

# JUDGED BY OUR OWN ACCOUNT

By Steven Greene

Website: <https://sabbathreflections.org>

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the book of Matthew is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. A sermon is nothing more than religious instruction but what Jesus said astounded the multitude of people gathered to hear Him. Unlike the Sadducees and Pharisees who taught their own way of **how** to keep the Law, Jesus spoke about things pertaining to a kingdom, judgment, mercy, faith, eternal life, and reward. In short, Jesus taught them the **purpose** of the Law (Hebrews 10:1) and these three chapters capture the fundamentals of God's Kingdom and Law.

In Matthew 5:25-26 we find a parable of a judge and judgment. Although this is a warning against being delivered to a judge by an adversary, it also describes the **process** of judgment. The process of judgment involves a person being brought before a judge who, upon rendering a sentence, delivers the person to someone charged with carrying out the punishment. What is not described is the process of **judging**.

MATTHEW 5:25-26 "Agree with [*be well-intentioned toward*] your adversary [*antidikos*] quickly, while you are in the way with him; lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, there is no way that you shall come out of there until you have paid the very last coin."

**DEFINITION:** *Agree* is used only here in the Bible but it can be misleading because this is about dealing with someone who is an adversary. In the Greek, *adversary* is *antidikos*, which is a compound of two words that mean *against* and *justice*.

Most are familiar with modern day courtroom procedures but they are not representative of the process of how God judges. For the biblical student, the Tabernacle of Witness (Acts 7:44) was the shadow of the heavenly things (Hebrews 8-9). For example, inside the inner sanctum was the mercy seat which was above the ark of the testimony. From this we can easily understand that judgment will be merciful but administered in accordance with the Law.

However, we also see a critical component of God's judgment reflected in the name of both the tabernacle and the ark, that of witness. Witnesses are foundational to God's Law. Notice their role in a murder trial:

DEUTERONOMY 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

This law applies also to the times of God's judgment of the world. In fact, there will be a number of legal witnesses in God's court including the gospel (Matthew 24:14), the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16), and Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5). However, unlike the courts in this country every witness in ancient Israel had an important responsibility placed upon them—they were required help carry out the punishment:

DEUTERONOMY 17:7 **The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death**, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

It is for this reason that Jesus Christ is a witness (Revelation 1:5) because He will be the judge of all (John 5:27; Jude 1:15) as well as the one who carries it out.

When it comes to witnesses, there is one glaring difference between laws in the U.S.A. and those of God's. The laws of this country allow anyone to refuse to testify against their own self. In contrast, there is a statute of God that **requires** testimony to be given. For a case in point, note the prophecy about Jesus Christ given in Isaiah:

ISAIAH 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and **as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.**

What this verse says is critically important. The phrase is “sheep before her shearers” and not “sheep before *shearing*”; meaning His silence was before those responsible for the “shearing”, not to be “sheared”. As prophesied, Jesus was silent before His **accusers** but not before Pilate, who was the Roman governor, because he was not one of His accusers. When Pilate asked him about the charges (Matthew 27:12-14), He became silent again because it would indirectly respond to His accusers. Since His accusers were all Jews, Jesus was also silent before Herod who was a Jew. However, during His trial before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin, the Gospels clearly bear record of Jesus speaking:

MATTHEW 26:57, 59, 62-64 But those who had arrested Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. ... 59 Now the chief priests and the elders and the whole Sanhedrin sought false evidence against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death; ... 62 And the high priest rose up *and* said to Him, “Have **You no answer** for what these are testifying against You?” 63 But **Jesus was silent**. And the high priest answered *and* said to Him, “**I adjure You by the living God that You tell us** if You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 **Jesus said to him**, “You have said *it*. Moreover, I say to you, in the future you shall see the Son of man sitting at *the* right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Jesus broke His silence before Caiaphas, the Jews' high priest, and the reason can be found in the Old Testament book of Leviticus:

LEVITICUS 5:1 And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing [*an oath*], and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of *it*; if he do not utter *it*, then he shall bear his iniquity *punishment*.<sup>1</sup>

This is a statute of God's Law that makes it a sin to refuse to testify if called upon to do so. What did the high priest say to Jesus? "I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God." The word *adjure* means "to exact an oath"; that is to **require a response under oath**. In this case, Caiaphas was appealing to **God** in order to require Jesus to testify. If Jesus had remained silent and refused to speak He would have been guilty of breaking the law! If Jesus Christ was required to testify before the high priest, how much more will we be required to testify before God? Because of this, there will be one more witness in God's court. Ourselves!

