

Judgment

By A.P. Adams

The word that forms the title of this article is one of momentous import. **Judgment! The Judgment Day! The Judgment Seat of Christ!** How full of awful significance are these Bible expressions! What do they mean? We can ask no more important question than this.

The common, orthodox idea about this subject is that the Judgment Day will be a short period of time somewhere in the future, when every individual of the human race will be assembled before Jesus the Judge, and sentence will be pronounced upon each, according to their deserts; this sentence will be irreversible and final, fixing the eternal destiny of each person either for weal or woe; a vast number (according to many, the great majority) will be condemned at that dread tribunal, and given over to eternal despair; hence the Day of Judgment is represented as a fearful time of almost universal doom. thus Orthodox hymns describe it,

**"The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away!
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?"**

Now if we examine this view in the light of Scripture we shall find that it is like many another **"orthodox" doctrine**, an absurd mixture of garbled scripture and crude, human tradition; with just enough truth in it to mislead the unthinking, and not enough to save it from the rubbish-hole of cast-off and worn-out theological conceits. I invite the reader's attention to the teachings of the Bible on this subject.

The principal word rendered judgment in the New Testament is **Krisis**, which word we have incorporated into the English language, simply changing the initial letter, *Crisis*. This word in English means, "A **critical period of time, decisive moment, turning point, deciding time.**" The Greek word has a similar meaning: "**a separating, choosing, deciding, determining, judging, trial, judgment.**" In the New Testament the word is used to denote the deciding time, trial or probation of man; and is spoken of in such a way as to indicate that this time of trial, probation, or judgment is given to man as a blessing and favor, and when such time arrives for any individual, class or individuals, or the world, it is cause for great rejoicing and thanksgiving; read, for example, the 96th Psalm, and notice how all people and even inanimate nature are called upon to exult and rejoice "*Before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the world. He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth.*" This presentation of the nature of the time of judgment as a period of great rejoicing and special blessing, is in most striking contrast with the orthodox view, which makes the judgment day a time of almost unmitigated horror and dread. We will now examine other Scripture.

The first point that I would call attention to is, that according to the apostle Peter, the day of judgment is not a short period of time, a day of twenty-four hours, but a long period of at least a thousand years. "*The heavens and the earth which are now,*" says the apostle, "*are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment;*" and then he adds the caution, very emphatically, "*But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2 Pet. 3: 7-8). From this we may fairly infer that the judgment day may be a long period of time of perhaps a thousand years, or even longer, as the thousand years seems to be mentioned indefinitely to denote the greater vastness of God's days in comparison to man's. This view is still further confirmed by Rev. 20:4, where John says, "*And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*" Here seems to be a reference to the judgment day with the saints, who shall "*judge the world*" (I Cor. 6:2) sitting upon thrones, (compare Rev. 3:21) and again is it intimated that the duration of that judgment period is a thousand years. What is the work of this long day of judgment? Simply to

pronounce sentence upon those who have already had their trial or probation? No; this period is the time of time or probation of man, - of all those who have not previously had such trial.

Probation is the period of man's education, instruction, development and perfecting; but very few thus far have had any such probation, and it was not in God's plan that the world as a whole should have their probation in this life; as it is written, ***"It is appointed unto men once to die and after this probation."*** (Heb. 9:27). The word here is **Krisis**, and that, as we have seen, means trial, the deciding time, or probation. The word, probation, would be a perfectly correct translation of the original word, and thus rendered, the passage is a direct and positive proof that the time of future judgment is the time of man's probation; so far from its being true that there is no probation for any after death, the truth is, that by God's express appointment, the great mass of mankind do not have any probation at all until after death. This is the rule as it pertains to the race but there is an exception to this rule in the case of a single class, viz., ***"the Church of the first born."*** (Heb. 12:23).

The judgment of man began with Christ, the first finished man, as he himself said, ***"Now is the judgment (Krisis) of this world; (Kosmos) now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*** (John 12: 31-32). That is to say, the probation of the race began with Jesus, mankind's ***"Forerunner;"*** then also began the process by which ultimately, Satan, the prince of this world, will be cast out. (Compare Rom. 16:20, and Heb. 2: 14-15).

