

Prophecy

Three Judgments For The Believer

Our complex problematic being

At salvation, we were born into a new relationship with God.

- a) Having been born of God (1 Jn. 5:1, 4) does not mean a present life of endless joy and never again have a problem. Very quickly we learn that there has been a change which perhaps cannot be explained. The things we found pleasurable are not the same, there is a conviction about things we heretofore thought nothing about doing. It is as if a new power is in our very being and that is exactly what has happened. In the Old Testament, we read of a woman called Rachel. She came to the understanding that she was going to have a baby, yet something was wrong for inside her she could feel a struggle, as if there were twins and each one was fighting for prominence. That is exactly what happened, and it is a perfect illustration of that which occurs when a person is born of God. There was no struggle against sin before salvation but there is after. It is the evidence of new life within. That which is happening is, God is seeking to conform us to the likeness of His Son and the old nature within fights to stay alive and rule as it had done before.

In the past at Calvary

I was judged as a guilty sinner, under condemnation (Rom. 1:18-31; 3:9-19; 1 Pet. 3:18), but God in love sent His only begotten Son to suffer the penalty for my sin. At the place called Calvary, the man on that middle cross was punished for what He did not do and in righteousness, God vented on Christ the full claims of justice and morality (Isa. 53:4-6). By His death, He broke my hereditary connection to Adam, and by His resurrection, He brought me into a new order of manhood (Rom. 6:6-8).

This judgment was secured and provided by the love shown in kindness, grace and mercy (Titus 3:4; 1 Jn. 4:10), and was penal. It forever removed the punishment that was due me because of my sin but in mercy borne by Christ on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). He provided "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9).

The present judgment/discipline

This new nature, the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), is holy, and therefore opposed to all that is non-conforming to the character of God. From that moment on there is a struggle which lasts as long as we are in this body. The apostle Paul found this by experience and wrote:

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom.7:14-23)

I remember when at school we were to study and work all year because at the end of the year, there was an assessment of how we did. While we are in these bodies and on our homeward journey, we are as it were writing our exam and at the Judgment Seat our "papers of life" will be reviewed and we will be rewarded or suffer loss. The reason for suffering loss or graciously receiving rewards is greatly dependent on our conformity to the Lord. Concerning the Lord, it is recorded that, "He pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3), and as His will was to do the will of Him that sent Him (Jn. 6:38), the life of a believer ought to be the same. A child born in a natural family must learn how to behave according to the character and status of the family. So the believer born of God (1 Jn. 5:13) is to learn conformity to the character of God. The standards are very high, such as, "Be ye therefore perfect,

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even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48) and, “Be ye holy for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15, 16). Therefore, depending on how I have been, either an obstinate, self-willed child doing what I wanted instead of the will of God, I shall suffer loss. If I do the will of God I shall be rewarded. In the time of my earthly sojourn, my Heavenly Father seeks to train me to conform to the image of His son. This leads to several questions:

- a) How am I now judged? I am judged by the Father of spirits in love. (Heb. 12:7)
- b) What am I judged and disciplined as? I am judged as a child by, “Chasteneth and scourgeth”. (Heb. 12:5-11)
- c) Why am I disciplined now? It is to grow spiritually and in the knowledge of God and Christ (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:18). The Lord longs to see the devotion of my heart to Him (Song of Sol. 1:2-3). His children develop by growing into abundant life (Jn. 10:10) and living in the reality of the liberty He has given (Rom. 8:21) which is a “glorious liberty”, celebrating the victory of Christ over sin and death (Rom. 6:14) and Satan’s power. Even now in this life, He can reveal His Son in me (Gal. 1:16). In so doing, the reality of the gospel’s transforming power will be evident to a dying world.
- d) What is the characteristic of this judgment? This judgement is governmental.
- e) Who does the judging? This present judging is in part that which the individual does in judging themselves (1 Cor. 11:31). In the church there ought to be prophets/teachers who can assess what is being said relative to error (1 Cor. 14:2).

The Lord judging at the Judgment Seat in the future

In the four passages dealing with the Judgment Seat there are distinctions which must be observed:

- a) In Romans, the emphasis is on “God”. The best translations render the passage as follows:
 - i) Stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10)
 - ii) Every tongue shall confess to God (Rom. 14:11)
 - iii) Shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12)
 1. For spiritually worthless speech (Matt. 12:36)
 2. Of my stewardship (Lk. 16:2)
 - (a) For the work God has entrusted to me (1 Cor. 4:1)
 - iv) Elders will give an account of the sheep under them (Heb. 13:17)

When does the judgment seat of Christ take place?

There are some questions to which the scriptures give very clear answers, but the answers to other questions are not as clear as one would like. On those questions which are not given a clear answer, or where God has given no indications, then the subject should be left as one of God’s secrets.

We are given explicit information about when the Judgment Seat takes place. 1 Corinthians 4:5 informs the readers that it takes place after the Lord comes. However, that is a very general ambiguous term for it begs the question, how long after the lord comes? Is it His coming to the air at the rapture or His coming to the earth after the tribulation as Revelation 22:12 indicates?

- a) There are several arguments presented to answer this question and the ones I am aware of are:
 - ii) Is it immediately after the rapture?
 - iii) Is it before the seven-sealed book is taken by the Lord and opened, therefore before the rise of the man of sin or combination of a system and the man of sin in the first seal (Rev. 6:2). This will depend on whether one understands the twenty-four elders to be the church or not.
 - iv) Is it in the 75 days between the coming of the Lord to earth and the setting up of the Millennial kingdom?
- b) My understanding is that it will take place immediately after the Lord comes and before the judgments relative to Earth. The following scriptures indicate the chronological order of first His coming and then the judgment.
 - i) Prophetic picture. I recognize that between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, there are nine days. The Feast of Trumpets occurs on the first day of the seventh month (Lev.

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- 23:24) and the Feast of Atonement was held on the 10th Day of the seventh month. This to me indicates the order as we have in 1 Corinthians 4:5, the coming of the Lord at the sound of the trumpet and then the judgment.
- ii) Parables. The Lord spoke a parable about a nobleman who went away having received the Kingdom. Upon his return, his servants were brought before him to give an account of what they had done with that which he had entrusted to them (Lk. 19:15-26).

Where does it take place?

To the best of my knowledge, there are no references anywhere in the scriptures concerning where the Judgment Seat takes place. We do know it is not on earth for the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and it is after that.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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