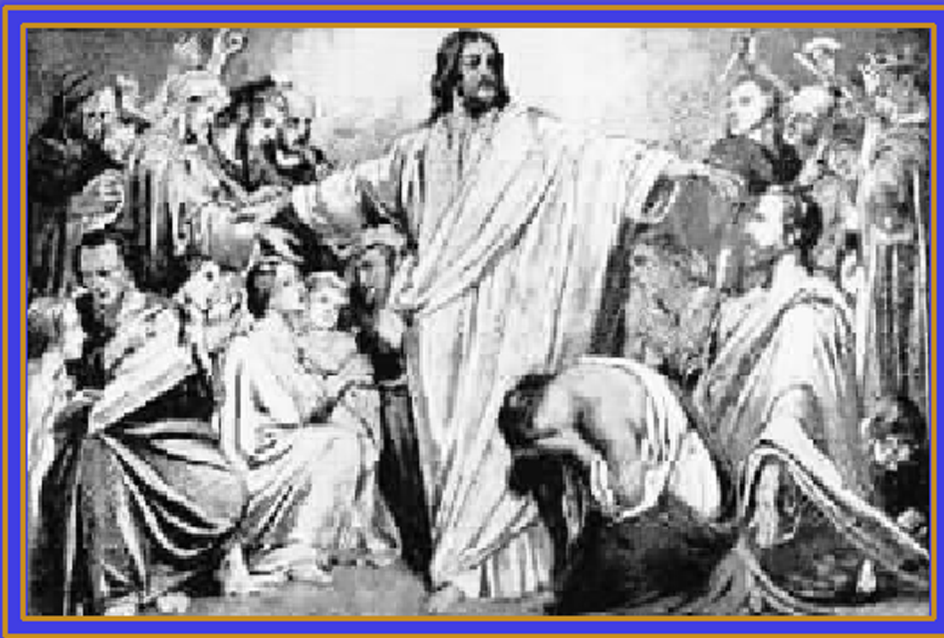


# The Day of Judgment



“And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:32)

## THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Many vague and indefinite ideas prevail in regard to the Day of Judgment. The view generally entertained is that Christ will come to earth seated on a great white throne, that he will summon saints and sinners in rank and file before him to be judged, and that the judgment will be done amid great earthquakes and convulsions of nature—causing graves to open, rocks to rend, and mountains to fall. On the one hand, it is thought that trembling sinners will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe to hear their sins rehearsed, only to be returned to an eternal and merciless doom. On the other hand, it is thought that saints will be brought down from heaven to witness the misery and despair of the condemned and to hear again the decision in their own cases, and then be returned to heaven. According to the prevailing theory, all receive their sentence and reward at death, and this second judgment, by way of distinction, is called the “general” judgment. However, the second judgment is merely a repetition of the first, and there is no conceivable purpose for the second judgment since, it is claimed, the final and unalterable decision is rendered at death.

The entire time supposed to be assigned to this stupendous work of judging billions of humanity is one twenty-four-hour

day. To repeat, according to the common view, the work of the Day of Judgment will be completed within the limits of a *single literal day*. This very crude conception, which is entirely out of harmony with the inspired Word of God, is drawn from a too literal interpretation of the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt. 25:31-46). It shows the absurdity of trying to force a literal interpretation on figurative language. A parable, which is never an exact statement, merely illustrates a truth by using symbolism that, in many respects, is like that truth. If the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats were a literal statement of the manner in which judgment will be conducted, it would then apply to *literal* sheep and *literal* goats—just as stated—and not to mankind at all.

If properly understood, the Scriptures pertaining to the great Day of Judgment, appointed by God, show a beautiful harmony and reasonableness. However, before examining this testimony of Holy Writ, we need to consider the use of two terms.

In both the English and the Greek language, the term “judgment” signifies more than simply the rendering of a verdict; that is, it includes the idea of a trial as well as a decision based upon that trial. Although the term “day,” both in Scripture and in common use, usually represents a period of twelve or twenty-four hours, it really means any definite or special period of time. For instance, we speak of Noah’s day, Washington’s day, and

Luther's day, and the Bible not only mentions the seven "days" of creation but also refers to the entire time of creation as a "day." "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth ... in *the day* that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4). The day of creation is a long, definite period of time. Another example is Psalm 95:8, which speaks of the forty years the Israelites wandered in the Wilderness of Sinai as a "day." "Harden not your hearts, as ... in *the day of temptation* in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works *forty years*" (Heb. 3:8,9). The Scriptures also speak of the "*day* of salvation," the "*day* of vengeance," the "*day* of trouble," and the "*day* of wrath" — terms that apply to periods of time longer than twenty-four hours either during the Jewish Age or at the end of the Christian or Gospel Age (2 Cor. 6:2; Isa. 61:2; Jer. 46:10; 51:2; Zeph. 1:15; Rom. 2:5). And the terms "day of Christ," "day of judgment," and "day of the Lord" apply to the Millennial Age, in which Messiah will reign, rule, and judge the world in righteousness, granting a trial as well as rendering a sentence (Phil. 2:16; Matt. 11:24; 2 Pet. 3:10; Acts 2:20). Of that period, it is written that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus] whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31).