Jesus passed through his trial and ***"brought forth judgment unto victory,"*** i.e., his trial was brought to a successful issue, and he shall ultimately ***"bring forth judgment to the Gentiles,"*** plainly implying a blessing for the Gentiles: ***"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."*** Another evidence that judgment shall result in blessing. ***"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."*** (Isa. 42: 1-4). Here is yet another indication that judgment is for man's benefit. When judgment is set in the earth it will be a glad hour for all mankind as we have already seen, and as this same prophet

declares still more plainly in the **26th chapter of Isaiah**; *"Yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early, for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."* We see then that the old prophet had a good reason for earnestly desiring the Lord *"in the way of his judgments,"* because then, *"when his judgments were in the earth, the inhabitants of the world would learn righteousness."*

During this gospel age *"they that are Christ's," "the church of the first born"* the *"house of God"* (I Pet. 4:17; compare Eph. 2: 19) are having their judgment, trial, or probation. Peter says, *"The time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God."* Thus does it appear that a certain class are having their trial during this age; and this view is fully confirmed by other Scripture. Says Christ, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life"* (John 5: 24, RSV). Here is a class spoken of who escape the future general judgment; how? because they have their judgment or probation here and now, as Paul says, *"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world"* (I Cor. 11: 31-32).

This is the idea exactly: a class or group are having their judgment or trial now, that they may not come under the general judgment of all mankind. They judge themselves, Paul say, i.e., they voluntarily take the place where God's just judgment puts every sinner, viz., as dead and lost. Seeing their helpless, lost and dead condition, they fall on Christ as their only hope and thus the sooner pass through the educating, developing, perfecting process of probation, and reach the image of God; these have *"part in the first resurrection."* They voluntarily *"yield"* themselves to God (Rom. 6:16-19); they *"present their bodies living sacrifices unto God,"* (Rom. 12: 1); they *"humble themselves"* (Matt. 18: 4), they *"mortify the deeds of the body,"* they *"crucify the flesh,"* they *"reckon themselves dead,"* they *"judge themselves that they may not be condemned with the world;"* that is to say,

they freely give themselves up to God's molding hand, and do not **"resist the truth"** (2 Tim, 3: 8), nor **"frustrate his grace"** (Gal. 2:21), and thus they come to **"know the power of his resurrection,"** and gain **"the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."** (Phil. 3: 10, 14). Now all this is set forth in figure in Matt. 21: 42-44, **"Whosoever shall fall on this stone (Christ) shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder."** If we voluntarily fall on Christ we must submit to being **"broken," "crucified," "mortified,"** i.e. **"perfected through suffering;"** but the **"prize"** is worth all this and more; **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."** But what of those who will not submit? Those who will not fall on the stone? The stone will fall on them; and what then? They shall be winnowed. The latter part of this verse is a gross mistranslation; the original word does not mean to grind to powder, or any thing of the kind; the word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and means **"to part the grain from the chaff, to winnow."** (See foot note in Rotherham's translation).

If we would know what is signified by winnowing, turn to Jer. 4: 11, and see that to **"fan"** or winnow (the word is exactly equivalent to the one in Matt. 21: 44), is to **"cleanse" from "wickedness,"** verse 14. Hence we should read the passage, **"upon whosoever it shall fall it will winnow them,"** i.e., though the process will be violent and severe, yet they will be benefited in the end, **separated from the "chaff" of sin, "cleansed"** from their wickedness, and made pure. Those who will not humble themselves, shall be humbled, (Matt. 23: 12) those who will not **"reckon themselves dead"** and **"die daily,"** shall be killed, but mark you, **"The Lord killeth and maketh alive he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up"** (1 Sam. 2: 6), **"He maketh sore, and bindeth up, he woundeth, and his hand make whole"** (Job 5: 18); **"He turneth man to destruction, and saith, return ye children of men"** (Psa. 90: 3); **"Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."** (Hos. 6: 1). The Psalmist says, **"For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins; thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water but thou broughtest us OUT into a wealthy place."** (Psa. 66: 10-12).

