

## JUDGED BY OUR OWN ACCOUNT

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the book of Matthew is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. 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 on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 “Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

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

Most are familiar with modern day courtroom procedures but they are not representative of the process of how God judges. 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 administered in accordance with the Law but with mercy.

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 “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of **two or three witnesses**; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

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 the first against him to put him to death**, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil 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, the statutes of God 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 was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and **as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.**

What this verse says is critically important. The phrase is “sheep before its shearers” meaning His silence was before those responsible for the “shearing”; i.e., His accusers. 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. However, when Pilate asked him about the charges (Matthew 27:12-14), He became silent again because it would indirectly respond to His accusers who were also present. His accusers were all Jews so Jesus was also silent before King Herod, 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 And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. ... 59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, ... 62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do **You answer nothing?** What *is it* these men testify against You?” 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “**I put You under oath [adjure] by the living God:** Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” 64 **Jesus said** to him, “*It is as you said.* Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

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

LEVITICUS 5:1 ‘If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and *is* a witness, whether he has seen or known *of the matter*—if he does not tell *it*, he bears guilt.

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 put You under oath by the living God.” The KJV translates it *adjure*, which 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 36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account [*logos*] of it in the day of judgment. 37 "For **by your words [*logos*] you will be justified, and by your words [*logos*] you will 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 "And he said to him, '**Out of your own mouth I will judge you,** you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit 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 at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, 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, "**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.** 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 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But **let a man examine himself,** and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks **judgment to himself,** not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 **For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may 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 Day of "Crisis" because our testimony will be one of obedience unto death. On the day of our resurrection, God will proclaim:

REVELATION 12:11 “And they [the saints] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word [logos = word or account] of their testimony [evidence], and they did not love their lives to the death.

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

ROMANS 2:14-16 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness [summartureoo], and between themselves their thoughts [logismos] accusing [kategoreo] or else excusing [apologeomai] them) 16 in the day when God will 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:

*SUMARTUREOO* = testify jointly, that is, corroborate by 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.

*KATEGOREO* = 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.)

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>  
[sabbathreflections@gmail.com](mailto:sabbathreflections@gmail.com)