

# THE STORY OF MAN'S DESTINY #3

## "JUDGMENT DAY"

GEN. 3:8-19; JN. 3:17-18; ROM. 5:12-19

### 1. INTRODUCTION.

Judgment day! What is it? When is it? Why is it? These simple questions draw out of the wells of theology, an assortment of doctrines and traditions that we would like to address in this lesson. The traditional concept of "judgment day", is of a time when everyone who has ever lived on planet earth will be assembled in one place, where all of their life- long deeds will be read from a book of records of all men. "Judgment day" conjures up images of "white throne judgments"; "sheep and goats"; a recital of the history of every human being; gnashing of teeth and an ultimate assignment to a destiny chosen on the basis of good or evil deeds. The express purpose of this judgment day, according to tradition, is to hold court, as it were, over the billions of earthlings and for the judge (God) to decide what your ultimate reward will be. Those who have lived good lives will inherit eternal life from this session of court. Those who have lived evil will be consigned to a much worse punishment as retribution for their evil. The point of this "judgment day" is to distinguish between good and evil and for God to find out and make a decision if you have been naughty or nice. From this he will then send you off to your eternal destiny. Keep in mind, meanwhile, that everyone who has already lived (and died) in past centuries, according to this same "judgment day scenario", has already been to their respective eternal destinies ever since their death. I guess all of this is to "correct" any mistakes God made in sending them to the wrong place when they died. (Think about that!!)

Let's take a closer look at this "traditional" view of judgment day. Something doesn't sound just right with it all. Let us say that we are at the very last day of time and, as the traditional theology stipulates, God has told Gabriel to bring out the trumpet section and begin getting all of Adam's posterity together. That's *all* of them at one time gathered together, from Adam right down to whoever is alive at that moment. Someone has estimated that this many people congregated at one single moment would have us stacked all over the land mass of the earth ---- 7 deep. Rather crowded wouldn't you say? Then, one by one, God is going to read all of the dirty laundry list about all of us. (You see --there is none good, not one, so it would certainly be a ghastly biographical rendering of sins for all of us). Now for those who were already sent to their "mansion in the sky", this ordeal is a waste of their time strolling down those "streets of gold". For the rest, not-so-fortunate, who had, centuries before, been "judged" as unbelievers and rushed off to a much less desirable fate of "torment and agony", they are hoping this process takes a mighty long time.

All of this makes me ask the question, why? Why in the name of a God of wisdom and justice, did he decide (that is, judge) which place you should be sent to when you died, and now, at the last day of time, have to go through a process of getting the billions of us together and, all over again, judge if we really did belong where he decided to send us when we died. Now for that possible one or two that God let a few too many sins slip by when they died and had sent them to one of those "mansions", but now after looking more closely at a couple of outstanding church deacons and finding that their record had a few clandestine, unsavory, and un-repentant acts of adultery, etc., and must close their "mansion doors" and send them to a hotter climate, they are not going to be happy campers.

Do you get my drift in all of this?" There must be something badly wrong with this traditional picture. Either God is not as perfect as we thought he was or somebody has their theology about the "Day of Judgment" all messed up. Only one guess as to which it is. The theology of the traditional, so-called, judgment day and it's bizarre scheme of calling everybody "down from heaven and up from hell" so God can decide all over again where you belong is completely wrong. So let us turn to the scriptural record of man's sin against God and find out the truth about how and when God passes judgment as to whether you are saved or lost.

### 2 JUDGMENT DAY(S).

We can obtain a great amount of help in understanding the questions before us, if we first see that there have been many times (days) when God has passed judgment upon the wickedness of men. It is also important to understand the difference between God judging whether a matter is right or wrong as distinguished from the “execution” of his determination or judgment.

A very good example of this is the flood. First, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Gen. 6:5. Then in verse 7, God said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and God gave him a commission to build an ark for his salvation. Noah worked on this boat for about 120 years. After it was completed, Noah and his family boarded and God closed the door. Then the flood came and everything that had life upon the earth, perished in it. One hundred and twenty years before, God “held court” over the wickedness of man. His findings were that they were guilty of gross wickedness and the only remedy was to eliminate the entire population and start over. So he passed the sentence of destruction upon them and they lived with this sentence of death for the ensuing 120 years. Then God executed the Judgment”. That is, he sent the flood. You might well note that God didn’t (have to) call any of them together and read any of their sinful biography to them. His law from the beginning forbade sin, and they had violated, flaunted and rejected that law. God, in his own infinite wisdom and power decided (passed judgment) as to what the consequences would be. The ark for Noah and his family and the flood for everyone else was the execution of that judgment. This principal and this process will hold true down through all history.