The same God that brought them into trouble for their discipline and improvement, brought them out again into a wealthy place. ***"He turneth man to destruction and saith return ye children of men."*** Some are ***"saved by grace"*** (Eph. 2: 5), others are ***"saved so as by fire"*** (I Cor. III. 15), but however God deals with us, whether in mercy or in wrath, we may be sure that the ***"end"*** (i.e., the purpose in view), is always the same, ***"that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."*** (Jas. 5: 11). Hence, though ***"the stone which the builders rejected"*** (and are still rejecting) shall fall on many, those who are not willing to fall on it, yet shall they not thereby be utterly undone and ruined, as would seem to be indicated by the rendering in the common version, but rather winnowed, cleansed, and purified.

We have seen that some have their judgment now, and will not come under the general judgment of the world; why are they thus judged now? To fit them for judges in the day of judgment, I reply. Christ is the great judge of quick and dead but there are to be associate judges with him, as he himself said, ***"Ye that have followed me, in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*** (Matt. 19:28 compare Rev. 3: 21). Again we read, ***"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"*** (I Cor. 6: 2) and yet again John saw this company of saints seated upon thrones, and executing judgment, ***"and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*** (Rev. 20:4; compare Psa. 149). What is the ***"end"*** of this judgment? To save, I reply, for see Psa. 22: 27-28; when ***"the kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among the nations"*** then, ***"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him;"*** and at that same time, ***"when the kingdom is the Lord's," "SAVIORS"*** (not one but many saviors) ***shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau."*** (Ob. 21). The ***"Saints shall judge the world"*** to ***"save the world,"*** (John 12:47) for they are the ***"Sons of God"*** for whom the whole creation waits, (Rom. 8:19), and the promised ***"Seed in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*** This idea of judges being saviors is fully illustrated in the book of Judges. Joshua, Gideon, Samson and the rest judged Israel to save them; the judges were deliverers and saviors; (Judges 2:16) the word rendered judge in this book also means savior,

and is so rendered in Young's Bible translation; Nehemiah also calls these judges of Israel, Saviors; (see Neh. 9:24-27).

Thus the process, nature and purpose of judgment is made plain. Judgment begins **"at the house of God."** The head of that house (Heb. 3:6) is the first to pass through his trial, and to **"bring forth judgment unto victory."** Then the members of the household, **"the church of the first born"** undergo their trial during this gospel age, and are **"made alive at his coming"** (I Cor. 15:23) and are constituted **"kings and priests"** and **"judges of the world"** in the **"ages to come."** Then comes the general Day of Judgment, the period of the world's probation, as it is written, **"It is appointed unto men once to die and after this probation."** Now what will be the result of that general judgment? The deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. For thus saith the Lord, **"There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear."** (Isa. 45:21-23). Paul quotes this passage in Phil. 2:10-11, and tells us that this universal homage will be **"to the glory of God the Father,"** hence it must be voluntary, coming from hearts in harmony with Him, at the time when **"God is all in all;"** and Paul still further confirms this glorious prediction of the final universal triumph of God's saving power, in Rom. 14: 10-11, where he quotes this same passage we have been noticing thus, **"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, 'as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God'."** (see New Version, margin; compare Rev. 5:13). This last passage is very significant; it plainly indicates that the final result of standing before the judgment seat of Christ will be every heart brought into harmony with God, so that every tongue shall praise him.

Now see I Chron 16: 29-34; here the time when the Lord comes to judge the earth is represented as a period of **universal joy and gladness.** So in many of the Psalms we have already intimated; see the 67th, 72nd, 96th, 98th, etc. So in other passages of the Old Testament, some of which I have cited; I will notice one more; In Isa. 2 and Mic. 4, we find a prophecy of the

establishment of Christ's kingdom on the earth. ***"The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off;"*** and what will be the result of this judging and rebuking? blessing or cursing? Blessing most assuredly, for ***"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."*** Thus we find God's judgments spoken of in such a way that we are sure that they are always the expression of his love, and for the good of mankind.

