

Judgment Day

by Bryan Gibson

Be honest. When is the last time you gave serious thought to THE day of judgment? It's real easy to push it to the back of our minds, or even completely out of our minds. But it's far too important to ignore. Let's consider some important points about the day of judgment, using *Paul's Epistle to the Romans* as a basis for our study.

Each one of us will be judged in the final day. "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). We may be able to wriggle out of some appointments, but not this one. I WILL stand before the Lord in judgment, and YOU will too.

In the judgment, we will be held accountable for all that we've said and done and thought (except those things that have been forgiven and forgotten by God—Hebrews 8:12). "In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16). Going outside the Book of Romans for just a minute, notice what is said in Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil." We may have said or done something that no one else knows about, but God knows and we will have to give an account to Him.

This judgment will be a righteous judgment. "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5; see also 1:32). This is in sharp contrast to the judgments we sometimes make, perhaps on appearance alone, or before getting all the facts straight. Too often, we make mistakes with our judgments. That won't happen with God. He will know all the facts about us, and we will be judged accordingly.

The standard for this judgment will be the truth, or the gospel. "But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things" (Rom. 2:2). "In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16). If we need further incentive to study, this ought to provide it. I need to know the gospel, and know it well, because that's what I'll be judged by.

What we receive in the judgment depends on whether or not we obey the truth. Romans 2:5-10 makes this point very clear. According to this passage, those who obey the truth will receive glory, honor, peace, and immortality; those who do not will receive indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. No, our salvation is not dependent on perfect obedience (Rom. 3:21-26); we will have to seek forgiveness time and time again (1 John 1:8-2:22). But how can we expect to be forgiven when we don't diligently seek to obey His will?

What God wants us to receive in the judgment is eternal life—that's why He sent His Son to die for us. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:8-9). The day of judgment does not have to

be a “day of wrath” for us. By believing and obeying Jesus, and by seeking forgiveness through Him, we can receive eternal life. Nothing would please Him more.

“Careless soul, O heed the warning, for your life will soon be gone;
O how sad to face the judgment, unprepared to meet thy God” (J. H. Stanley).