

# JUDGMENT

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# JUDGMENT

## Introduction

The bible has much to say about judgment, what it is and how it relates to humanity. The subject is broad based in scope for it affects all of humanity with unique and specific implications for Christians. Contrary to popular belief, judgement is not punishment or condemnation. The Bible speaks of judgement primarily as the capacity to perceive, discern and make reasonable decisions. It is a "process" in which decisions are reached "after" due consideration of facts and circumstances. The predominant word translated judgement in the New Testament is **krisis**, which appears in 48 verses and is consistent with the above meaning. The word **krima** has also been translated as judgement and is in general agreement with the above. The tense of the word has implications on its various meanings. Judgement, in past tense, implies that a sentence has been rendered. "It is the judgement of the court that the sentence of ..." is an English example of its use in past tense. Even when it is used in past tense, it has no implications as to the severity or mildness of a sentence or whether any sentence is imposed at all. The judgement of a court may be acquittal. The sentence for guilt may be harsh, mild, or no sentence at all. There is no implication for automatic punishment or condemnation associated with judgement as the Scriptures will affirm.

Where there is judgement there is also the necessity of a judge. God is a Judge, Christ sits in His judgement seat, and there are human judges. Judge and judging will also be examined in the New Testament beginning with the judgements of men.

## JUDGEMENTS OF MEN

Scriptures recognize the necessity of man - within defined limitations - to form and express judgements relative to their fellow-men. The New Testament validates the need for individuals to constantly form judgements relative to the conduct and character of others for our own guidance, safety and usefulness. The most common form of judgement is for Christians to protect themselves against false prophets and false ministers who seek to pervert the gospel of Christ.

### **Matthew 7:15-16**

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them."

### **2 John 9-11**

"Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not

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take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work."

### **John 7:24**

"Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgement."

Lk. 7:43, 12:57, Ac. 4:19, 15:19, 16:4,15, 20:16, 21:25, 23:3,6, 24:6, 25:25, 26:6-8, Ro. 2:1-3, 14:3-5, 1Cor. 10:15,29, 2Cor. 5:14, Col. 2:16.

Christians must judge whether the teachings and doctrines of others are consistent with the truth of the gospel. This judgement can be made only when one is grounded in the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Constant vigilance against the infiltration of false concepts and ideas is required.

The New Testament clearly articulates the gospel of Christ. Not everyone claiming to know and teach the gospel is necessarily doing so. A false gospel is one which invokes Old Covenant practices like Sabbatarianism, legalism, practicing aspects of Mosaic Law or any integration of the above. It also cautions about integrating man-made philosophies into the gospel and as a means of worship. The New Testament associates any person or group advocating the above with the false prophet and as such, is to be rejected by Christians.

### **Galatians 1:6-8**

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel - which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"

Paul was referring to the attempt of some to integrate Judaism with the gospel of Christ. Paul rejected any and all such attempts. He did not allow any integration of Mosaic Law nor did he say that the practice of such ordinances were OK as long as Christians understood it was not for Salvation. Paul condemned all such practices and all those who advocate such practices without exclusion. Any statement to the contrary is simply not from God.

A firm rejection of those who deceive or introduce foreign elements to the gospel is consistent with the gospel's admonition toward such people. Christians are not to welcome them nor their teachings. The gospel teaches Christians not to hate or despise such people, usurp God's place as judge, pass rash or unjust judgements, nor any judgements that are needless or uncharitable.

### **1 Cor 4:5**

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each

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one's praise will come from God.

### **Romans 14:13**

"Therefore let us stop passing judgement on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."

### **Matthew 7:1-2**

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

God is the one true and righteous judge. Whatever standard believers use to judge others is the same standard God will apply to those believers. If Christians judge within the standards established by God, they are not usurping God's authority but putting into practice His revealed standard. God is the ultimate judge of humanity. Christians are not to judge other people. They may judge words, works, teachings, and behaviors as it relates to "their" acceptance and conduct toward such things, but not to pass judgement on the person teaching or doing those things. It can be summed by the phrase, hate the sin but love the sinner. Romans 14 and Matthew 7 does not contradict this as verses 6 and 7 of Matthew confirm:

### **Matthew 7:6-7**

"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces. Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

### **1 Corinthians 6:1-5**

"If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?"

Apart from private judgement, it is also necessary for men to have official judgement through divinely authorized human government. The exercise of judicial functions is an essential aspect of all government. Judges and juries should realize that they are subject to the judgements of God and should therefore exercise their office equitably and with due moderation. (Rom. 13:1-7, 1Pet. 2:13-14, Mt. 5:40)

### **Romans 13:1-2,5**

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist

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have been established by God ... Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of the possible punishment but also because of conscience."

Submission refers to obedience to prevailing governmental laws and ordinances that do not come into direct conflict with the believer's conscience regarding spiritual matters. The gospel leaves to the believer's conscience the degree of participation in the divinely ordained operation of human governments such as military service, jury duty, and their degree of participation in the political process of voting, campaigning or holding appointed or elected offices.

## JUDGEMENTS OF GOD

A strongly entrenched tenet of Christianity is the belief of one general judgement for humanity, Christians and non-Christians alike. Let's examine the specific judgements of God as revealed in the Bible.