Another example is Sodom and Gomorrha, Gen. 18:20-21. God told Abraham of the wickedness of these cities and that he was going there to see if it was as he had heard. So the Lord sent angels, who came to Lot’s house in Sodom and told him of the impending destruction of these cities for their wickedness. The angel had to hasten upon Lot to deliver him before God brought judgment upon them. As soon as Lot was safely out of the city, God rained down fire and brimstone and destroyed the cities and everyone in them. Again, the pattern was that God saw the wickedness; determined the penalty for it and, finally, he executed it. There was no calling of the inhabitants together (good or bad) to read them a list of their sins. God simply executed judgment against them.

The Babylonian captivity was brought upon Judah because of their sins and neglect and rejection of the Lord. Jeremiah and others warned them repeatedly of the coming of this captivity. Jeremiah even told them how long it would be. Finally, the Babylonian army laid siege to Jerusalem; captured, killed, destroyed and plundered the city. The “judgment bar” they faced was the word of God repeatedly telling them of their evil; of impending captivity, and of God’s offer of deliverance. They would not listen to God’s word, so in due course, the judgment was executed.

When the church was established on the day of Pentecost, a multitude of people gathered to witness the phenomenon of the Holy Ghost baptism and to hear the message of the gospel preached by Peter. The Bible tells us that many believed and obeyed. Many more did not. By the power and authority of the gospel and the different reaction of people to it, God judged which ones were saved and which ones were not. In this case as in all others, the word of the Lord is the standard of judgment of good and bad, saved and lost.

The Old Testament prophets on many occasions, warned Judah of the destruction that would come upon them if they persisted in disobedience to God. When Christ came, he gave great details of the destruction of the temple, Jerusalem and the calamities that would come upon the people. Then, in 70 A.D., the Romans, after having besieged the city of Jerusalem for some time, tore down the walls; set fire to the temple; killed or scattered the people, just as they had been forewarned. Again the pattern is the same. God passed judgment on wickedness and disobedience. Then in due course, the judgment was executed.

Let us consider one final example of a single individual. Ahab was about as wicked as a king could be. In his wickedness, he had Naboth falsely accused; stoned to death and then took his property, in particular, his vineyard that Ahab had coveted. While he was on the property, surveying his new

acquisition, the prophet Elijah was sent by the Lord to meet him with a message of judgment. Elijah told Ahab, that in the same place where dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, that they would also lick up the blood of Ahab. I Kgs. 21:19. About 2 years later, Ahab was slain and they washed his chariot in the vineyard of Naboth and there the dogs licked up the blood of Ahab as Elijah had said. He was sentenced by the word of the Lord and shortly thereafter, the judgment was executed.

When a person commits a crime in society, they are tried for their actions. If they are found guilty, the judge will pronounce a sentence against them. Subsequent to this, the sentence is carried out. In the case of a judgment of death, it may be years before it is executed. Thus it is literally true, that the execution of a penalty is, in fact judgment. Therefore, the word judgment may mean the execution of a sentence that has already been rendered. Just as we are already sentenced to death for sin, and ultimately the judgment will come, that is, we will die.

This is how it has been throughout all time. Why should we think it would be any different as God determines if you and I are saved or lost? The real question we want to answer is this: How and when does God decide if we live eternally with him or are eternally rejected by him.

### 3. THE LAW OF GOD WAS VIOLATED IN EDEN.

Gen. 2:16-17. The law of the Lord was clearly explained to Adam along with the consequences for breaking it. From the very beginning the governing rules of life in the garden of pleasure were clearly spelled out. The court of the highest heavens, had declared that they might freely eat of all of the trees of the garden, except one. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not to be eaten or even touched. The consequence for breaking this law was death.

Gen. 3:6, says, that when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband and he did eat. Then and there, the law of the Lord had been broken and the price would have to be paid.

