

# The Doctrine of Judgements

by Pastor Bill Reed

## Introduction

The whole concept of judgment in the Bible arises from the divine attributes of God, being holiness, righteousness, and justice. Holiness occupies the highest rank among the attributes of God. It is the attribute by which God desired to be especially known in Old Testament times (Joshua 24:19, 1 Samuel 6:20, Psalm 22:3, Isaiah 40:25, Habakkuk 1:12).

It is emphasized by the bounds set about Mt. Sinai when God came down on it (Exodus 19:12-25). Also it is seen in the division of the Tabernacle and Temple into The Holy and Most Holy Places (Genesis 26:33; 1 Kings 6:16; 19). Three vital things should be learned from the fact that God is holy. First; there is a chasm between God and the sinner. Secondly, man must approach God through the merits of another because man neither possesses nor is he able to acquire the sinlessness which is necessary for access to God. And thirdly we should approach God with reverence and honor.

A correct view of the holiness of God leads to a proper view of the sinful self (Isaiah 6:5-7). In God's holiness lies the reason for the atonement; what his holiness demanded, his love provided. Righteousness deals with his dealing with humanity. If he was to deal with us righteously, then his holiness must be maintained through justice. And justice requires a payment for sin before God can fellowship with us. In Christ's death, the wages of sin is met (Romans 6:23) through his love, and therefore justice is accomplished, and a holy God can now fellowship with those who are hid in the righteousness of Christ through faith. (Colossians 3:3) So now let us look back to the cross & understand the judgment that took place on that day.

## Judgment of The Cross

The justice of God has already judged sin on the cross through Jesus Christ the sinless sacrifice, willfully giving his life. In our place, as a substitute for us. Our sins being laid on him and the wrath of God poured out on him instead of us. Therefore the scriptures are very clear **“that he has delivered us from wrath”** (1 Thessalonians. 1:10), and **“there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:1).

“Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and God has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53: 4-6)

Our sins were judged once and for all in Christ (John 1:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2) the believer in Christ is accordingly freed from the guilt and penalty of sin; because Christ has accepted the guilt and paid the penalty for him. No believer will ever be judged for his sins, since he has been judged for them already in Christ.

“There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”  
(Romans 8:1).

As we come to a close with the judgment at the cross we must make reference to this wonderful verse, which has been such a force of liberty in my personal walk with God. The Greek word for “**condemnation**,” in this verse is *katakrima*, it is a compound word from “*kata*”, which means against, and “*krino*”, which means to judge. It also has the suffix *-ma*, which makes this word mean the result of judgment. In simpler language, this word says very clearly that those who are in Christ, through the new birth **will never experience the result** of judgment against them, since the result of judgment is death.

And this is possible because Jesus Christ suffered the result of judgment, death for us. **“Verily, verily, I say unto, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is (already) passed from death unto life.”** (John 5:24)

The believer’s judgment for sin then is passed and was settled at the cross. This was our positional judgment as sinners, and because of this judgment we are no longer classified by God as sinners. We are now seen by Him as children. (1 John 3:1) As we enter into our experience on this earth as children of God, we come into the reality of another judgment, which is optional to the believer. And it is such a provision of grace, that the believer would be foolish not to take advantage of it, this judgment is called the judgement of self.

### **Judgment of Self**

The warning to judge self is addressed directly to those who are saved: **“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of God, that we should not be condemned with the world”** (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). Here chastisement is contemplated as a discipline for the believer who does not avail himself of the provision of self judgment. The Greek word for chastened here is, “*paideuo*,” which means to train children, or to instruct. So when God's children do not obey him, he will discipline them out of love for them.

“For whom God loveth he chasteneth” (this is not punishment done in anger, but correction in love) -- but if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards and not sons.” (Hebrews 12:6-8)

This verse clearly teaches that all of God's children experience some degree of discipline, and if we don't, it's because we aren't His children. In order for a believer to escape the discipline of his Heavenly Father he must participate in the provision of grace called, self-judgment. This is where the child of God examines himself according to the scriptures and with the Holy Spirit's conviction, and admits to God and self that he has sinned.

This is accomplished through “**confessing**” our sins to God. **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness .”** (1 John 1:9) The Greek word for confess is “*homologeō*,” and it literally means to speak the same things. This comes from “*homos*”, meaning same thing, and “*logeō*” to speak. This is clearly teaching that when we sin we agree with God's word and the Holy Spirit that what we have done is sin, and God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse.

