

The Ultimate Judge

One of the great cries heard in heaven is a cry of praise to God in His roles of Judge and Rewarder. The elders who worship God around His throne in heaven proclaim these words:

The time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth. (See Rev. 11:18.)

In Revelation 15:3-4a, we read that God's judgment is just and true:

"Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?"

God Alone Has the Power to Judge

God is the only one with absolute wisdom, absolute righteousness and absolute power. These are the three things necessary for a judgment to be eternal. A judge who executes judgments for all eternity must be without sin or fault, must have a total understanding of any situation—truly seeing the motivations of a person's heart as well as the actions of the hand and the words of his mouth—and must have the ability not only to bring a person to the bar of justice, but to execute the sentence that is meted out. Only God qualifies to be the Judge of all He has created and all that occurs in time and space throughout the ages.

God's Judgment Is Never Capricious

There is no arbitrary enforcement of the rules in God's judgment. When we stand before Him, we will be judged based on what we have done in response to God's commandments. Judgment is based on our obedience, including our obedience in

receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior. Take a look at Revelation 16:6: “For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!”

God’s Wrath Is Coming Against All Who Have Opposed Him

God reserves judgment for those who have sought to push Him off the throne so they can reign in His place.

Who is it that seeks the destruction of the earth and God’s people? Satan. Jesus said very clearly, “The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Who are the people who set themselves up to be the enemies of God? There are two main groups. The first consists of people who are in rebellion against God. They know what the Scriptures say, and they know the commandments of God. But they have decided that they are going to live their way rather than God’s way. In a second group are those referred to in the letters of Paul as being “apostate.” An apostate is a person who knew the gospel and accepted it intellectually or as a social formality but then turned his back on the truth of the gospel. An apostate is a person who denies the Virgin Birth, denies the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, denies the Lord’s bodily resurrection, denies that Jesus is the only way to heaven and denies the coming judgment of the Lord.

Judas followed Jesus, but he always had his own agenda. He followed Jesus because he thought it would be profitable to do so and because he wanted to “use” Jesus to accomplish his own goals. Judas was one of the most privileged of all people in history—he had an opportunity to walk and talk with Jesus on a daily basis. He had an opportunity to hear Jesus’ life-changing message firsthand and to witness many of Jesus’ miracles. Yet Judas betrayed Jesus to those who sought to crucify Him.

Peter also betrayed Jesus by denying three times that he was associated with Jesus. He turned his back on Jesus in Jesus' greatest hour of human need. Peter had boasted of following Jesus to the death, but then within a matter of hours he did not have the courage to admit to a few maidens and common folk that he even knew Jesus.

Like Judas, Peter was guilty of betrayal. But Peter took a very different course after his denial of the Lord. He did not try to hide, ignore, or deny what he had done. Rather, he humbly surrendered all of himself, including his failure, to Jesus. He chose brokenness and confession over arrogance and pride. He became an apostle, whereas Judas became apostate. God's judgment is on the apostate, not the repentant.

God's Reward Is Coming to Those Who Trust and Obey Him

We read in Hebrews that God is a rewarder of those "who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). God's rewards are going to be given to three groups of people:

His prophets—those servants who proclaim the truth of God without hesitation, fear or compromise.

His saints—those servants who have followed Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, doing His bidding to bring the good news of salvation: a message of deliverance to the captives, the illumination of the truth to those who are spiritually blind and wholeness to those who are sick, weak or hurting.

Those servants—both great and small—who fear the Lord's name.

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