Why should some assume that the Day of Judgment is only twelve or twenty-four hours long when a wider meaning is



recognized for the word “day” in other cases? It would seem that proponents of this thought have accepted tradition and have not investigated the Scriptures for evidence. Those who carefully use a complete Bible concordance and note the kind and the amount of work that will be accomplished within the Day of Judgment will soon see the absurdity of the common view and the necessity for giving the term “day” a wider significance.

While the Scriptures speak of a great judgment or trial day yet future, and show that the masses of mankind will have a full, fair trial and final sentence in that day, the Scriptures also teach that there have been other judgment days during which certain individuals or elect classes have been on trial. The first great judgment, trial, and sentence were at the beginning of man’s creation in the Garden of Eden, when the whole human race, as represented in their head, Adam, stood on trial before God. The result of that trial was a verdict of “guilty, disobedient, unworthy of life,” and the penalty was death: “dying thou shalt die” (Gen. 2:17; see King James margin). And so “in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22). The trial time in Eden was the world’s first “judgment day,” and the decision of the Judge, Jehovah, has been enforced ever since. “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom. 1:18). His wrath is seen in every funeral procession, in every grave, in every ache and pain—all are the result of that first trial and righteous

sentence of God that condemned Adam (and the unborn human race in him) as unworthy of life and the blessings originally provided for man when created in God's likeness and obedient.

However, the Scriptures show mankind will be recovered from the sentence of that first trial by the great Redeemer's *one sacrifice for all* (Luke 2:10; Rom. 5:18,19). Indeed all are to be rescued from the grave and the sentence of death (destruction), which, in view of this promised redemption, is no longer to be considered everlasting but, rather, is a *temporary* sleep (Matt. 9:24). At present, only the Church of believers in Christ are in any sense released from the original sentence and penalty, but in the millennial morning, the remainder of mankind will be awakened by the Life Giver. The escape of believers in the present age is not actual but only reckoned by faith. As the Apostle Paul said, "We are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24). Even though we are in Christ now, our actual release from the death penalty incurred in Adam will not be experienced until the resurrection morning, when we shall be satisfied to awake in our Redeemer's likeness (Psa. 17:15).

The fact that we who have come to a knowledge of God's gracious plan in Christ have already escaped the corruption that is still in the world, so far from proving others will have no future hope of escape, really proves the contrary, for we are called the "*firstfruits*" unto God of all His creatures (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4).

Our escape from death in Adam to life in Christ is but a foretaste of the deliverance of “whosoever will” from the bondage of corruption (death) to the liberty of life promised to all whom God shall ultimately recognize as sons (Rev. 22:17). When Christ extends the opportunity of life to all in the next age, those who hearken and obey, fully conforming their lives to the righteous laws, will be delivered from death to life regardless of the distinctions of nature God has provided for His sons on different planes of being (1 Tim. 2:3,4). The Gospel Age is the trial day for life or death for those called to the *divine* nature (2 Pet. 1:4), but God has appointed a day in which He will judge the *world*. How can this be? Has God changed His mind? Has He concluded that because His decision in the trial of the first man and the general sentence were too severe, He should now judge the world individually? No! Were such the case, we would have no better guarantee of a just decision in the future trial than in the past.

It is not that God considers His decision in the first judgment unjust but that He has provided a redemption from the penalty of the first judgment in order to grant the human race another judgment and trial under more favorable conditions, all having then had experience with sin and its results. God has not changed one iota from His original purpose, which He formed before the world began, for He distinctly informs us that He changes not, that He will by no means clear the guilty (Mal. 3:6; Exod. 34:6,7).

He must exact the full penalty justly pronounced, but that penalty has been provided by a substitute: the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who, by the favor of God, tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9). Having provided a ransom for Adam's race with his own life, Jesus can justly give a new offer of life to all mankind. The offer to the Church is under a covenant of sacrifice (Psa. 50:5). The offer to the world will be under the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31).