This experiential washing is seen in John 13, where Jesus is washing the disciples feet. In verse six He comes to Peter, who in misguided humility, tells Jesus that he can not wash his feet. Jesus answers him saying, **“if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.”** When he says “**no part with me**”, he is referring to **fellowship, and not a relationship.**

This can be seen by the word used for wash that he uses here the word is “*nipto*,” in the Greek, and speaks of bathing just a part of the body and not the whole body. If Jesus intended for this to represent salvation he would surely have used “*louo*,” which means to bathe the entire body.

This is proven even further in the next few verses. “**Simon Peter saith unto him, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, he that is washed (*louo*) needeth not save to wash (*nipto*) his feet, but is clean every whit.**” Those who have already experienced the cleansing of God's blood for salvation, bringing them into the family of God need only to experience the cleansing of God's blood for fellowship, which is accomplished through the confession of our sins to God and this is known as self judgment.

The question of relationship is a finished work the moment a sinner places his faith in Jesus Christ. At that very moment the sinner is changed into a “**new creation**” (2 Corinthians 5:17), and by grace becomes a child of God. Now we enter into the realm of fellowship. Not every child of God experiences the intimacy of fellowship on a consistent basis. You must remember there are obedient children as well as disobedient children in God's family.

Remember what he called the disobedient ones in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2? He called them “**carnal, babes in Christ**”. They were carnal because they were being ruled by the flesh nature instead of the holy spirit. They were called babes because they were immature, not because they were newly saved. A believer that does not stay in fellowship through confession will end up as carnal and be among the immature who will then be trained through discipline.

The judgment of a believer is truly **threefold**: past, present, and future. As we have already seen, the believer has been judged in Christ at Calvary for his sins. This **past judgment as sinners**, establishes relationship between God and the regenerated saint. Then we have also examined the self-judgment of the believer through confession of our sins. **This present judgment as sons** keeps us in fellowship with our father. Now we will look at the judgment of believers that is a **future judgment as servants**.

### **Judgment of The Believers Works**

This judgment has nothing to do with sins, for those have already been judged in the past at Calvary. Remember Christ has suffered the full punishment for the believer. This judgment could better be understood as an evaluation by God, to determine whether our works were done in the flesh, or done in the Spirit. “**We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad**” (acceptable or disapproved) (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The pronoun “**we**” occurs twenty-six times in this chapter, and in every instance it means the believers. Also the epistle is addressed to the “**church**” and “**saints**” at Corinth, so the judgment spoken of here is for believers only. The time of this judgment is when the God comes (1 Corinthians 4:5), and the place is “**in the air**” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). it will not be a judgment in the sense of a trial to see whether the judged are innocent (saved) or guilty (lost), for it is a judgment of the works of the saved only.

**“No other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any mans work abide which he has built there upon he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”** (1Corinthians 3:11-15)

In Revelations 1:14, the eyes of Christ are described **“as a flame of fire”**. As we stand before that holy gaze on that day, every hidden motive of the heart will be seen through the purifying eyes of Christ. And all those works which were done in the flesh, will be consumed by the “fire” of his gaze. These are referred to as wood, hay, and stubble, the combustible materials. But those that remain will bring rewards. One final note on this future judgment, the Greek word for judgment seat is *“bema,”* which was an elevated seat, or umpires seat. And at the end of the Greek Olympic games the successful contestants would gather here to receive their crowns. Let us be found faithful on this day! This now brings us to the fourth judgment in this series, and this one also will concern just one people group, the nation of Israel. The time of this judgment is also future.

### **The Judgment of Israel**

While the church is being judged at the Bema Seat of Christ, in the air, the nation of Israel will be judged under the Antichrist on the earth. The Jews are an “earthly” people; and as all the promises to them are earthly it follows that their judgment must be of an earthly character. The primary verse for this judgment is found in Ezekiel 20:33-44; it reads as follows:

“As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and you shall know that I am the God. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if you will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye My Holy Name no more with your gifts, and with your idols. For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein you have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And you shall know that I am Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up my hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall you remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought you for my names sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

The basis of their judgment is their rejection of the Godhead. In the days of Samuel, they rejected God the Father (1 Samuel 8:7), in the days of Christ, they rejected God the Son. (Luke 23:18), in the days of Stephen, they rejected God the Holy Spirit. (Acts 7:51, 54-60) For this sin of rejection they have been scattered among the nations until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled. When the times of the gentiles are about to end the Jews will be gathered back to the Holy Land “**unconverted**”, and caused to “**pass under the rod.**” They will be cast into God's “**melting pot**” (Ezekiel 22:19-22), and pass through an experience spoken by Jeremiah and Daniel as the time of Jacob's trouble. (Jeremiah 30:4-7, Daniel 12:1).

