

## Judgment

(Week 7)

“from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

As Jesus has ultimate authority, so He is the judge of all. Because He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Savior of all men, He has the right to hold them all responsible for what they do.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge of this future judgment motivates us in the present.

The reality of divine judgment is scary. God sees everything that is done, and He impartially punishes wrongdoing.<sup>2</sup> Jesus Himself exhorts us to fear God over anything else because He has the ultimate power to punish us.<sup>3</sup> If you are not afraid of what God can do to you, you are not thinking clearly.

Fear is a healthy response to something that is genuinely terrifying and which requires action. What action you take when fear comes over you makes the difference between wisdom and foolishness. The life of the apostle Paul offers two great examples of each path. In Acts 24:24+25, Paul is speaking to Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, and Felix's wife, Drusilla. As Paul was speaking about “the judgment to come” and the responsibilities it demanded, Felix “became afraid” and sent Paul away. In 2 Corinthians, Paul and Timothy explained the rationale for their ministry to the Corinthians by stating that everyone would have to stand before Christ to have all their deeds judged. This knowledge inspired fear in them, that impelled them to please God and persuade people of what God wanted them to know.<sup>4</sup> The “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” because by it we may order our lives rightly.<sup>5</sup> It is foolish to ignore or put the fear of God from our minds like Felix. Our fear of the Judge is sobering, and it is good to be sobered. This is why the New Testament encourages us to live in such a way that we will be confident on the Day of Judgment.<sup>6</sup>

More than just being confident in spite of our fear, we may even look forward with eager expectation to God's judgment. For, just as He will punish wickedness, He will reward goodness.<sup>7</sup> Just as He will crush the oppressors, He will lift up the oppressed.<sup>8</sup> All Creation is groaning, waiting, as it were, for Jesus to put all things right.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, all of this talk of confidence and being excited at the expectation of Christ's judgment is putting the cart in front of the horse. If we do not have a familial relationship with God through trust in Jesus, we have nothing to expect from the Lord but condemnation and destruction.<sup>10</sup> I will discuss this idea in more depth later in the series.

Jesus is coming back to judge you. Therefore, what counts first in life, is not whom you marry, what job you have, or what others think of you; what matters most is whether or not you are pleasing the Lord. Do not minimize the dread of Christ's scrutiny, but allow it to push you toward a place where you are ready to receive it with confidence and joy.

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1 Genesis 1:27; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Timothy 4:10.

2 Hebrews 4:13; Colossians 3:25.

3 Matthew 10:28.

4 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.

5 Proverbs 9:10.

6 Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Peter 3:14; 1 John 4:17+18.

7 Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 22:12.

8 Micah (the whole book); Philippians 1:6.

9 Romans 8:18-25.

10 John 3:18; Revelation 20:11-15.