MATTHEW 12:36-37 But I say to you, for every idle word that men may speak, they shall be held accountable [*logos*] in *the* day of judgment. For by your words [*logos*] you shall be justified, and by your words [*logos*] you shall be condemned.

Jesus said we will be judged by our **own** accounting of our words and works. Notice the conclusion of the parable of the talents and pounds:

LUKE 19:22 Then he said to him, '**Out of your own mouth I will judge you**, you wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow.

Witnesses have always been an important part of God's Law and His judgment will be based upon witnesses whose testimony is truthful because every person **shall** testify of their decisions, choices, and actions. Interestingly, the Greek word for *judgment* is commonly translated from the Greek word *krisis*. So, biblical judgment is what we call a *crisis*. Those that reject Jesus Christ will discover He is the true Witness that will carry out their sentence of death, bringing a final end to their "crisis".

However, those who are the children of God are being judged today: "For the time *has come* **for judgment to begin with the household of God**; and if it first *begins* with us, what *will be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). True Christians are under judgment in this life according to His word of righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

While our obedience is measured by God through sufferings, He also lays trials upon His begotten children to correct us. This is done in the fullness of His agape love. As it says,

---

<sup>1</sup> Lev. 5:5; 1 Kings 8:31; Prov. 29:24.

“As many as I love, **I rebuke [admonish] and chasten [correct]**. Therefore, be zealous **and repent**.” (Revelation 3:19). As long as we are examining ourselves and repenting of sin, we are without reproach before God and will not fall under the judgment that is coming upon the world:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-32 For this reason, *if* anyone shall eat this bread or shall drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and *the* blood of the Lord. 28 But **let a man examine himself**, and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup accordingly 29 Because the one who eats and drinks unworthily is eating and drinking **judgment to himself**, not discerning the body of the Lord. 30 For this *very* reason, many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many have fallen asleep. 31 **Now if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, so that we will not be condemned with the world.**

In the Bible, the Greek word for witness is *martus*, which is source for *martyr*. God’s children will be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ in that “crisis” day because our testimony will be one of **obedience unto death**. On the day of our resurrection, God will proclaim:

REVELATION 12:11 But **they [the saints] overcame him [Satan]** through the blood of the Lamb, and **through the word [logos = word or account] of their testimony [evidence]**; and they loved not their lives **unto death**.

In the day of judgment, there will be witnesses that reveal the secrets of men:

ROMANS 2:14-16 For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the* law, practice by nature the things contained in the law, these who do not have *the* law are a law unto themselves; 15 Who show the work of the law written in their own hearts, **their consciences bearing witness [summartureoo], and their reasonings [logismos] also, as they accuse [kategoreo] or defend [apologeomai] one another;**) 16 In a day when **God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ**, according to my gospel.

The first half of verse 15 is easy enough to understand. Our conscience is one witness, whether for or against us which is equivalent to the “spirit of man” (1 Corinthians 2:11). To fully comprehend the last half requires a closer look at certain of the Greek words:

**DEFINITIONS:**

*Summartureoo* = testify jointly, that is, corroborate by (concurrent) evidence.

*Logismos* = conceited reasoning. Thayer explains that the intent behind this word is hostile. This agrees with 2 Corinthians 10:5, the only other place it is used, where it is translated imaginations and included with other thoughts that are exalted against God.

*Katagoreo* = to be a plaintiff, i.e., to charge with some offence.

*Apologeomai* = 1) to give an account of oneself; 2) legally to make a plea; 3) by extension, to justify or exonerate oneself.

From this, Romans 2:15 can be understood as:

The Gentiles show the work of the law written in their own hearts because the spirit of man in them testifies, jointly along with their conceited reasoning, against one another; whereby, they accuse one other of offences and try to justify themselves.

Verse 16 affirms that Jesus Christ will be a witness against evil men and, in doing so, will reveal all their secrets. (Also Mark 4:22.)