### 4. THE SUPREME COURT IN SESSION.

Gen. 3:8-19. Adam and Eve had broken God's law and they did what anyone guilty of a crime will do. They tried to hide and cover up their guilt among the trees of the garden and by making fig leaf coverings for their exposure. But you cannot hide from the Lord.

God called out to Adam: Where art thou, Adam? Adam responded that he was afraid because he had heard the voice of God. His guilt was chiding his conscience knowing he had violated the commandment God had so clearly given him.

Gen. 3:9-12. God questioned Adam about his conduct. "Have you been eating of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat thereof? The last thing anyone wants to be questioned about is their conduct. What we do is our own business and we should not have to submit to the "opinions" of others, so the reasoning goes. Adam is no different. His response was just like any criminal in court. He had a perfect alibi, he thought. It was not my fault. It was the woman you gave me that gave me this fruit to eat. Gen. 3:13. The woman was also an accomplice in this act of disobedience. She also tried to put the blame elsewhere by accusing the serpent of being the responsible one.

The judge in a natural court is not usually swayed by excuses and alibis. A crime had been committed and Adam and Eve were the only possible perpetrators and the "judge" knew this. They were not freed of their guilt. Instead they faced the "judgment bar" of God's holy word and they were found guilty ---- then and there, ---- not centuries later at some other presumed "judgment day". They were at the bar of justice now. The book (of God's law) was open before them. They were judged out of the things that were "written" in the book. Like Belshazzar of old, they were weighed in the balances of God's justice, and found wanting. Subsequently God, the great judge of

right and wrong, began to describe the judgment that came upon Adam and Eve and the world as a result of their disobedience to the word of God.

Gen. 3:14. First was the judgment that was pronounced upon the serpent. The serpent was condemned to the lowest of life in the world.

V16. The judgment upon the woman, separate from the man was that sorrow would be multiplied upon her. In sorrow she would bring forth children and her husband would rule over her.

V17-19. The judgment upon Adam was severe. Cursed is the ground; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all thy days; thorns and thistles it would spring forth; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread all of thy days. Then God passed the ultimate judgment upon both Adam and Eve. A judgment they had been forewarned of from the very beginning. "Dust thou are and unto dust shalt thou return". Adam and Eve were sentenced to death!

Take them away! Lock them up! Gen. 3:24, Adam was driven from the garden. A sword now guards the entrance to the tree of life in Eden. His freedom is gone! His access to (the tree of) life is gone. The pleasure of the garden is gone. He is an outcast from the society of God, waiting for the execution of the sentence. Gen. 5:3-5. And Adam lived 930 years, and he died.

As we reviewed the verses describing the judgment meted out to Adam, we skipped over V15. This verse is considered by Bible students to be the first promise of God for a substitute for our sins through the coming of Christ and his sacrifice at calvary. In the laws of our state there is a unique provision that gives the highest official of the state, the governor, the prerogative of granting a pardon to a condemned person. Even when a criminal has been condemned to die, under the right circumstances, when the governor decides that the public good will be served and the criminal has been rehabilitated, he can exercise a show of mercy and pardon his crime.

Similarly, even with the sentence of death upon Adam, which he surely deserved, Gen. 3:15, allows a provision in the law where the "governor" can grant a full pardon. And this governor is Jesus Christ and the grounds for granting a pardon to Adam and his posterity are mercy and grace upon the condition of our being rehabilitated to God. How merciful the "judge" was to include in his sentence, a provision that could someday allow his full and complete pardon for the sin he committed.

The verdict of guilty had been rendered. The sentence had been imposed. In due course the judgment was carried out, executed. Subsequently every divine record has concluded Adam was guilty. From that time until now, there is absolutely no question about the guilt or the sentence imposed upon Adam. He had broken God's law; he had been judged for doing so and sentence had been passed. The sentence of death, resulting from his sin, has passed upon all the entire human family. No one has to wait to learn of their innocence or guilt. We all stand guilty and condemned before God. Yes, there is a merciful chance of a pardon, but without that we know what our judgment is.

