

COMING JUDGEMENTS OF GOD

The object of this study is to examine three coming judgements of God over which there is much confusion among Christians in the contemporary church. The study will determine from scripture what the judgements are, who they will affect, and when they will occur. The three, and the order in which they will occur, are the Judgement Seat of Christ, the Judgement of the Nations, and the Great White Throne Judgement.

The first, the Judgement Seat of Christ, will take place in heaven after the first resurrection – also called the resurrection of the just, and the resurrection of life (CP Lu 14:13-14 with Jn 5:25-29). This resurrection will occur when Jesus comes to take all the saints of God back to heaven with him before the tribulation (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18; 2Th 2:1-7; Rev 1:19; 3:7-13 with Rev 20:4-6). In a coming day every believer in heaven will stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ to give an account of themselves to God for everything they have ever done as a Christian, whether it be good or bad (CP Ecc 12:14; 2Cor 5:10). However, while the Judgement Seat of Christ is a judgement of believers, it is not to determine punishment but the believer's place in heaven. It is where Christ will judge every believer's earthly works, and how those works stand or fall will determine the believer's position in God's eternal kingdom (CP 1Cor 3:11-15).

This teaches that every earthly work of every believer will be revealed, ...made *manifest*, at the Judgement Seat of Christ. In V13 Paul likens this process to a refining fire that will test every work. Only works symbolised by gold, silver and precious stones will survive the fire. These are symbolic of works built upon the foundation of Christ – grounded in Christ (CP Mt 7:24-25; Lu 6:47-48). *Wood, hay and stubble*, which burn up, symbolise lesser works done independent of God – not grounded in Christ (CP Psa 127:1-2 with Mt 7:26-27; Lu 6:49). All works done by believers independent of God are vain. The lasting success of any works of believers is contingent upon them being built upon the foundation of Christ. Believers will not lose their salvation when their lesser works burn up, but there will be a loss of rewards in heaven (CP 1Cor 3:15).

Although the Judgement Seat of Christ does not involve punishment, it should not be regarded lightly or carelessly (CP Php 2:12; 1Pe 1:17). Believers will have to give an account to God of their stewardship of the gifts, talents, opportunities and responsibilities He entrusted to them (CP Mt 25:14-23; Lu 19:12-19; 1Cor 4:1-4). Every believer's earthly works will be examined and openly revealed in their true reality at the Judgement Seat of Christ. *Works* not only refers to stewardship of gifts, talents, opportunities and responsibilities entrusted to believers, but to their conduct toward others and love for one another (CP Lu 14:12-14; Ro 12:9-21; 14:10-13; Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:16 – 4:1; He 6:10-12; 1Jn 4:17). Everything believers have ever done during the course of their Christian life, whether good or bad, will be revealed at the Judgement Seat of Christ – their every thought, their every word, their every deed, their secret acts,

their character, their motives, their attitudes, their work and their ministry (CP Ecc 12:14; Ro 14:10-13; 1Cor 3:11-15; 4:5; 2Cor 5:10; Eph 6:1-9; Col 3:16 – 4:1; Jas 1:2-4, 12, 19, 21; 2:1-4, 9; 1Pe 1:3-7, 17; Rev 22:7, 11-12),

Believers' bad deeds, when repented of and confessed during their earthly life, are forgiven in relation to eternal punishment, but they will still be taken into account when being judged for recompense by Christ at the Judgement Seat of Christ (CP 1Jn 1:9 with Col 3:22-25). Believers can do nothing about past offences, but they can make every effort not to repeat them in future (CP 1Cor 10:6-13; 2Cor 5:9; 13:5; 1Jn 2:28).

Now, let us see what scriptures teach about the next judgement (CP Mt 25:31-46). This is called the Judgement of the Nations. It takes place after the Tribulation and Jesus defeats Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon (CP Rev 19:11-21). Although it is called the Judgement of the Nations it will in fact be individual people who will be judged because Jesus separates them from each other into *sheep* and *goats* (CP Mt 25:32-33). The sheep represent those individuals who will go into the eternal Kingdom (CP Joel 3:2, 12; Zech 14:16). The goats represent those who will be cast down to Hell. *All nations* who will be gathered before Jesus in Mt 25:32 are the Gentiles who survive the Tribulation. *Nations* in Greek also means Gentiles. Their judgement takes place prior to Christ setting up his millennial reign on earth, to determine who of them will go into the eternal Kingdom. The basis of the Gentiles' judgement will be their failure to extend mercy to the Jewish believers during the Tribulation (CP Mt 25:34-40 with 41-46). This can never be construed as teaching salvation by works; that these Gentiles were saved because of their kindness to the Jews. That would contradict the testimony of scripture (CP Eph 2:8-9). It simply means that those Gentiles' kindness to the Jews during the Tribulation, reflected their love for Christ. That is what saved them.

Although the application of this teaching is toward the Gentiles who survive the Tribulation, the teaching is relevant to Christians in all ages. Believers today must also extend mercy to the least of God's children, whether they be Jews or Gentiles (CP Mt 5:7).

Now to the third and final judgement subject of this study (CP Rev 20:11-15). This describes the Great White Throne Judgement. It and the lake of fire signifies the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth prior to Him handing over the eternal Kingdom to God (CP 1Cor 15:23-28). The Great White Throne Judgement is when all the ungodly, from the beginning of time to those killed by fire from God at the end of the thousand years in the last great rebellion led by Satan, are cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the final destination of the wicked – a place of torment into which Satan and the fallen angels, Antichrist and the false prophet, and everyone whose names are not written in the Book of Life, will be cast at the end of Christ's millennial reign (CP Rev 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:1-10; 21:7-8). Those not found written

in the Book of Life include the tares of the field and the Gentiles condemned by Christ at the Judgement of the Nations, for their failure to extend mercy to the Jewish believers during the Tribulation (CP Mt 13:24-30; 25:34-40 with 41-46).

In summary, these are three separate and distinct judgements that will take place at three separate and distinct times. The first, the Judgement Seat of Christ, is only for Christians, to determine their place in God's eternal Kingdom. There is no punishment involved, only rewards or loss of rewards in heaven. The second, the Judgement of the Nations, only concerns Gentiles who survive the tribulation, to

determine who of them will be eligible to enter the eternal Kingdom. This does not concern Christians who have already had their places allotted in the eternal Kingdom at the Judgement Seat of Christ at least seven years previously – the duration of the Tribulation. The last judgement, the Great White Throne Judgement, is solely for sinners and all the ungodly, including Satan, fallen angels, Antichrist and the false prophet. They will all be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever. This also does not concern Christians. When this happens they will already have been a part of God's eternal Kingdom for at least one thousand and seven years. Hallelujah!