

Judgement

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. This judgment is spoken of in 2 Cor 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." The manifestation of the believer's works is in question in this judgment. It is most emphatically not a judgment of the believer's sins. These have been fully atoned for in the vicarious and substitutionary death of Christ, and remembered no more (Heb 10:17). It is quite necessary, however, that the service of every child of God be definitely scrutinized and evaluated (Matt 12:36; Rom 14:10; Gal 6:7; Eph 6:8; Col 3:24-25). As a result of this judgment of the believer's works, there will be reward or loss of reward. In any event, the truly born-again believer will be saved (1 Cor 3:11-15). The judgment seat, literally bema, evidently is set up in heaven previous to Christ's glorious second advent to establish His earth rule in the millennial kingdom (Matt 16:27; 2 Tim 4:8; Rev 22:12). The out-taking of the church, according to 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-58, must first be fulfilled. The judgment seat of Christ is necessary for the appointment of places of rulership and authority with Christ in His role of "King of kings and Lord of lords" at His revelation in power and glory.M.F.U.
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JUDGMENTS. Theologians have often maintained that there is one general judgment. This is a tenet strongly entrenched in Christian theology. But a careful inductive study of all the Scriptures involved demonstrates that there are at least eight distinct judgments described in the Bible.

The Judgment of the Cross. This is the judgment upon sin effected by Christ when He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). It is the basis of the believer's salvation when he believes. Christ has borne the sinner's guilt and in Him, as a substitute for all on behalf of whom He died, sin has been judged. The one who believes on Christ has been released from judgment, and "there is therefore now no condemnation" (John 5:24; Rom 8:1; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:26-28; 1 Peter 2:24).

The Judgment of Believers. This takes the form of divine correction and chastisement (1 Cor 11:30-32; Heb 12:3-13; John 15:1-9). The apostle Paul says: "But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world" (1 Cor 11:31-32). This, then, involves God's disciplinary action against a sinning saint. "The sin leading to death" (1 John 5:16; cf. 1 Cor 5:1-5; Acts 5:1-11) occurs when the believer, through deliberate continued sin, brings reproach upon the name of Christ and upon his salvation by free grace, and forfeits his physical life "that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

The Believer's Works. This judgment concerns only Christians, and it is not a matter of judgment for sins that have been judged at the cross and with which the believer will not again be faced (John 5:24; Rom 8:1); it involves instead the divine appraisal of the Christian's works and service. This will entail reward or loss of reward (2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10,12; Eph 6:8; 2 Tim 4:8). See JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

The Judgment of Self. This is referred to in 1 Cor 11:31-32. It has reference to stern criticism of a Christian of his own ways with accommodation to the divine will and immediate confession of and turning away from all sin (1 John 1:7-9). True confession is equivalent to self-judgment and involves immediate cleansing and restoration to fellowship and walking "in the light."

Judgment of the Nations. This judgment is referred to in Matt 25:31-46. It involves divine dealing with the nations on the basis of their treatment of Israel. The "goat" nations on the left hand involve those peoples who are sent to the lake of fire. The "sheep" nations on the right hand enter the millennial kingdom. The peculiar basis of this judgment is the way all nations have dealt with Israel during the Tribulation period preceding the second advent of Christ. OT prophecy is clear in its prediction that some Gentile nations will enter the coming kingdom of Israel (cf. Isa 60:3; 61:6; 62:2). These nations will be subordinate to Israel. As the millennial state merges into the eternal state, Gentile nations are still asserted to be on the earth when the heavenly Jerusalem descends from heaven (Rev 21:24,26).

The Judgment of Israel. Ezek 20:33-44 clearly teaches that Israel must come into judgment before being restored in the millennial kingdom. This OT teaching has confirmation in the NT from the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13 (see Joel 3:11-15). Prophecy seems to teach that there will be a general resurrection of all truly regenerated Israelites of the past dispensation to be judged. Those who had a kingdom hope are to arise and enter the earthly glory (cf. Ezek 37:1-14; Dan 12:1-3).

The Judgment of Angels. These are fallen angels and are evidently judged in connection with the great white throne (1 Cor 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

The White Throne Judgment. This last great judgment comprehends the judgment of all unsaved of all ages (Rev 20:11-15). The basis will be works, which evidently suggests differences and degrees of punishment. All who are not found in "the book of life" are cast into "the lake of fire." This is called "the second death," which means final and complete cutting off from God's presence and a sin-cleansed universe.

For theologians who object to these various judgments, a simple choice must be made between following traditional theology or the plain teachings of the Scripture inductively formulated. The author considers that the doctrine of a general judgment is incompatible with inductive logic in handling the Scriptures.

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