

The Five Judgments

by C.I. Scofield

C.I. Scofield's sermon discusses the five distinct judgments outlined in Scripture, emphasizing their differences and implications for believers and the world.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Divine Judgment", "Eternal Rewards"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the concept of judgment as depicted in the Scriptures, highlighting the misconception of a single general judgment at the end of the world. Instead, he identifies five distinct judgments for believers, focusing on the judgment of sins at the cross, the judgment of sin in believers leading to chastisement, and the judgment of believers' works upon Christ's return. He also discusses the judgment of nations during Christ's glorious appearing and the eventual judgment of the wicked dead after the millennium, emphasizing the different subjects, places, times, and results of each judgment.

Transcript

The expression "general judgment," of such frequent occurrence in religious literature, is not found in the Scriptures, and, what is of more importance, the idea intended to be conveyed by that expression is not found in the Scriptures.

Dr. Pentecost well says: "It is a mischievous habit that has led the Christian world to speak of the judgment as being one great event taking place at the end of the world, when all human beings, saints, sinners, Jews and Gentiles, the living and the dead, shall stand up before the great white throne and there be judged. Nothing can be more wide of the teaching of the Scriptures."

The Scriptures speak of five judgments, and they differ in four general respects: as to who are the subjects of judgment; as to the place of judgment; as to the time of judgment; as to the result of the judgment.

THE JUDGMENT AS TO BELIEVERS

Their sins have been judged.

Time: A. D. 30.

Place: the cross.

Result: death for Christ: justification for the believer.

'And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: Where they crucified him" (John 19:17-18).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Pet. 2:24).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13).

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

"But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

"When he had by himself purged our sins" (Heb. 1:3).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1).

THE JUDGMENT OF SIN IN THE BELIEVER

Time: any time.

Place: anywhere.

Result: chastisement by the Lord, if we judge not ourselves.

"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" (I Cor. 11:31-32).

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12:7).

(See also I Pet. 4:17; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Sam. 7:14-15; 2 Sam. 12:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:20.)

THE CONDUCT, OR WORKS OF BELIEVERS ARE TO BE JUDGED

Time: when Christ comes.

Place: "in the air."

Result to the believer: "reward" or "loss." "But he himself shall be saved."

It is a solemn thought that though Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree and God has entered into covenant with us to "remember them no more" (Heb. 10: 17), every work must come into judgment. The life, the works of the believer must be reviewed by the Lord.

"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 every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:9-10).

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set a naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14: 10).

It will be observed that both of these passages are limited by the context to believers. In the first, the apostle speaks of us as in one of two states: either we are at home in the body and absent from the Lord, or absent from the body and present with the Lord-language which could not be used of unbelievers. "Wherefore we make it our aim" to be well-pleasing unto the Lord, "for we must all be made manifest" (2 Cor. 5:8-9).

In the other passage the words "we" and "brother" again limit it to believers. The Holy Spirit never commingles the saved and the unsaved. Then, lest it should seem incredible that a blood-cleansed saint could come into any judgment whatever, he quotes from Isaiah to prove that "every knee shall bow," and adds, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

The following passage gives the basis of the judgment of works: "For other foundation can no man lay than that 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 man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, 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" (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

The following passages fix the time of this judgment: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). (See 1 Cor. 15:22-23.) "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

But how comforting it is, in view of that inevitable scrutiny of our poor works, to learn that in His patient love He is so leading us and working in us now that He can then find something in it all for which to praise us.

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:9).

For the place of this judgment, see 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Matthew 25:24-30.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

Time: the glorious appearing of Christ (Matt. 25:31-32; Matt. 13:40-41).

Place: the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1-2,12-14).

Result: some saved, some lost (Matt. 25:46).

Basis: The treatment of those whom Christ there calls, "my brethren" (Matt. 25:40-45; Joel 3:3,6- 7). These "brethren" we believe are the Jewish remnant who shall turn to Jesus as their Messiah during "the great tribulation" which follows the taking away of the church and is terminated by the glorious appearing of our Lord (Matt. 24:21-22; Rev. 7:14; 2 Thess. 2:3-9). The proof is too extensive to be put forth here. It is evident, however, that these "brethren" cannot be believers of this dispensation, for it would be impossible to find any considerable number of Christians who are so ignorant that they do not know that offices of kindness to believers are really ministries to Jesus Himself.

As this judgment of the living nations is sometimes confounded with that of the great white throne in Revelation 20:11, it may be well to note the following contrasts between the two scenes.

The living nations will be characterized by the following: no resurrection; living nations judged; on the earth; no books; three classes-sheep, goats, "brethren"; time, when Christ appears. The great white throne will be characterized by the following: a resurrection; "the dead" judged; heavens and earth fled away; "books were opened"; one class: "the dead"; after He has reigned one thousand years.

The saints will be associated with Christ in this judgment and hence cannot be the subjects of it. (See I Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22; Jude verses 14-15.)

In truth, the judgment of the great white throne and the judgment of the living nations have but one thing in common: the Judge.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED DEAD

Time: a determined day, after the millennium (Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:5,7).

Place: before the great white throne (Rev. 20: 11)

Result: Rev. 20:15.

Some may be troubled by the word "day" in such passages as Acts 17:31 and in Romans 2:16. See the following passages, where "day" means a lengthened period: 2 Pet. 3:8; 2 Cor. 6:2; John 8:56. The "hour" of John 5:25 has now lasted more than eighteen hundred years.

The Scriptures speak, also, of a judgment of angels (I Cor. 6:3; Jude verse 6; 2 Pet. 2:4). Luke 22:30 probably refers to judges as under the theocracy - an administrative office, rather than judicial. (See Isaiah 1:26.)

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