

Why the Courts of Heaven Judge Some People Even Before They Die

I realize that some of my posts will not win the Dale Carnegie award that wins friends and influences people (at least the 'win friends' part). This is one of those posts.

People often ask me how I write, and I tell them that I sense a prophetic download or witness in my spirit on what to write, and I just spontaneously write without often knowing detail of what I am going to say until my hand taps the computer; hence, I am not merely writing posts based on current events to get the most hits. I write based on what I sense the Lord has laid upon my heart—whether or not it is popular, because I always endeavor to write to an audience of *one*.

One more thing—lest someone who reads this thinks I am an extreme Arminian (who thinks believers can be saved and lost every day based on their walk) think again—I write this as one who considers himself a “soft” Calvinist (although I refuse to wear a particular doctrine or denomination on my shirtsleeves except the lordship of Christ overall) when it comes to soteriology and or individual salvation. (How the following can fit in a so-called Calvinistic system is for another article, not this brief missive.)

How Some Have Already Been Judged by the Courts of Heaven

The Bible makes it clear to us that all of us—Christian or non-Christian, will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For the believer, it has to do with rewards for their works (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10), and for the unbeliever, they will judged according to their works without Christ as their righteousness (Rev. 20:11-20).

The above passages make it seem as though verdicts have been rendered only after a person dies. However, other passages relate the fact that to a certain extent, verdicts have been rendered even before a person dies (perhaps not the full extent of rewards or punishments but a general verdict regarding their eternal fate—even before they pass away from the scene).

The Passages to Study

Jesus said in the Gospel of John 5:24 that true believers *have already* passed from death unto life. Consequently, if a believer in Christ has already passed unto life before they physically die—is it possible that some have already been condemned even though they are still physically alive?

In John 3:18, Jesus says “He who believes in Him is not condemned. But he who does not believe *is condemned already*, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (emphasis mine).

Of course, we all at one time were in this state of unbelief and under condemnation, and by God’s grace eventually believed and were saved from His wrath—but the point of this is that legal standing with God is rendered while we are still alive, not after we die (see also John 3:36).

How about divine decisions regarding specific people being made regarding eternity?

The apostle John said that it is possible that some people have sinned the sin unto death while they are still alive, perhaps even rendering it meaningless for prayers to be offered up for them (See 1 John 5:16-17).

Scholars are divided over whether this has to do with a person committing spiritual death, which is akin to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (which is the unpardonable sin that has to do with rejecting the Lord Jesus; see Matthew 12:32 in which

Jesus said will their sins will not be forgiven in this age or the one to come) or physical death. (See Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:5, 11:30-32 for an example of premature physical death.)

The point is, a person can get to a place on the earth wherein their sin and or disobedience is so great that the courts of heaven render a decision regarding their fate even before they die physically. This is why it says, "The Lord will judge His people" and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:30,31).

Unfortunately, there are some dualistic preachers who focus on a truncated view of the goodness of God that compromises the plain teachings of the New Testament. Yes of course, God is good, and the fullness of grace has been manifested by Jesus—not by Moses (John 1:17); however, the penalty for rejecting truth is much more severe in the New Covenant than in the Old Covenant. (If you don't believe me, please see Heb. 10:26-29.)

As a matter of fact, some mature believers who have tasted the fullness of the Word and Spirit and the power of the world to come who fall away cannot be brought back to repentance, since they have crucified afresh the Son of God again in their heart, hence the verdict has already been given. (if you don't believe me, please read Heb. 6:1-8.)

This is why the apostle Peter says mature believers who have overcome the world and again fall away would have been better off if they had not been born (read 2 Peter 2:20-22.) However, please note: This passage is not referring to new, immature believers who have always struggled, like the Prodigal son of Luke 15, the pre-resurrection apostle Peter, the carnal Christians of 1 Corinthians 3 and the lapsed saints alluded to in Galatians 6:1,2.

Read more next week as I dive in deeper to this subject.