

THE SEVEN JUDGMENTS

by **Dave Breese**

We live in a world where life moves on, sometimes with equanimity, sometimes with trouble. Unfortunately, many people think life moves on, comes to an end, and that's it. That is not it! The Bible teaches that everything we say and do will one day be evaluated. Judgment Day is coming! But there's not just one judgment; there are seven told about in Scripture.

1

Believers' Sins at the Cross

The first is the judgment of the believer's sins at the cross. To understand this truth is to begin to understand what Christianity is all about. Jesus spoke about this judgment when He prayed,

Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die
(Jn. 12:31–33).

Christ knew He was moving toward His crucifixion. But when Jesus went to the cross, He bore judgment for the sins of mankind. In that moment, God reached through the annals of time and gathered from every broken heart, every dissolute life, and every despairing spirit the sins of all humanity and placed them on His Son. The Bible says,

For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21).

You are saved by the righteousness of God, not by your own righteousness: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Ti. 3:5). People talk about Christianity and eternity, yet they don't understand what either is all about. They say, "When a man lives a terrible life, he goes to hell." "She is such a wonderful person, she'll be in heaven someday." Friend, you don't go to heaven because you live an honorable life. You don't go to heaven because you're sweet, nice, and kind. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). You go to heaven for one reason alone: You have believed on God's Son as your personal Savior—you have accepted the fact that your sins already have been judged and atoned for by His sacrifice on the cross.

2

Believers' Self-Judgment

The second judgment is the believer's judgment of himself. The apostle Paul spoke about the excesses that had developed at Corinth. Many Christians were drunken and dissolute. So he said,

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:30–32).

As Christians, God calls us to perfecting holiness in the fear of God. It means daily saying yes! to God and no! to the Devil.

Spiritual victory isn't really that profound. It's attained by causing our lives, choices, and decisions to conform as much as possible to the image of Christ. In Corinth, however, people started to treat the communion service not as a great memorial feast but as a time of personal indulgence. We can be Christians, saved by the grace of God, but still be very real disappointments to the Lord and to His people. In fact, the Bible says, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13).

The Christian life involves saying no to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 Jn. 2:16) and saying yes to the great purpose of God. It takes spiritual discernment and personal judgment.

3

Believers' Works

The third judgment is called the Judgment Seat of Christ:

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 (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Judgment Seat of Christ is an awesome appointment that every Christian has. Will the issue there be, "Am I saved, or am I lost?" No! That matter was decided the moment you believed in Jesus and took Him as your personal Savior. The issue here will be your works: What have you done for Christ since you were saved?

Can you imagine standing in the towering, magnificent presence of the throne of Jesus Christ? There, before a myriad of believers, Christ will ask you, "What did you do with time and treasure and talent? What did you do with the opportunities I gave you?"

Some will have a great report before the Lord. They will present to Him "gold, silver, precious stones" (1 Cor. 3:12): the gold of a life lived for Christ, the silver of souls won to the Savior, the precious stones of spiritual accomplishment. The Bible says Christ will speak to those individuals and say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; . . . Enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Mt. 25:21).

But the Bible also says some will have only "wood, hay, stubble" to present to Christ. Those materials will disappear in an instant:

And the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built upon it, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire (1 Cor. 3:13–15).

That's the Judgment Seat of Christ. What an awesome experience!

4

Judgment of Gentiles (Nations)

The fourth judgment pertains to the Gentile nations:

And before him shall be gathered all the 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 (Mt. 25:32–34).

Jesus Christ is the King of the Jews. He is also the King of the world. And one day, as King of the Jews, He will sit on the throne, judging the nations of the world. The basis of that judgment will be as follows:

For I was hungry, and ye gave me food; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Mt. 25:35–40).

Many times people quote this passage as a mandate to care for the children of the world. I don't violently object to this use; but if we are going to stay with sound exegesis, we must recognize that Christ is not talking about all the children of the world. He is talking about the least of these *my brethren*. And the brethren of Christ are the Jewish people. During the early days of the Millennium, the nations will be required to answer the question, "What have you done to the Jewish people?"

5

Judgment of Israel

The fifth judgment is the judgment of Israel. Israel has come under many cycles of discipline. But one final judgment is yet to come. When Christians are taken out of the world at the Rapture of the church, the Tribulation will begin. The Tribulation is "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). During those days, Israel will come under the terrible oppression of the Antichrist. The Jewish people will be so pressed, so chagrined, that they will ask, "Why is this happening? Where is God now when we need Him?" They will come to the end of their rope. So the Bible says,

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1).

The Jewish people will recognize Jesus as their Messiah, and all Israel will be saved. That will be quite a moment! "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11:15).

6

Judgment of Angels

Scripture also mentions a judgment that will come on the angels. Angels are great in power and might—much stronger than humans. God created them to be His special servants, but some rebelled. About them, Jude wrote,

And the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 6).

Those angels are already in prison, awaiting that Judgment Day. Who will judge the angels? Well, the apostle Paul wrote,

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? (1 Cor. 6:2–3).

We Christians will judge the angels. That's a fantastic statement, but it's true. The angels will stand before you and me in judgment. To fully understand this fact gives us a glimpse of the exalted position of redeemed humanity in eternity.

7

Judgment of the Wicked Dead (Great White Throne)

Finally comes the judgment of the wicked dead. It's hard to read this passage without becoming greatly moved concerning the awful fate of the wicked:

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 whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:12-15).

The Bible states this fact with finality. Think of the people running around in today's world saying, "I don't need God. He's totally irrelevant. What has He ever done for me?" What inane and preposterous arrogance!

He's given you life. He's offered you salvation. He is "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25). We need to hear it again: If a person knows Jesus Christ as personal Savior, he's going to heaven. If he doesn't, he will be cast into the lake of fire. At the Great White Throne,

the question will be, "Is my name written in the Book of Life?" It gets there by believing in Jesus Christ and accepting Him as your personal Savior. If you haven't yet said that wonderful yes! to Jesus Christ, do it today. I pray that you will.