When God gives the world its individual trial, Christ will be the Judge. The Son will thus be honored because of his obedience even unto the death of the Cross (Phil. 2:8). Jehovah Himself highly exalted His Son to the divine nature so that as Prince and Savior, he will be able to recover from death and judge all whom he purchased with his own precious blood. For this purpose, God has committed all judgment to the Son and has given him all power in heaven and in earth (John 5:22; Matt. 28:18). The highly exalted, glorified Christ, who so loved the world as to give his life as its ransom price, is to be the Judge of the world in the promised future trial (1 Tim. 2:5,6). With such plain declarations of Scripture, there is nothing to dread. In fact, all should rejoice and look forward to the Day of Judgment. The character of the Judge is a sufficient guarantee that the judgment will be done with justice and mercy and with due consideration for the infirmities of all so that the willing and the obedient may be brought back to the original perfection lost in Eden.

In ancient times, a judge executed justice and relieved the oppressed. For instance, when under oppression by enemies because of transgressions against the Lord, Israel was time and again released and blessed by the raising up of judges. Thus we read: "And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer ... who delivered them, even Othniel.... And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: ... and his hand prevailed.... And the land had rest forty years" (Judg. 3:9-11). Though the world has long been under the power and oppression of Satan, the One who gave his life to pay for the sins of all will shortly take his great power and reign. Jesus will deliver and judge those whom he redeemed. With this conclusion, all of the prophetic utterances agree. "*With righteousness* shall he judge the poor, and reprove *with equity* for the meek of the earth" (Isa. 11:4).

The coming judgment will be done on exactly the same principles as the first judgment. The same law of obedience will be presented with the same reward of life and the same penalty of death for disobedience, and just as the first trial had a beginning, progressed, and culminated in a sentence, so it will be with the second trial. The sentence will be life for the righteous and death for the unrighteous. However, the second trial will be more favorable because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial. And unlike the first trial, the second trial will be one

in which each person will stand the test for himself alone, and not for another. At that time, none will die because of Adam's sin and inherited imperfection. In those days, it shall no more be said: "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge" (Jer. 31:29,30). "The [individual] soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). It will be true of the world then, as it is true of the Church now, that a man will be judged according to what he has and not according to what he does not have. Under the reign of Christ, mankind will be gradually educated, trained, and disciplined until they reach perfection. When they reach perfect harmony with God, they will be required to obey God perfectly, and any who fall short will be cut off in Second Death, being judged unworthy of life (Rev. 21:8).

The sin that brought death to the human race through Adam was simply one disobedient act, but by that act, Adam fell from his perfection. Since Adam was created perfect, God had a right to demand perfect obedience from him, and God will demand the same from all men when the great work of restoring them is complete. None will be permitted to have everlasting life who then, in the slightest degree, fall short of perfection. To fall short at that time would be to sin *willfully* against *full light and full ability* and thus to perish in Second Death.



Should anyone during that future age of trial, under its full blaze of light, spurn the offered favors and obstinately refuse to “hear that prophet” (Jesus), he will be cut off in Second Death almost immediately (Acts 3:23). Those who do bow the knee and “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” but fail to make sufficient progress toward perfection after a hundred years will also be reckoned unworthy of life and will be cut off—though at a hundred years of life, they would be in a period of comparative childhood (Phil. 2:10,11). It is written of that day, “As a lad shall one die a hundred years old; and as a sinner shall be accursed he who (dieth) at a hundred years old” (Isa. 65:20, Leeser). For those who are not cut off, their trial will then continue throughout the remainder of the Day of Christ, reaching a culmination only at its close.

The conclusion of the world’s coming judgment is clearly shown in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. At the end of the Millennial Age, two classes will have been completely separated: the obedient and the disobedient, those in harmony with the letter and the spirit of God’s Law and those out of harmony. The sheep class will enter into everlasting life, and the goat class, under the same sentence as in the first judgment, will go into death, from which Christ had previously released them. This will be their second death (Rev. 2:11). No ransom will be

given for them, and there will be no release or resurrection, their sin being willful and individual against full light.

We do not wish to be understood as ignoring the present responsibility of every man, woman, and child according to the measure of light enjoyed, whether much or little, and whether it be the light of nature or the light of revelation. “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether good or evil, for all deeds of the present time will receive a just recompense of reward either now or in the next age. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some ... follow after” (1 Tim. 5:24). Only the Lord’s favored little ones, the consecrated of the Gospel Age, have as yet sufficient light to incur the full, final penalty of second death.

We will read Scriptures as an evidence that the world’s Day of Judgment is future and that the dead world of mankind—the billions of humanity who have gone into the grave—*are not now in heaven with eternal bliss or in a hellfire of eternal torture* depending on the deeds of the present life.

