

We Are Experiencing a Mini-Judgment Day

The great British evangelist George Whitefield (1714-1770) once said (in the light of a litany of lies and false accusations lodged against him), "I am content to wait till the judgment day for the clearing up of my character. When I am dead I desire no epitaph but this, 'Here lies G. W. What kind of man he was the great day will discover.'"

Yes, everything will be laid bare and discovered on that day. As we read in the book of Ecclesiastes, "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (Eccl. 12:13-14, NIV).

Everything—absolutely everything—will come to light, and those sins that have not been covered and cleansed by the blood of Jesus will testify against us on that day.

That's why Jesus urged His disciples not to fear mere humans, saying, "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known" (Matt. 10:26).

There are times, though, when God draws near in the here and now, coming in great power and as a holy refining fire, bringing hidden things to light while we are alive in this world. And as painful and humbling as these moments can be, they are also a form of mercy: better to be confronted in this present world, when we can do something about them, than to be confronted on the day of judgment, when it's too late to repent or change.

Better to be rebuked now than later. And if we are guilty of covering our sins, refusing to repent and seeking to lead a

double life, better to be exposed now than then.

Breaking news, Spirit-filled stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

Speaking of that final day of accounting, Paul wrote:

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames (1 Cor. 3:10–15).

Some believe Paul was speaking specifically to church planters and pastors, saying that on that day, their works would be tested by fire. Others believe Paul was writing to followers of Jesus in general regarding their works being tested by fire.

Either way, the overall message is clear, teaching us that there are many things in this world that may look impressive and imposing and powerful, but when they are tested by God's fire, they will burn up.

We also learn from this passage that the genuine nature of our works will be revealed. Was our ministry built on pride? Was it mixed with fleshly ambition? Was it founded on lies and deception? "It will be revealed with fire." What a sobering thought!

Thankfully, the Lord in His kindness, and in His desire to

make His bride holy and pure, will sometimes send that revealing fire to us in this present world. (Again, this does not refer to sins for which there has been true repentance and cleansing. God delights in forgiving and forgetting. He will not dredge up our past if it has been dealt with properly in His sight.)

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

This is what He did to congregations in Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3, telling Ephesus, a congregation that was orthodox, hardworking and faithful, that they had left their first love and were in danger of losing their very standing as a church (Rev. 2:1-7).

In the same way, to the believers in Sardis He said, "'I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead'" (Rev. 3:1b) They were deceived by their own press reports.

And to the believers in Laodicea He said, "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

These words must have shocked this outwardly successful congregation and stung them deeply. But they were words of life and love.

As the Lord said just a few verses later, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Rev. 3:19-20).

We are in one of those sacred seasons where the Lord Himself is drawing near: a season of holy upheaval, a season of the

refiner's fire.

May we receive this mercy rather than resist it, remembering that God has no desire to embarrass us or bring reproach to His name.

If He can get our attention in private today, He won't need to get our attention in public on that final day.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated *The Line of Fire* radio show. He is the author of over 40 books, including "Can You be Gay and Christian?"; "Our Hands are Stained with Blood"; and "Seizing the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival." You can connect with him on Facebook, X or YouTube.