#### CONDEMNED ALREADY. JN. 3:17-18.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world. It is true that the mission of Christ was not a mission to condemn. He came to save us from the condemnation we were already in, imposed upon us through Adam in the garden. V18, says: He that believeth on Him is not condemned. Additionally, Rom. 8:1, says: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Going back now to Jn. 3:18, we read: "He that believeth not is condemned already". We are already judged guilty and our sentence (of death) has already been handed out to us. We are "locked up" in the prison of our sins, waiting for the execution of the sentence (death). There is only one hope for us at this point: that the "governor" will grant us a pardon. He has decreed that any pardon from our transgressions and sentence of death will be granted only on the terms and conditions of faith in a risen Christ.

#### WE ARE ALREADY JUDGED. ROM. 5:12-19.

Rom. ch. 5, begins: Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Roman (Christians) had experienced a pardon from their sins. No longer were they outcasts, barred from the “garden of God” and the “tree of life”. They (now) have, by faith in the Lord Jesus, experienced a deliverance from the prison of their sins. It isn’t that they have served out their full sentence and thus are set free. Instead, they have been pardoned of the guilt, condemnation and the consequences of all their sin. It is very important to remember that their pardon has a probationary condition attached to it. That condition is faith in Christ. If they abandon their faith, the full sentence is re-instated because they have violated the terms of their pardon and freedom. That is how it is for us today: We say that we are free, pardoned from our guilt and its penalty. But our freedom and pardon is conditioned upon our (continued) faith in Christ. We say that we have (already) passed from death unto eternal life, but it is a conditional life, based upon our continued faith in Christ until such time as he eliminates our dependency upon faith by giving us immortal, never ending life.

Now, to Rom. 5:12-19. V12. By one man (Adam) sin entered the world. The result of this sin was death. This death passed (from Adam) unto all men because that all men (through Adam’s blood) are condemned sinners.

V15. Notwithstanding the fact that through Adam, sin and death has passed upon all men, yet the gift of God’s pardoning grace is made available to all who believe. Through this “grace” there is a mitigating clause in the sentence of death we face.

V16. Through one man, Adam, the sentence of sin and death has brought condemnation upon everyone. Nevertheless, there is the free gift of justification from all offenses through Jesus Christ and his atoning work at calvary.

V17. It is through the offense (disobedience) of Adam that death has passed on to all men by his one sin. In spite of this, if we will, by faith in the gospel, receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, we can reign in life, by the Lord Jesus Christ and his pardon.

V18. Therefore as by the offense of one (by the sin and disobedience of Adam) --- JUDGMENT CAME (in the Garden of Eden) upon all men. The judgment day over the sinful state of man was held in the garden thousands of years ago. We were judged, found guilty and condemned to death through the sin of one man, Adam.

V19. This process of condemnation, through which all men were judged to be sinners as a result of Adam’s disobedience, brought the sentence of death upon all of us. Contrariwise, through obedience (to God’s will) and sinless life, many will turn to God by faith in Christ, and be made righteous, through the life of one man, Jesus Christ.

From Adam came sin, condemnation and death. These 3, sin, condemnation and death, have passed from Adam into the life of every person born in the Adamic family. Call it a biological act or a retributive sentence, or call it both of these if you prefer; the facts are that our nature and bent to sin, along with the resulting death which follows, are conditions that we receive from the procreative process from generation to generation. It is in the blood; it is in the genes, in the DNA of every child born. It is not possible for human begettal to void, by-pass or exclude passing on a sinful, corruptible, mortal nature to us. Human productivity carries with it the judgment of sin and death from Adam to now. This seed of sin is carried in the seed from the father which also is the pro-creator of the blood we have.

#### AN APPOINTMENT WITH DEATH. HEB. 9:27.

Heb. 9:27, reads: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”. This is a central verse of scripture that is used by the proponents of a future judgment bar gathering of all people to be judged and subsequently learn if they are saved or lost. So much has been read into this verse that simply is not there. Let’s examine it carefully to see just what it is teaching us.

Prevailing theology reads this verse to say: “We die and then we are judged”. That is not what it says. Further, proponents of a future judgment bar don’t really mean that after you die, then comes the judgment bar. What they really mean is: After a resurrection comes the judgment event. But the verse says nothing about a resurrection. The verse reads, “it is appointed once to die”. It isn’t

saying that it is appointed to die “some time”. Rather, it is saying, at one time it was appointed that we would die. The action of this verse is “the appointment”, not the death. So when was the appointment with death scheduled? The (only) obvious answer is in the garden of Eden.

