

# "Here Comes the Judge"

By Allan Pole



Theme: Jesus is the pivotal figure in heaven's court room.

Text: Hebrews 6:2

Here's a thought: A.W. Tozer advised, "We do well to think of the long tomorrow."

Billy Graham wrote:

A number of years ago I was stopped for driving too fast in a speed zone, and in the courtroom, I pleaded guilty. The judge was not only friendly but embarrassed for me to be in his court. The fine was ten dollars. If he let me go free, it would have been inconsistent with justice. The penalty had to be paid either by me or someone else! Judgment is consistent with love. A God of love must be a God of justice. It is because God loves that He is just. His justice balances His love and makes His acts of both love and justice meaningful.

2,000 years ago, the church had sprung from Jewish roots and was spreading quickly through the city of Jerusalem, the province of Judea and throughout the Roman Empire. A letter to Jewish followers of Jesus, known today as The Book of Hebrews, was written by an unknown author with the intent to lay a foundation of faith for them within the New Covenant.

We join the letter in Hebrews 5:11-6:3:

11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. 6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, 2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of

hands, the resurrection of the dead, and **eternal judgment**. 3 And God permitting, we will do so. NIV

Hebrews 6:2 lists *eternal* judgment as one of the basic or fundamental doctrines for new believers.

Eternal destinies will be decided at:

## **The Great White Throne Judgment**



We waffle in our finite human minds between two extreme views of God, concluding that He is *either* a judge *or* He is merciful. Amazingly and thankfully, He is *both!* Someone has observed, "In Christ, the judgment of God is nonsense apart from His grace, and the grace of God nonsense apart from His judgment."

The great white throne judgment, the final judgment, is described in Revelation 20:11-15:

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. NIV

At the end of the age the books are opened (Revelation 20:12) and they contain records of everyone's deeds, whether they are good or evil, because God knows everything that has ever been said, done, or even thought, and He will reward or punish each one accordingly.

A preacher said to a farmer, "Do you belong to the Christian family?"

"No," he said, "They live two farms down."

"No, I mean are you lost?"

"No, I've been here 30 years."

"I mean, are you ready for Judgment Day?"

"When is it?"

"Could be today or tomorrow."

"Well, when you find out for sure when it is, you let me know. My wife will probably want to go both days!"

Jesus was trying to get through to religious leaders in Matthew 12:33-37:

33 Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned. NIV

What we say is eternally important, because our words reflect what is in our hearts. If we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved (Romans 10:9-10). I shudder to think of what will happen to those who have rejected Christ in their hearts and confessed this with their mouths. These are defining moments when people's eternal destinations – separation from the Lord with eternal torment in hell or paradise with Him in heaven - are decided.

The plan of eternal salvation – the Good News - is summarized in

1 John 5:10-12:

10 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. NIV

We talk about "being guilty by association". Here the Apostle John talks about us "being *innocent* by association". By accepting the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins and by surrendering to Him as Lord we become one with Him. It is not by good works, but by grace we have been saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

It is only through identifying with Christ that we can have our names written in the book of life.

Have you considered how this affects the people around you who do not have the Son? Will you pray for them and ask the Lord how He wants to use you to reach them with His love and Good News?

Eternal destinies will be decided at:  
The Great White Throne Judgment  
**The Judgment Seat of Christ**



The phrase “the judgment seat of Christ” appears in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10:

1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. NIV

As I read about the life of the Apostle Paul in the Book of Acts and the letters that he wrote, I am challenged and inspired by how much he was motivated by eternity. I get the impression that Paul thought about The Great White Throne Judgment and The Judgment Seat of Christ every morning when he got up and these thoughts shaped his priorities each day.

We are called to cease from our own striving and enter into a union with Christ, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30). By being yoked with Christ means that He is the initiator and we are the

responders in His work. It means to walk by the Spirit rather than by the flesh. We think the flesh is just bad words or hurtful actions. Actually, the flesh is self-effort and selfish ambition – a sinful nature which we carry from birth. To walk with God is to watch Him, listen to Him and obey Him. This is a very different idea from what we think is good and religious. This is a call to relationship!

Do you know your judgment day? A man said to his friend, “My grandfather knew the exact day of the year that he was going to die. It was the right year too. Not only that, but he knew what time he would die that day, and he was right about that, too.”

His friend replied, “Wow, that's incredible! How did he know all of that?”

The man explained, “A judge told him.”

We tend to believe that eternal judgment is concerned only with words and actions but even the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts will be judged by the living, active (not the dead and dusty) Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). Let's not forget that man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). No human judge can know a person's heart. You and I cannot know another person's heart. In fact, we can't even know our own hearts well enough to judge ourselves accurately (1 Corinthians 4:3). The perfect judge knows every motive, thought, word and action.

Some people believe that the Great White Throne Judgment and the Judgment Seat of Christ are the same event, while others see them separately. What is most important is to recognize there is a day of reckoning coming for everyone with eternal consequences for those who reject Jesus Christ and eternal salvation for those who accept Jesus Christ. For those who accept Him there are opportunities for rewards. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not about salvation but about rewards.

The Lord has sent His church on a mission. The Corinthian church had lost its way by conforming to the world around them and by comparing leaders with one another rather than fulfilling the tasks in this great mission assigned to each person.

Paul addresses this problem in 1 Corinthians 3:5-15:

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe - as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the

grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. NIV

These words were first written almost 2,000 years ago but they could have been written this week! Jesus Christ is the foundation of what God is building here on earth. It is deeply disturbing to think that well-meaning people – even people called Christians – could do works that will not last – like wood, hay or straw. These are works done apart from abiding in Christ, works done on our own initiative and in our own strength. In contrast, gold, silver and costly stones are works done in fellowship with - and in obedience to - Jesus.

Take a step back – how passionate are you about knowing, walking with and obeying Jesus?

American pastor A.W. Tozer (1897-1963) advised, “We do well to think of the long tomorrow.”

It is critically important that we realize how our short lives here on earth affect life and death beyond the grave.

Use a spool of string to illustrate eternity like Francis Chan does at <https://bit.ly/2qgmBvg>.

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Jesus is the pivotal figure in heaven’s court room.