As we close out our section on the judgment of Israel, we see that Jesus spoke of this time as “the great tribulation”, and he and Zechariah the prophet associate it with the return of the God. (Matthew 24:21-31, Zechariah 14:1-11). The result of this terrible time will be that the Jews will call in their misery upon the Lord. (Zech. 12:10), then Christ will come back to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:3), and the Jewish people will look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10), and a nation, the Jewish nation will be “born” (converted), in a day (Isa. 66: 8) this will complete the judgment of the Jews. It is obvious that we cannot go into more detail with the specific verses concerning this prophetic time, and Israel. This is not meant to be a comprehensive study on the judgment of Israel, but only an introduction into these matters. Therefore we are now ready to take a look at another future judgment.

### Judgment of the Nations

The account of this judgment is given in Matthew 25:31-46. There are many who believe that this is the same judgment as in Revelations 20: 11-15, we beg to differ, seeing how a close look reveals too many differences. The following comparison will show the difference in the two accounts:

<b>Matthew 25:31-46 vs. Revelation 20:11-15</b>	
No resurrection	A resurrection
Living nations judged	Dead judged
On the earth (Joel 3:2)	Heaven and earth gone
No books mentioned	Books opened
3 classes named sheep, goats, brethren	1 class named. “The dead”
Time - before the millennium	Time - after the millennium

This comparison Reveals the fact that one of these judgments is on the earth, the other in the heavens, and they are separated by a thousand years. The Greek word for nations here is “ethnos,” it occurs one hundred fifty-eight times in the new testament. It is translated “gentiles” -- ninety-two of those times, “nation or nations”, sixty-one of those times and “heathen” five times, but is never in any of these instances applied either to the dead or resurrected. Is this a judgment of the nations only, the Jews cannot be in it, for they are not reckoned among the nations. (numbers 23:9) and as the Church will be associated with Christ in this judgment, for the saints shall judge the world. (1 Corinthians 6:2) therefore the Church cannot be in this judgment either.

The key to understanding this judgment is that it is not a judgment of individuals, but of nations. The sheep here do not represent individual believers in Christ as it does elsewhere when speaking of individuals. Here it refers to those nations that during the tribulation time, treat the Jewish people kindly, feeding and clothing them during the time of their persecution. The scriptures are very clear with references, that certain gentile nations will share the coming kingdom with Israel (Isaiah 60:3, 61:6; 62:2) these nations shall serve Israel (Isa. 14:1-2; 60:12). The gentile nations are declared to be present in the earth when the new city comes down from God, out of heaven (Rev. 21:24,26). At the beginning of Israel's history as a nation, God told Abraham **“I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth”** (Genesis 12:3). It is not accidental that the word “curse” appears in both the Genesis and Matthew passages. At the time when God is anticipating the period of Israel's life among the gentile nations, he said: **“I will bless them that bless thee”** while Christ said, **“come, ye blessed of my Father.”** Likewise at the beginning of their history God says, **“I will curse him that curseth you,”** and then Jesus says, **“Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire,”** and this is the judgment of nations.

### **Judgment of Angels**

The main verses here (1 Corinthians 15:24-26), indicates that during the kingdom reign of Christ, angelic powers must be judged, and among them as a last enemy death must be destroyed. There are also fallen angels to be judged (1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; Revelation 20:10).

### **Judgment of the Great White Throne**

The major passage for this final judgment is Revelation 20:11-15. This is God's final dealing with the wicked dead. That all unsaved humanity must be raised to judgment is taught by Christ in John 5:28-29, and **“Whosoever is not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire”**. The judgments of God are as sure as His word, and no human reasoning or opinions of man can change the fact that God has already judged sin on the cross, nor can we dispute the beautiful provision of grace in the opportunity to judge, or examine ourselves, to keep ourselves free from discipline. The *Bema* seat is as much a reality as the cross, and although in the future, its reality is as sure as his word.

These truths should be such a motivating factor in the lives of believers, and yet if we are not motivated by the deep love of God demonstrated at the cross, we will not be motivated by the thoughts of future rewards. We need to rise above the “earthly”, and begin by faith to see the “heavenly”. We need to recognize the shortness of life and the time that is fading away before our eyes. Soon he will be here! Will we found waiting or wanting? The answer to that question begins with an examination of our hearts, with its desires and purpose. Let us begin now.