### 1. *Judgement of the Cross*

This is the judgement upon sin effected by the Calvary event when Christ said in John 19:30, "it is finished." The condemnation of sin and death through Christ is the basis of the believer's salvation. Christ has borne the sinner's guilt and became the "substitute for all" on whose behalf He died. Sin was judged and condemned. Christ paid the penalty for sin once and for all in the person of Jesus Christ, the Divine-Substitute. Those who are in Christ have been hailed to court, tried, sentenced to death and executed in the Person of Jesus Christ, the substitute. (1Pet. 2:24)

#### **Romans 8:1-3**

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death ... He condemned sin in the flesh."

#### **John 5:24**

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

#### **Gal 3:13**

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

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### Heb 9:24-28

- 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
- 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another--
- 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
- 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,
- 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

## 2. *The Judgement of Believers*

The judgement of believers takes the form of divine correction and chastisement.

### 1 Corinthians 11:32

"When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."

### Heb 12:3-11

- 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.
- 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.
- 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
- 6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."
- 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?
- 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.
- 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?
- 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.
- 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

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### **John 15:1-2**

- 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.
- 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Correction and chastisement is God's disciplinary action against a sinning saint. The "sin unto death" (1 Jn. 5:16, 1 Cor. 5:1-5, Ac. 5:1-11) occurs when the believer, through deliberate and continued sin brings reproach upon the name of Christ and upon his salvation by saving grace, forfeits his physical life so "that his spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus."

### **3. *The Judgement of Self***

#### **1 Corinthians 11:31-32**

"But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgement. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."

This refers to the stern criticism of a Christian concerning himself and his walk in Christ. It's an immediate confession of and a turning away from all sin and yielding to the divine will of God.

#### **2 Corinthians 13:5**

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

#### **James 5:16**

Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

True confession is equivalent to self-judgement and involves an immediate cleansing and restoration to "walking in the light."

### **4. *The Judgement of the Believer's Works***

This form of judgement concerns Christians only and is not a judgement for sins. Judgement for sins has taken place at Calvary and the believer will not be faced with this judgement again. (Jn. 5:24, Rom. 8:1, Heb. 10:10)

#### **2 Corinthians 5:14**

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."

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The judgement seat of Christ (**bema**) will divinely appraise the believing Christian's works, deeds and service and impacts the believer's measure of reward or loss of reward. Let's examine this in greater detail. The Greek word "bema" is translated as judgment seat and appears in 12 verses.

### **968 bhma bema bay'-ma**

from the base of 939; ; n n

AV-judgment seat 10, throne 1, to set (one's) foot on + 4128 1; 12

1) a step, pace, the space which a foot covers, a foot-breath

2) a raised place mounted by steps

2a) a platform, tribune

2a1) of the official seat of a judge

2a2) of the judgment seat of Christ

2a3) Herod built a structure resembling a throne at Caesarea, from which he viewed the games and made speeches to the people

Bema is used of the judgment seat of Pilate when Jesus was put on trial in Matthew 27:19 and John 19:13; of Abraham when he left Mesopotamia to dwell in Charran Acts 7:2-5; Herod's throne in Acts 12:21; Gallio's judgment seat over Paul in Acts 18:12-18; Festus and Ceasar in Acts 25:4-17;

### **2 Corinthians 5:10**

"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

### **Rom 14:10**

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The judgement seat of Christ is absolutely and most emphatically **not** a judgement of the believer's *sins*. These have been *fully* atoned for by Christ's substitutionary death at Calvary and will be "remembered no more forever" (Heb. 10:17). It is quite necessary that the service of every child of God be scrutinized and evaluated. (Rom 14:10-13, Gal. 6:7, Eph. 6:8, Col. 3:24-25, 2 Tim. 4:8)

### **Colossians 3:24-25**

"knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality."

This judgement of the believer's works will result in "reward" or "loss" of reward. In any event, the born again believer - one sanctified in Christ - is guaranteed salvation.

1 Cor 3:11-15

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

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- 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,  
13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.  
14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.  
15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

### 5. *The Judgement of the Nations*

#### **Matthew 25:31-33**

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left."

This involves God divinely judging all the nationalities of the earth (Mt. 25:31-46). Nations does not necessarily mean countries as defined by geo-political borders but as people of all ethnic origins. The Greek word translated nations is **ethnos**. The nearest English translation is ethnic or ethnicity. Ethnos has been translated as Gentile 93 times, nation 64 times, heathen 5 times and people twice. It generally means all non-Israelite peoples. They will be judged by how they treated other human beings. Some shall receive the gift of eternal life while others punishment in the lake of fire:

#### **Matthew 25:34-36,40**

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

### 6. *The White Throne Judgement*

This last great assize encompasses the resurrection and judgement of all the unsaved throughout the ages. The basis of this judgement is on the works that were done which implies various degrees of reward or punishment. Those not written in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire which is the second death (Heb. 10:26-30, Rev. 20:11-15).

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### **Revelation 20:12,15**

"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books ... If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

### **Hebrews 10:26-27**

"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."

### **Matthew 12:36-37**

"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgement for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

## **7. *The Judgement of Satan and his Demons***

The judgement of Satan and his fallen angels is connected to the great white throne judgement. (Jude 6)

### **Revelation 20:10**

"And the devil, who deceived them, were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

### **2 Pet 2:4**

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell (tartaroo) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

Hell in 2 Peter is a translation of the Greek word "tartaroo" taken from Tartaros (the deepest abyss of Hades); to incarcerate in eternal torment. This appears to be the same as the term "bottomless pit" in Revelation where Satan and his demons are bound for a thousand years.

### **Rev 20:1-3**

- 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
- 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;
- 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the

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thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The demonic realm will be judged by the saved in Christ ...

### **1 Cor 6:3**

Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?