

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

DEATH, JUDGMENT, AND ETERNITY

David P. Brown

With every passing day, we are closer to that final, complete, great, and terrible Judgment Day. Yes, if our Lord does not come back first, we must die (1 The. 4:15-18), but the Hebrews writer reminds us—**“but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27). Following our Lord’s appearance in the clouds when **“every eye shall see him,”** he **“shall judge the quick and the dead”** (Rev. 1:7; 2 Tim 4:1b; 2 The 1:7-10). Indeed, on that day all of us shall **“stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”** (Rom. 14:10b-12). Those who lived under the laws of Patriarchy and Moses will be judged by those standards of Godly conduct. We who live under the authority of Christ shall be judged according to the New Testament (John 12:48). As the inspired James, Paul, and Peter wrote, **“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”**— **“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”** **“Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead”** (Jam. 2:12; See Jam. 1:21-25; Rom.2:16; 1 Pet. 4:5), Thus, the apostle John wrote:

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 (Rev. 20:12).

From of old this great and noble day was declared. As Solomon wrote: **“For God shall bring every work unto judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”** (Ecc. 2:14; Also see 11:9; 1 Pet. 1:16, 17). **“Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish”** (Psa. 1:5).

All should understand that the final judgment is *not* a time and place whereby it is determined that men are saved or lost. One’s condition at the judgment will be the same condition in which one is found at death or at the return of Christ (1 Cor. 15:58; Luke 16:19-23; Rev. 2:10). It is in this life that we prove to God by our obedience to the gospel and faithful adherence to his cause that we love, trust, and believe in him; the Christ and the New Testament system of salvation or we do not.

On the Judgment Day every one of us shall give an account to Christ for all of our words and deeds. Again, what is good and what is bad will be defined on the basis of the divine law under which a person lived and died. On that day, the Lord will sentence men to eternal glory or eternal doom based on their words and deeds said and done while on earth (Mat. 25:34,41; 7:21-23).

When the proceedings of that majestic and tribunal are forever closed, the resurrected righteous shall enter Heaven to experience and fully enjoy glory, honor, majesty, peace, happiness, contentment, and love. Indeed,

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this is life eternal that no mortal mind can grasp and no fleshly tongue can express (Mat. 25:31-40; 1 Cor. 15:35ff; 2 Cor. 5:1-6; 1 John 3:1-2).

But, what of those who die in sin and by it are separated from God thereby (Rom. 3:23)? By their repudiation of the gospel of Christ they spurned God's love, saving grace, and mercy. The shameful, agonizing, ignominious, and vicarious death of the sinless Son of God on Golgotha's tree to make forgiveness of man's sin possible for mankind meant nothing to them. Hence, for these loathsome characters there is no escape from the damnation of a devil's hell. Into outer darkness the Lord of glory shall sentence them. And, into that abyss of blackness they will forever go. Therein they will suffer eternally the consequences of dying in a lost condition, guilty of sins they loved to commit (1 John 3:4; Jam. 4:27; 2 The. 2:12). Upon their minds will be the full reality that they could have used their sojourn on earth to find God, His Christ, and His truth. Thereby, they would have found the salvation that comes by doing the will of the Christ—but they did not because they would not (Jos. 24:15; Mat. 7:7; 23:37; Luke 16:31; John 8:31, 32; Acts 17:27; 28:24-28). And, in that total eternal absence of light, they will experience intense pain, anguish, shame, remorse, and contempt. Furthermore, there will be no hope (expectation) of relief from their excruciating misery. Such are the dreadful and eternal consequences of entering eternity having lived one's life in rebellion to God. This is hell, the second death—eternal separation from God and all that such a separation implies (Dan. 12:2; Mat. 22:13; 25:30; Jude 13). Tormented day and night with only **“the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars”** for their companions (Rev. 14:11). Their worm will not die nor the fire tormenting them be quenched (Mark 9:44). Therein is found no particle of peace, happiness, joy, contentment or the possibility of any attribute of goodness in that **“lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”** (Mat. 25:41-46; Rev. 21:8). **“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever and they have no rest day or night”** in that **“furnace of fire.”** And, to accompany their ascending smoke, hell's cacophony—the phantasmagoric **“wailing and gnashing of teeth:”** It is the “music” of wretched lost souls, devoid of all hope. This hellish racket in the pit of outer darkness forever evidences God's vengeance of which our loving Lord and the Hebrews writer warned (Rev. 14:11; Mat. 13:42; Mat. 10:28; Heb.

