

# Judgment Day Surprises

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One of the recurring themes of the New Testament is that of the final accounting that all men must make before their Creator—The Day of Judgment. Jesus described it in some detail (Mat. 7:21–23; 25:31–46). The final New Testament book emphasizes The Judgment near its close (Rev. 20:11–15). Hardly a New Testament book fails to mention it. In spite of the emphasis on this theme, it will prove surprising in many ways:

- **It is real:** All who deny the existence of the true and living God (i.e., atheists, humanists, pagans, et al.) will awaken—too late—to the fact that the Bible was true after all.
- **When it will occur:** No one can know when Jesus will return in judgment (Mat. 24:36, 42). The time of its occurrence will be a surprise to everyone.
- **The purpose of it:** It will not be a trial or a day of inquiry to determine guilt or innocence; the Lord will know who the saved and lost are beforehand (2 Tim. 2:19). It will be a day of sentencing—to eternal punishment or life (Mat. 25:46).
- **The standard of it:** Judgment will not be according to Protestant or Catholic creed books, the religion of one's parents, the decisions of church councils, or the words of the pope or Mohammed. God will judge all by the spiritual law under which they lived. Concerning all who have lived since Calvary, Jesus said, "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).
- **The basis of it:** We will not be judged based on our: (1) **profession** of faith: "Not everyone who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 7:21a), (2) **good intentions:** "When I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me" (Acts 24:25b), (3) **sincerity:** Saul of Tarsus was sincere in his belief that he must oppose Jesus (25:9), (4) **zeal:** Paul said his Jewish brethren had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2), or upon any other bases (e.g., promises, wealth, social standing, parentage, et al.). We will also not be judged comparatively with others.

Our **behavior while we lived** will determine the sentence at The Judgment for each of us. Merely confessing Jesus will not suffice, but all that will matter will be whether or not we have done the "will of the Father" (Mat. 7:21b). Jesus further said that we will give account in The Day of Judgment for our words, which will either justify or condemn us 12:36–37). Paul's words are very specific: "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

It thus behooves us all to live so as not to be unpleasantly surprised.

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