**“The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.” (Psa. 115:17)**

If the dead were alive in heaven, they could praise the Lord, but the dead cannot utter praise.

**“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” (Eccl. 9:5)**

The dead are not aware of anything because they are in an unconscious state in oblivion. Moreover, the time is coming when death and hell will deliver up those who are in them.

**“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.” (Rev. 20:13)**

The equivalent words for “hell” are *sheol* in the Old Testament and *hades* in the New Testament. In the Book of Genesis, faithful Jacob said that if Benjamin died like his brother Joseph, grief over the loss would cause his gray hairs to go to the grave (*sheol*) with sorrow.

**“And he [Jacob] said, My son [Benjamin] shall not go down with you; for his brother [Joseph] is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief [should] befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave [*sheol*].” (Gen. 42:38)**

And notice what Job said:

**“O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave [*sheol*], that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath**

**be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time,  
and remember me!” (Job 14:13)**

If Job wanted to go to a hell of torture to escape wrath up here on earth, it could not be too bad down there! No, “hell” is a condition of death or *nonexistence*, and not of torture.

**“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with  
thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor  
knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*],  
whither thou goest.” (Eccl. 9:10)**

Thank God, we have the following promise:

**“I will ransom them from the power of the grave  
[*sheol*]; I will redeem them from death: O death, I  
will be thy plagues; O grave [*sheol*], I will be thy  
destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine  
eyes.” (Hos. 13:14)**

The “grave” condition will be destroyed when its occupants are resurrected, beginning in the near future at the establishment of Christ’s Kingdom (Matt. 6:10). The Apostle John said:

**“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the  
which all that are in the graves shall hear his  
[Jesus’] voice,**

**“And shall come forth; they that have done good,  
unto the resurrection of life; and they that have  
done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation  
[judgment, Greek *krisis*].” (John 5:28,29)**

The “resurrection of judgment” is the Day of Judgment, in which mankind will be given an opportunity to obtain everlasting life. During that trial time, they will also receive penalties for any willful misdeeds done in the present life.

The Old Testament tells us that Moses *slept* in death; that is, he did not go either to heaven or to a condition of consciousness in hell. David likewise fell *asleep*.

**“And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers.” (Deut. 31:16)**

**“So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.” (1 Kings 2:10)**

Even the wicked kings, who were enemies of the Lord, are spoken of as falling *asleep*. The following Scriptures speak of King Ahab, King Omri, and King Manasseh.

**“So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.” (1 Kings 22:40)**

**“So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.” (1 Kings 16:28)**

**“And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.” (2 Kings 21:18)**

Turning to the New Testament, we see that Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, also *slept* in death, as did Stephen, the Christian martyr.

**“These things said he [Jesus]: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.**

**“Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.**

**“Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.**

**“Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” (John 11:11-14)**

**“And he [Stephen] kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”  
(Acts 7:60)**

The Prophet Daniel tells that all mankind *sleep* in the grave.

**“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”  
(Dan. 12:2)**

The promised awakening will come after the great Time of Trouble to occur in the near future. Jesus stated that prior to his First Advent, no man, without exception, had ascended up to heaven.



**“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13)**

Many would consider us to teach “soul sleeping,” but that is exactly what the Scriptures say. The human race has fallen asleep in death. In fact, if every Bible text on death and hell were honestly examined, the conclusion would be obvious.

On the subject of the Day of Judgment, the great deceiver Satan has used sophistries to rob both the world and the nominal Church of the blessed assurance of a coming time of *righteous* judgment. They know that the Bible tells of a coming Day of Judgment, but they regard that day with fear and dread. Because of this fear, the good tidings that the Day of the Lord is near are unwelcome, and people generally do not wish to hear the subject mentioned. They have no idea of the blessings in store for the world under the glorious reign of him whom God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness. Among the greatest of the blinding influences that Satan has devised to keep men in ignorance of the truth regarding the Day of Judgment are the errors that have crept into the creeds and the hymnbooks of the various religious sects. Many esteem these errors as of paramount importance to the Word of God, but how differently did the prophets and the apostles regard that promised Day of Judgment! Note the exultant prophetic utterance of David:

**“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice:  
and let men say among the nations, The LORD  
reigneth.**

**“Let the sea roar [its approval], and the fulness  
thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.**

**“Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the  
presence of the LORD, [why?] *because he cometh to  
judge the earth.***

**“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for  
his mercy endureth for ever.” (1 Chron. 16:31-34)**