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12:29). As Paul wrote:

... the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: (2 The. 1:7-10).

And what of those who did believe and obey the gospel in being baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins (Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26, 21), who for a time lived the Christian life, but who were overtaken in a trespass (Gal. 6:1). The apostle Peter tells us.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning (2 Pet. 2:20).

Of those who once knew the New Testament system of salvation, but turned from it, the Hebrews writer warned:

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, and unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:26-31).

Thus, we are again reminded of God's truth concerning death, the judgment, eternal life, and eternal damnation. We who have obeyed the gospel are God's children, His soldiers, members of the body of Christ, citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and the elect of all the earth. We would do well to allow the implications of our relationship to God and what brought it about to sink deeply into our being as we consider our ways.

In view of these great truths about the judgment and

the eternity to follow, why are we not more ...

1. Determined, steadfast, and vigilant in our efforts to hold tenaciously to the truth of God on all matters?

2. Fervent and zealous in teaching the truth of salvation to those lost in sin?

3. Resolute, honest, and objective in opposing error in our own lives?

4. Diligent and fair toward all in our examination and refutation of error and ungodly living—no matter who teaches it or the personal cost to us in refuting it?

5. Resolute in marking false teachers and avoiding them no matter their popularity and friendship to us or our friends?

6. In love with the brethren—the elect of the earth, God's family, His army, the saved, and God's trophies?

7. Concerned about practicing corrective church discipline—if necessary the faithful withdrawing fellowship from the erring children of God who reject and repudiate all efforts to bring them to repentance?

8. Thankful and humble before God because of His goodness toward us?

9. Godly in our daily living and in our dealings one with another?

10. Bold, confident, and contrite in our supplications and prayers to God?

11. Sacrificial in giving of our lives and possessions in service to God?

12. Full of reverential awe as we approach God for the purpose of worshipping.

13. Compassionate for the orphans and widows in their afflictions?

14. Firm in our commitment to do good unto all men, especially the children of God; always careful to allow the Bible to teach us the meaning of good and how to practice it.

Why do some of us, certain preachers and elders included, cower in the face of Satan's pack of snarling wolves as they go about their wicked work of ravishing the flock of God? Where is our love for lost souls and the blood-bought body of Jesus Christ? Do some of us practice respect of persons in our proclamation and defense of the whole council of God? Do some of us lie? Are some of us guilty of practicing hypocrisy? If such is the case, we must repent of such sins (as well as all other sins).

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Then, without fear, favor, or respect of persons, we must apply God's truth fairly, and equally to ourselves, our friends, and foes alike.

THERE IS AN END TO OPPORTUNITY

All opportunities for us to change for the good will end when we die. Following death, only the Judgment and eternity remain. Then, following the Judgment, only eternity looms before us. And, in eternity we will be in heaven or in hell. Therefore, in this vapor-like life is found the only time for us to prove to God that we love Him, and have faith in Him and His system of salvation (Jam. 4:14; Rom. 1:16; Jude 3).

Behold, **NOW**
is the *accepted time*;
Behold, **NOW**
is the day of *salvation*

2 Corinthians 6:2

WHAT IF...?

Al Brown

What if you were standing before the Lord at the Judgment Day, and He were to ask if you had been a diligent student of His word. What would you say? You surely realize that you will have to give an account of what you have done in this life, and part of that accounting will involve whether you have obeyed the commands of God. One of those commands is to study His word (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet.3:15; 2 Pet. 3:18).

Certainly, we are all busy with many things. Many people and organizations make many demands on our time and resources that we often feel we cannot refuse to heed. Yet, when all is said and done, and all the activities of this life has ceased for you, which will have been the most important? Especially, which will have eternal significance? Aren't these the most important since all material and this—worldly things and needs will have passed away (1 John 2:15-17).

Common sense should tell us, then, that we should say "No!" to these worldly concerns and pressures in order that we may hear our Savior welcome us into the Paradise of God on that day!
—Deceased