

'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad'. (2 Cor. 5:10)

'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil'. (Eccl. 12:14)

It is possible to stand before Christ in the day of judgment and not be ashamed. The Scriptures provide ample instruction to this end.

Be wise and give heed thereto.

The Christadelphians

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Christ the Judge of living & dead

Watchman Christadelphians - Leaflet 42

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Christ the Judge of living and dead

The Lord Jesus, at His second appearing, will come, not as the Lamb of God to give His life as sacrifice for sin, but in power and great glory. One of His first works will be to fulfil His foreordained office of Judge of living and dead:

'I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom'. (2 Tim. 4:1)

The Father 'hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his 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 damnation". (John 5:27-29)

Divine judgment, is a subject upon which few care to dwell. Nevertheless it occupies a place, and not a small one, in God's message to man. He who neglects any part of this message does so at his peril. Those who listened to the Spirit-endowed teachers of the first century heard much concerning judgment to come. Christ in His discourses made continual allusion to it. The same applies to the utterances of the apostles. Cornelius listened to it from the lips of Peter. (Acts 10:42) The Athenians heard of it from Paul, (Acts 17:30,31) as did also the dissolute Felix, to his dismay. (Acts 24:25) The letters of the apostles similarly abound with references to it. Both Paul and Peter taught that it formed an essential feature in the message which they had to deliver:

'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel'. (Rom. 2:16)

'And he commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick (living) and dead'. (Acts 10:42)

In the light of the information which these various sources supply, the subject stands out clearly and seriously. At a definitely fixed time, God will institute a tribunal, before which men and women will be summoned to answer for their conduct. As already indicated, the judge will be the Lord Jesus returned from heaven, immortal and glorious, accompanied by the angelic hosts. The time is designated 'the last day' and 'the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God'; (John 12:48 and Rom. 2:5,6) and is contemporary with the Lord's second coming.

The summons to judgment will not be a universal one. The basis of this summons will be a knowledge and belief of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, as expressed in Christ's command to His apostles:

'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned'. (Mark 16:15,16; also Matt. 28:19,20)

'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'.

(John 12:48)

Vast multitudes who have passed away in death, will never rise. Not all, 'of them that sleep in the dust of the earth', says Daniel, 'shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt'. (Dan. 12:2) Other Old Testament prophets refer to this class. They are not responsible to resurrection and judgment because of their ignorance of the gospel of salvation; (Isa. 26:14; Oba. 16) and the Apostle Paul reveals the ground upon which God will exempt them:

That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk ... having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart'. (Eph. 4:17,18)

'And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent'. (Acts 17:30)

Of those who will stand before the tribunal of Christ, some, as has been shown, will have been gathered from among the living, others will have been raised from the dead. The number is to embrace all those responsible from the time of Adam to the Great Day of Judgment. (Rev. 11.18)

These testimonies reveal the fact that the day of judgment concerns both righteous and unrighteous alike. The notion, held by some, that the righteous are to be excluded from Christ's judgment inspection must be rejected as unscriptural and pernicious: ►►