

unforgiven to condemn them in the last day. They will be weighed in the balance and found wanting. This investigative judgement must be completed before Jesus comes, because when He comes all decisions have already been made as to who are the saved and who are the lost. It will then be too late to get ready! We must be ready now, with our sins confessed, forsaken, and forgiven, before Christ comes! After Christ comes all decisions are made, and the second phase of judgement takes place--the sentencing.

In every trial, when the guilt of the defendant has been determined, there is a date set for sentencing. During this period of time, the evidence that has been produced in the trial is evaluated and the sentence determined. It is in this second phase that the righteous saints participate.

Just as there was a resurrection to life of the saints at the second coming of Jesus, there is yet one more resurrection to be experienced--the resurrection of damnation (see John 5:29). The lost, those who

**THE
SECOND
RESURRECTION**

were not taken to heaven at the first resurrection, come forth from their graves at the end of the thousand years (see Revelation 20:5).

At this time, Satan is released for a little while and immediately begins again his work of deception (see Revelation 20:5,7-9).

Determined to the end in their hatred of righteousness, the wicked under Satan's leadership try to capture the saints and take the holy city. It is at this time that the third and last phase of judgment occurs.

Stopped from carrying out their purposes, the wicked suffer the executive judgement determined against them in the sentencing phase. Fire comes down from heaven which completely burns up all the wicked--including Satan or Lucifer himself--and all become nothing but ashes (see Ezekiel 28:18; Malachi 4:3). In this lake of fire all sin and sinners are forever removed from the universe, and all traces of rebellion are eternally eliminated.

With this vivid picture of the judgment before you, the great question which needs to concern you is: How can I save myself from such a fiery and terrible destiny? God mercifully tells you how:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life....that the world through him might be saved....and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God

abideth on him." John 3:16-17, 36.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." James 4:7-8, 10.

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:1,4-8.

"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2:1-6.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

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The Final Judgement



The culmination of the gospel is the second coming of Jesus Christ. Of this event the New Testament writers spoke over three hundred times! Connected with this event is the deliverance and vindication of the people of God. To this event Abraham and the other patriarchs looked forward to (see Hebrews 11:10, 13-16).

In viewing this scene, John sees the bride of Christ dressed in white.

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:8.

We know that this bride is the church, or saints of God (see 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-24). It has been Satan's great lie that salvation consists in our passive acceptance of the salvation Christ wrought out by His life and sacrifice; that all that is necessary for us to do is to accept the work He has done on Calvary. But we read that the white robe worn by the saints is the robe of their righteousness.

"...let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John 3:7.

It is true that their righteousness is obtained through Jesus, but the saints do not just give lip service to the fact that God's law is holy and just and good (see Romans 7:12), but they exemplify this law in their lives (see Revelation 14:12). Through an active and living faith they have become partakers of

the divine nature and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust (see 2 Peter 1:4). By faith in Jesus working in and through them they have been cleansed from all sin, and from all defects of character.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20.

To many, the passing of time without the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus' second coming is a source of perplexity. But the Bible tells us the reason for this apparent delay.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Revelation 19:7.

The delay has been due to the fact that the wife, or the church of Christ, has not prepared, or made herself ready, to meet Him. And the way Christ's church makes herself ready is by removing all spots and stains of sin from their character (see Ephesians 5:23-27).

Our character is revealed by the things we do, not by occasional good deeds or occasional misdeeds, but by the habits we have developed. The little incidents of everyday life that so often pass without our notice are the things that shape our character. Every event of life has great consequences--either for good or for evil. The longer a given course of conduct is pursued, the greater the probability of continuing the same course throughout the life.

The character we cultivate, the attitudes we assume today, are fixing our destiny for time and eternity. The choices we make and the deeds that result are all faithfully chronicled in the heavenly books of record (see Revelation 20:11-15). It is there shown whether our characters are after the

order of obedience, or of lawlessness which originated as rebellion in Lucifer. We are deciding today, by our attitudes and character, whether we will be found wearing the white robe of righteousness or will be lost when Jesus returns.

Indecision soon becomes decision in the wrong direction. Many will fail of entering into heaven and eternal life because they failed to make determined efforts, through Jesus, to overcome their defects of character here on earth. Many, while expecting to

overcome the problems in their lives at some future time, are deciding today for eternal loss.

Jesus came to earth the first time as the Saviour of mankind. He brought to the world words of life (see John 6:63), that by receiving them all who would might obtain salvation. Jesus warned, however, that those who refused to receive these words would be judged by them.

"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.

When Jesus comes the second time, it is not as a Saviour but as a Judge.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12.

When Jesus returns, all of the righteous dead are resurrected, and with the living righteous are taken to meet Jesus in the air (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The secret to being a part of this first resurrection is by overcoming all sin; for those only who have overcome by the power that Jesus has made available to all will be found written in the Lamb's book of life, and only those whose names are found written in this book have a part in this resurrection.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Revelation 3:5.

At the appearing of Jesus, the righteous rejoice at the sight (see Isaiah 25:9). The wicked are terrified and seek to flee from His presence (see Revelation 6:16), and are slain by the brightness of His appearing (see Revelation 19:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:8). It is at this time that Satan is bound for a thousand years, after which he will once again be loosed for a little while (see Revelation 20:1-3).

No Future Opportunity To Change

Many have been misled to expect a future opportunity of making a decision for salvation at the time when Satan is to be bound; but we can plainly see that Satan is not bound until the time that Jesus returns, at which time the righteous are taken to heaven and the wicked are destroyed. (For more information on this, please write for our tract on the Secret Rapture.)

The binding of Satan is the confinement of circumstances. We have all heard the expression: "my hands are tied." We understand this to mean that the person is speaking of the fact that because of

circumstances beyond his control, he is prevented from doing that which he would otherwise choose to do. In this situation, Satan is confined to this earth. The wicked are dead, the righteous are removed, and after six thousand years of intense activity, this fallen angel is forced to contemplate his impending judgement. Isaiah also speaks of this time:

"Yet thou (Lucifer) shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms...But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned." Isaiah 14:15-16, 19-20.

While the judgement began with the preaching of the gospel (see Revelation 14:6-7), it is still not finished; for we read that judgement will be given to the saints (see Revelation 20:4). Paul tells us that the saints will judge, not only the earth, but angels (see 1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

In every trial there are three phases of judgement--investigative, sentencing, and execution of the sentence. The first is the investigative judgement. At this time, the evidence is reviewed and weighed and a decision made as to whether guilt exists or not. If it is determined that the accused party is innocent, his trial is then ended with an acquittal. Paul speaks of this to Timothy:

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgement; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." 1 Timothy 5:24-25.

Some men, by their confession and forsaking of sin, have sent their sins beforehand to judgement and have been forgiven and covered by the blood of Jesus. But others have refused to do so, and any unconfessed or unforsaken sins which have not gone beforehand to judgement will remain

CHARACTER DETERMINES DESTINY

THREE JUDGMENT PHASES