The verse of scripture should be read as follows: Once, in time, it was appointed that man should die. Following this (appointment; not following death) the judgment. That is, following the appointment of death, the carrying out of the judgment would occur by Adam’s death. If the “judging” process (of determining our guilt or innocence) has not already taken place (in the garden), then why are we already condemned as sinners and why do we die? There is only one rational answer to the question. The court (of the will of God) has already convened; we are found guilty and the verdict has been rendered. Subsequently, the sentence has been carried out on the entire human family ever since. You do not try someone the second time for the same offense as orthodox theology requires. It teaches that after you die, you are sentenced to a life of bliss or a life of torment. Then, at the last day of time, calling you back from your “eternal abode” (of palace or punishing) you have to stand trial all over again to see if the former judgment was correct. Shall we charge God so foolishly?

We have an “appointment” with death. It was decided in the garden. It is irreversible, except in the case of the “governor’s pardon”. Sin is the reason for the appointment. In Adam we all die. The wages of sin is death. There is no discharge in that war. We are condemned already if we do not believe on the only begotten Son of God (Jn. 3:18). Through one man’s offense, “judgment came upon all men to condemnation”. Rom. 5:18. But to those who believe: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8:1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5:1. Through the wonderful grace of God, the judgment of death has been set aside and we are given (new) life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**NOTE:** There are other passages of scripture that time does not permit to answer here. We shall return to this subject and address the questions other passages raise in the minds of some. We will find them to perfectly harmonize with the view expressed here, that all men were judged in Adam as sinners and sentenced to death.

### **THE FINAL JUDGE OF ALL THINGS.**

In Gen. 2:17, God said to Adam: “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. This was the exact standard by which Adam was judged: the word of God spoken unto him, nothing more, nothing less.

Jn. 12:48, says: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have (*already*) spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. The standard for judging every generation is the word of the Lord given unto us. The Bible is the book, opened before all men of every generation of all time that is the ultimate, final judge of the deeds of every man. Have I committed murder; God’s word will judge. Have I refused the offer of the pardoning grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; God’s word will judge me. The word of God is the standard, the rule, the judge of all men in all things. The past judgments upon the wickedness of societies, such as the Antedeluvians, Sodomites, Israel, apostasy of the dark ages, etc., were all rendered according to thus saith the Lord. No special assembly is necessary. We have the word of the Lord now; it is our judge day by day. Nothing could be added or taken away to that which the word of God commands now, not even if we were assembled together at the last day. How to be saved; how to live your life; how to serve the Lord, all are found in the word of the Lord. This is true whether or not we seek it, know it or desire it. It is the rule of faith for every matter spiritually and no other judge, judgment or record will take its place. God’s word has been there through all past history and it is there today to judge and either free us or condemn us. The “*SEAT*” of divine judgment is at the place where the word of God abides. We are as inexcusable as Adam because God, in his word, has told us what “trees” we can eat of and what “trees” will kill us. Nothing can or will be added to this standard of divine judgment. It is the final judge of all things.

## **THE PROVISION FOR GRACE.**

The standard of judgment, the word of God, mercifully contains a provision of grace, even for the chiefest of sinners. Why is it that orthodox theology only thinks in terms of punishment when they speak of “judgment”. God’s word also judges and metes out mercy and grace. Where else do you go to find out about the wonderful, saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? Throughout the church, one of the worst spirits the church has ever had is that it always wants to shake a finger of condemnation (judgment) at fallen mankind. No doubt we deserve it. But what God wants to do is to provide us the word of faith in Christ that he may use it as the means of judging us worthy (by his grace) of eternal life. Now tell me, when is it that God makes a decision to judge us as being his children? Is it when we believe in the name of Jesus and his saving power, or are we kept completely ignorant of this until some future judgment bar? I believe the answer is that we can, here and now, know that our judgment of death has been lifted, (through the provision of faith) the condemnation of sin has been taken away and the load of guilt is forever removed as long as we remain faithful to God. There is therefore, NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. He that believeth is (now) passed from death unto life. Judgment day is over for us in Him. We have been restored (in Christ) back to the paradise of God (Eden), where Adam first was. We have been given new access to the tree of life. We have the choice (as Christians) to follow the Lord Jesus by faith, or to (again) partake of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thereby void our right to the tree of life. The result of this is death.