hate. With your lips you spoke words of comfort, or you spoke words of bitterness. It was with those eyes of yours that sin was committed, or love was expressed. With your body righteous acts were done, or wrongs were perpetrated. He rewards or punishes the body, for it was in the body that the deeds were done.

If you come into judgment without Christ, without having your name written in the book of life . . . Listen! It is the Judge telling you beforehand what He is going to do, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Heed the warning now, and make sure that your name is in the book of life. Present yourself before the Saviour, and say, "I want You. You can save me—no one else can do it—and I trust You." He is willing to save all who come unto God by Him and in His name. Do you want Him to save you now?

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