

Bite Size Bible Study

Judgement #241

By Lee Logue

Generally, when we think of judgment, especially the final judgement, we think of the punishment aspect of having done something wrong.

There are many aspects of this mode of thinking that color our view of a righteous judgement and ultimately our view of God. We hope that God is going to be merciful to us but that the next guy is going to get his "just" rewards. We may use some of the historical figures to help justify our point of view that certain people should not be forgiven of their actions because what they have done is so heinous that we cannot fathom them ever being worth saving.

Therefore, let us be terrified of the possibility that, even though the promise of entering his rest remains, any one of you might be judged to have fallen short of it; for Good News has also been proclaimed to us, just as it was to them. But the message they heard didn't do them any good, because those who heard it did not combine it with trust. Hebrews 4:1-2 CJB

I think that to some extent everyone is terrified of what may happen to them after they die, even those who doubt that God exists.

We often forget that our righteousness isn't what gains us favor with God, but the righteousness of Jesus. We have all sinned and don't deserve God's praise, but Jesus has never sinned and through His righteousness He has gained us God's favor and praise.

*. . . and it is a **righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah**, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, since **all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise**. By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua.* Romans 3:22-24 CJB

With that in my mind, I was studying the letters Jesus dictated, through an angel and John, to the seven churches in Revelation 2&3. It became clear at these verses could be giving us a view of how Jesus judges, and because Jesus and the Father are one, that would be the way the Father judges us.

So, I would like to take two of the letters and try to show God's pattern of judging.

Letter to Ephesus (an important Messianic community)
"To the angel of the Messianic Community in Ephesus, write: 'Here is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven gold menorahs "I know what you have been doing, how hard you have worked, how you have persevered, and how you can't stand wicked people; so you tested those

who call themselves emissaries but aren't — and you found them to be liars. You are persevering, and you have suffered for my sake without growing weary. But I have this against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Therefore, remember where you were before you fell, turn from this sin, and do what you used to do before. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your menorah from its place — if you don't turn from your sin! But you have this in your favor: you hate what the Nicolaitans do — I hate it too. Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. To him winning the victory I will give the right to eat from the Tree of Life which is in God's Gan-'Eden (Garden of Eden)." Revelation 2:1-7 CJB

First, Jesus commends them on what they are doing well.

I know what you have been doing, how hard you have worked, how you have persevered, and how you can't stand wicked people

You are persevering, and you have suffered for my sake without growing weary.

You hate what the Nicolaitans do. A heretical sect that encouraged idolatry and sexual sins.

Secondly, He explains what they need to correct.

But I have this against you: you have lost the love you had at first. Not strong emotions which will not last, but the zeal for God's ways.

Remember where you were before you fell, turn from this sin, and do what you used to do before.

Thirdly, He explains the repercussions if they fail to make corrections.

Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your menorah from its place — if you don't turn from your sin! Removing menorah envisions not being a part of the functioning Messianic Community.

Note He says nothing about not gaining eternal life, or being condemned.

Lastly, He explains the good things that will happen if they do make corrections.

To him winning the victory I will give the right to eat from the Tree of Life. Meaning eternal life.

Letter to Pergamum (center of worship for pagan deities)
"To the angel of the Messianic Community in Pergamum, write: 'Here is the message from the one who has the sharp double-edged sword: "I know where you are living, there where the Adversary's throne is. Yet you are holding onto my name. You did not deny trusting me even at the time when my faithful witness Antipas was put to death in your town, there where the Adversary

lives. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: you have some people who hold to the teaching of Bil'am, (Balaam), who taught Balak to set a trap for the people of Isra'el, so that they would eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and commit sexual sin. Likewise, you too have people who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore, turn from these sins. Otherwise, I will come to you very soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. To him winning the victory I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone, on which is written a new name that nobody knows except the one receiving it." Revelation 2:12-17 CJB

First, Jesus commends them on what they are doing well.

"I know where you are living, there where the Adversary's throne is.

Yet you are holding onto my name.

You did not deny trusting me even at the time when my faithful witness Antipas was put to death in your town,

Secondly, He explains what they need to correct.

You have some people who hold to the teaching of Bil'am (Balaam), who taught Balak to set a trap for the people of Isra'el, so that they would eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and commit sexual sin (the issue here is taking part in pagan rituals).

You too have people who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. A heretical sect that encouraged idolatry and sexual sins

Thirdly, He explains the repercussions if they fail to make corrections.

Turn from these sins. Otherwise, I will come to you very soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth.

Lastly, He explains the good things that will happen if they do make corrections.

To him winning the victory I will give some of the hidden manna. Hidden Manna suggests Heavenly Provisions.

I will also give him a white stone, on which is written a new name that nobody knows except the one receiving it." White stone could reference to the white stone used for admission or an identification to an order.

New Name could refer to Abram being called Abraham or it could be that in Hebrew the name meant who that person was, i.e. his character. So that they would be given a righteous character to replace their sinful character.

Conclusion

If this is the way Jesus will judge each individual, I don't see any need to be frightened over the White Throne Judgement, or any judgement before that. He even seems like He is anxious for us to change and be the person we were created to be.

He will make sure that we understand what we need to correct and give us the instructions and tools to accomplish that task. He will be urging (not nagging) us on to success and providing assistance through the Holy Spirit. I believe that death will not change this and as Revelation 20:5 intimates that those who die before finishing their change will be raised again to complete the change.

You might like to do a little activity to see where you need to correct your path. Using the 4 lines below fill in what you think Jesus would say about you. Remember that He knows **YOU** and that **YOU** can succeed.

First, Jesus commends YOU on what YOU are doing well.

Secondly, He explains what YOU need to correct.

Thirdly, He explains the repercussions if YOU fail to make corrections.

Lastly, He explains the good things that will happen if YOU do make corrections.

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