

Jesus Is Our Judge

'For we must all appear as we are before the Judgement Seat of Jesus our Messiah, so that each one may receive his rewards according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord (respect and reverence), we seek to win people over to God' (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Apostle John had a very close friendship with Jesus while on earth. They were first cousins – their mothers were sisters. John was the one who leant on Jesus shoulder at the last supper. Even after the resurrection, John shared breakfast with Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, yet when John saw Jesus in His place, as God the Creator and Judge of mankind, the sight was so overpowering John fell at His feet like a dead man. Jesus is not only our Saviour; He is also our Righteous Judge. In the Book of Revelation, when John received a personal revelation of God, his attention did not usually focus immediately on the Lord. We could not stand being confronted by God, so first, John notices the seven lampstands before he saw the Lord.

We need to have our hearts open to understand prophecies in the Book of Revelation. It is a spiritual book intended for Holy Spirit filled people. John wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a great Voice like the sound of a trumpet ... then I turned to see Whose was the Voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstand, One like a Son of Man clothed with a robe which reached to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. His head and His hair were white like white wool; as white as snow, and His eyes flashed like a flame of fire. His feet glowed like burnished bronze as it is refined in a furnace, and His Voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and from His mouth there came forth a sharp two-edged sword, and His face was like the sun, shining at its brightest. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man, but He laid His right hand on me and said, 'Do not be afraid!'" (Revelation 1:10 to 17).

Jesus will first judge all of the genuine believers and reward them according to their works, then 1,000 years later He will judge the non-believers; the remainder of all mankind; everyone who has ever lived on this earth, plus all of the angels who have sinned (Revelation 20:4 to 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Jesus is not only the Judge, but He is also the total Victor over all forms of evil; sin, death, Hades and the devil ... there was nothing missing in His victory. Jesus did not go through the suffering on the cross for His sake because He always was victorious – He did it solely for mankind to bring us into His victory. That is the grace and the mercy of God.

We need to be confronted with the fact that Jesus is our Judge because we will all encounter Him one day. It was a terrifying sight for John; so terrifying he collapsed, then Jesus laid His right hand on John and said, 'Do not be afraid'. Committed Christians do not need to be afraid of the coming Judgement, for it is only for our rewards. Notice in the opening verse, there are only two categories of deeds done in the body; good or bad. Whatever is not good is bad. In the Kingdom of God there is nothing neutral. There is only heaven or hell; good and evil; light and darkness. Believers do not need to be afraid of the Judgement; we are safe, but there are multitudes of people who will face the Judgement and will be terrified. As committed Christians, we have a divine mandate to preach the full Gospel (2 Timothy 4:1 & 2), and that includes mentioning the terror of the Lord's Judgement. 'Behold, the Lord will come with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him' (Jude 1:14 & 15).

The first area that the Book of Revelation focuses on, is the seven lampstands which are the seven churches. The first place John saw Jesus, He was in the midst of the seven churches. Jesus was walking among the seven churches (Revelation 2:1), apparently examining each church. The mystery of the seven stars in His right hand are the angels; ministering spirits of the seven churches and the seven golden lampstands are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20). This tells us that the Lord holds the angels in His right hand and He, with the angels, are in the midst of the church.

In chapters 2 & 3 of Revelation, we come to the messages to the seven churches. Notice that every message was sent to a church. Anyone who was not in the church did not get the message! That is a sobering thought for those who refuse to attend church. We are not to forsake fellowshiping with one another (Hebrews 10:25; 1 John 1:7). If the message of Revelation were sent today, anyone who was not in a congregation, would not receive the Lord's message. The Lord is the Head of the church and if we are not in a church, we may possibly miss out on receiving what the Lord is saying to the churches today. As individuals, the Lord speaks to us. 'If anybody hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him'

(Revelation 3:20). Once we have heard His voice and are born-again, then He expects us to be in a church. The seven churches all received commendation, praise, correction, encouragement, and a warning of judgement that may follow. The promises that were given were only to one kind of person; to people who overcome, conquer and are victorious (Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:26; 3:5; 3:12; 3:21; 21:7).

Jesus said to the churches, "I know your works." He did not say, "I know your denomination." He said, "I know your location and what you are doing." Jesus also said, "Repent." Even committed, genuine Christians need to regularly repent. Repentance is the key to salvation and ongoing spiritual growth. If we bypass repentance, we can never have true faith. The blessings of God and His promises will never come our way unless we first repent. John the Baptist's message was a baptism of repentance (Luke 3:3). When Jesus first began His ministry, His first words to the people were, "Repent and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). When the multitude asked, "What must we do to be saved?" Peter answered, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:37 & 38). To be baptised without being repentant is a waste of time.

Revelation chapter 4 is a picture of the throne room of the universe. In this chapter, the first thing John saw in heaven was a throne. Again John could not look at the One Who sat on the throne, he saw the throne first before He saw the Lord. That is the throne room from where the Lord rules the universe. Everything in the universe is totally under the control of the One Who sits on the throne. Chapter 4 tells us about God's nature; He is holy, almighty, eternal, worthy and He is the Creator. The word holy is the only word that is joined with God three times in this chapter (verse 8) and also in Isaiah (Isaiah 6:3). There is very little understanding or concern about holiness amongst a lot of Christians. We need to focus our attention on these aspects of the nature of God; holy, almighty, eternal, worthy and our Creator. Once we get a clear vision of God Himself, the things of earth grow dim in comparison. Without that vision of God, we will not have the strength to face the terrible things that are going to come upon the whole earth.

The scroll which was the Book of Revelation was sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:1), and only Jesus was worthy enough to open those seals (Revelation 5:5). Back in those days, they didn't have printed books, but had long sheets of paper made from papyrus reeds called parchment, that were rolled up around a smoothed rod of wood. The scroll was God's plan to close the present age and usher in the age of the Kingdom of God. Although Jesus was called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, John didn't see a roaring Lion – he saw a slain Lamb (Revelation 5:5 & 6). The strength of God is not in physical strength – it is in meekness and humility. 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men' (1 Corinthians 1:25). What seems to be weaker than a crucified Man? As far as the world is concerned, Jesus died before a jeering crowd. Only His special people saw Him alive after He had been crucified. Jesus first saw Mary then He appeared to the apostles (John chapters 20 & 21).

As our divine Judge, we need only to be afraid of Jesus. 'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be afraid of Him Who can destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matthew 10:28). If we cannot envision Jesus as the Victor and the Judge over all the earth, and of the throne room in eternity, then we could be very fearful. Jesus was in the midst of the seven churches, and He was also in the midst of the activity in the throne room of God (Revelation chapter 5).

Peter told people to listen. 'Peter ... raised his voice and addressed them; "You Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be explained to you so that you will know and understand; listen to my words ...' (Acts 2:14). Jesus said something we all need to pay close attention to – He said; "He who is able to hear, let him listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches" (Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22). In our day, we still need to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the individual churches. Jesus told us to preach the Gospel. We all need to answer this question; are we truly listening to the Holy Spirit or are we doing so only when it suits us? Are we ready for His judgement? 'I charge you in the presence of God the Father and of Jesus the Messiah, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by the Light of His coming and His Kingdom; Preach the Word! (2 Timothy 4:1 & 2).

Amen and God bless you.

www.bibleabookoftruth.com