I have referred to some passages to show how the Lord ***"kills and makes alive,"*** as another illustration of this wonderful way of God, see Psa. 83; the Psalmist speaking of God's enemies says, ***"Fill their faces with shame;"*** what for? ***"that they may seek thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish;"*** Again I ask, what for? ***"that they may know that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth."*** Thus are we taught that through shame, confusion, and death, men are led to seek the Lord, and to know him as the one supreme, most-high Jehovah. ***"He turneth man to destruction and saith return ye children of men,' truly O Lord, 'thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth."*** (Hos. 6:4-5). How strangely the Psalmist speaks, ***"When he slew them, THEN they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God!"*** (Psa. 78:34). But this is God's way; through evil to good, through curses to blessings, through darkness to light, through death to life, is the method of Him whose ***"way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."***

We will consider now a few passages from the New Testament. John 5: 17-29. I can only notice this passage very partially now. Jesus says, ***"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."*** The great work of creating man in the divine image and likeness, in which the Father and the son are co-labourers, as is indicated in the first announcement of that work, ***"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,"*** this great work is yet unfinished, hence both are still working and will continue to work until ***"all things are made new."*** But

there is division of labor in this divine co-partnership; ***"for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son."*** Passing over several verses, in the 27th we find the reason given why all judgment is committed unto Christ, ***"because he is the son of man."*** Judgment, trial, probation, has to do with man; all must have their trial before they can be made alive in Christ. Jesus has himself passed through this trial, ***"tempted (i.e. tried) in all points like as we,"*** and ***"brought forth judgment unto victory."*** hence he is eminently fitted to have all judgment (the work of man's probation) committed to his hand; ***"For in that he himself hath suffered being tried, he is able also to succor them that are tried."*** Thus, ***"all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ,"*** and each one may be sure that he has one for his judge ***"who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,"*** and ***"can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way for that he himself also (was) compassed with infirmities."*** Now see verse 28 and 29 in John 5. ***"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his (Christ's) 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 trial."*** (See RSV, ed. note). The last word is Krisis, and means as we have already shown, judgment, trial or probation. This passage then confirms the one we have already noticed that ***"it is appointed unto man once to die and after this probation."*** We are taught that those that do evil here, those who fail to ***"make their calling and election sure,"*** or who have no light and knowledge, come forth from their graves at Christ's voice, not to be consigned to an endless hell or to be eternally destroyed, but to have their trial or probation before the judgment seat of Christ.

We cannot stop to notice many interesting points in connection with this passage, especially the subject of the two resurrections, ***"the resurrection of life,"*** and ***"the resurrection of trial"*** but surely we can see that the passage is in harmony with that view of the judgment that makes it a blessing to mankind. There is still another passage that confirms this same view; Acts 17:31: ***"God hath appointed a day (the day of judgment), in the which he will judge the world in righteousness (compare Psa. 96:13), by that man (the Lord Jesus Christ) whom he hath ordained. Whereof he hath given assurance***

unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Is it not plainly indicated here that the period of the world's judgment is one of blessing? Christ's resurrection is presented as an assurance that the world shall one day be judged in righteousness; this declaration is in the nature of a promise, an assurance of good, and the most glorious event that ever took place is the pledge to all men of their ultimate realization of this promise. In conclusion, see Jude 14,15. The Lord's coming with his saints ***"to execute judgment"*** (see I Cor. 6:2 and Psa. 149:9) will result in ***"convincing the ungodly"*** of their error, and thus bringing them to a better mind. So from Rev. 14:6-7, we learn that when the hour (season, time) of God's judgment is come, the everlasting gospel shall be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and ***"when his judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."***

Thus on every hand, by many and plain scripture, do we learn the nature and purpose of God's judgment. **The judgment day is not a period of dread and almost universal doom, as many represent it, but a time of gladness and joy for all mankind.** The assurance of such a day is given to man as a promise of good, and the pledge thereof is the resurrection of Jesus. He is ***"the first fruit of them that sleep,"*** and ***"if the fire fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."*** If the prevalent idea of the Judgment Day were true, we should dread its coming, and pray that it might be delayed as long as possible. But in harmony with the foregoing Scriptural view of that period, we can heartily join the old prophet and say, ***"in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, with our soul have we desired thee, for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."*** (Is. 26:9)

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