

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Judgment is something that everyone does everyday, many times without even thinking about it. Judging occurs when determining the best-looking produce in the grocery store, assessing a biblical message, or, a very common one, pointing out the flaws in others. One particular judgment that I dare say is not thought about often enough is God's judgment upon us.

After God rescued the ancient Israelites, He gave responsibility for judging the people to Moses along with some respectable and honorable men to help him:

EXODUS 18:20-22 “And you [*Moses*] shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and **show them the way in which they must walk** and the work they must do. 21

“Moreover you shall select from all the people **able men, such as fear God, men of truth**, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 22 “And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* **every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge**. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you.

God tasked Moses with showing the people “the way in which they must walk.” This phrase is repeated by God to the ancient Israelites over and over and over again¹. It does not say the way they must GO, but the way they must WALK. It reflects the fact that God does not judge people by their intentions but their WORKS—what they actually do. This is because, as I have discussed numerous times, keeping the Law of God requires *doing* good works². This is why God uses that phrase—“the way in which they must walk”—because works are evidence of love and obedience:

DEUTERONOMY 26:16-17 “This day **the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments**; therefore you shall be careful to observe them **with all your heart and with all your soul**. 17 “Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that **you will walk in His ways** and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice.

But the story of the ancient Israelites is a sad tale of constant failure because the people did NOT walk in the ways of God. In a general sense, God spent the first 2,000 years many times directly engaged with mankind—from Adam and Eve down to Noah. The next 2,000 years were more indirect as God interacted through judges and prophets. Still, the story was the same:

¹ A small sampling includes Deut. 5:32-33; 8:6; 11:22; 19:9; 28:9; 30:16; Josh. 22:5; Judg. 2:22; 1 Kings 8:57-58; Jer. 42:3; et al.

² Matt. 25:14-46; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:16; 2 Cor. 9:6-15; Gal. 3:5; 6:2-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 4:15-16, 28; Phil. 2:2, 4, 12-13; 2 Tim. 3:17; Titus 1:16; Heb. 6:1, 10, 14; 10:24; Jas. 1:27; 4:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 2-3; 14:13; 22:12.

JEREMIAH 10:23 O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in himself; **it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps [in the ways of God].**

But today is an age that is quite distinct. Instead of (directly or indirectly) imploring people to obey Him, God has drastically changed how He interacts with people. In the final 2,000 years of mankind, God has put the mind of His Son, Jesus Christ, INSIDE people. This approach is completely different and unique:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:5-10 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has **given us the Spirit** as a guarantee. 6 So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For **we walk by faith, not by sight**. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 9 **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** 10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat** of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Walking in the ways of God is no longer by sight as was the case in the first 4,000 years. Now it is by FAITH which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things **not seen**.” (Heb. 11:1). In these last 2,000 years God commands us to:

GALATIANS 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also **walk in the Spirit.**

Walking IN, *not* BY, the Spirit is powerful; much more so than by sight. Why? Because the Holy Spirit actually influences a person in the core of their being—their heart, mind, and soul. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit CONVICTS the world of **righteousness**:

JOHN 16:5-10, 13 “But now I [*Jesus Christ*] go away to Him [*God the Father*] who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ 6 “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send [it] to you. 8 “And when [it] has come, [it] will **convict the world** of sin, and **of righteousness**, and of judgment: 9 “of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 “**of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more**; ... 13 “However, when [it], **the Spirit of truth**, has come, [it] will guide you into all truth; for [it] will not speak on [its] own *authority*, but **whatever [it] hears [it] will speak**; and [it] will tell you things to come.

Righteousness is keeping the Law of God³. Those without the Holy Spirit are convicted of sin but those with it are convicted of righteousness. What is fascinating about the Holy Spirit in a person it is the motivation to SEEK God in order to *know* “the way in which they must walk.”

³ Ps. 119:172.

PSALM 143:8 Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness [*chesed* = *covenant loyalty and devotion*] in the morning, for **in You do I trust [have faith]; cause me to know the way in which I should walk,** for I lift up my soul to You.

No longer does a person need to seek out a particular leader, judge, or prophet to understand how to love and obey God. Now people are drawn to Him by a Spirit of Love in them. They have the mind of Christ⁴ who IS The Way⁵.

But this also means that there is no judge or prophet to warn people when they deviate from the path to eternal life. But they are still being judged nonetheless. Walking by faith means people with the Holy Spirit in them are still being judged each and every day—it just happens in a more subtle way:

1 PETER 4:17 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?

I do not think everyone with the Holy Spirit wakes up each morning and says, “I am being judged. I need to watch every step I take.” There are many who strive to draw close to God each day but few think about the daily, personal judgment that is upon the begotten children of God:

ACTS 17:30-31 “Therefore, since **we are the offspring of God,** we ought not to think that the [Godhead] is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. 30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, **but now commands all men everywhere to repent,** 31 “because **He [God the Father] has appointed a day on which He [God the Father] will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus Christ]** whom He [God the Father] has ordained. He [God the Father] has given assurance of this to all by raising Him [Jesus Christ] from the dead.”

As in times past, God judges according to works (*walking* in the way):

ROMANS 2:13 (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but **the doers of the law will be justified;**

But His judgment has also been elevated to a higher standard. No longer is it simply works that are judged, but also every word that is spoken:

MATTHEW 12:36-37 “But I [*Jesus Christ*] say to you that **for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.** 37 “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Those who have the Holy Spirit of God inside them are truly blessed. It transforms the heart, mind, and soul of people who can then truly know and follow “the way in which they must walk.” The result is:

⁴ 1 Cor. 2:16.

⁵ John 14:6.

1 JOHN 4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this: **that we may have boldness in the day of judgment**; because as He is, so are we in this world.

The last 2,000 years are unique from the first 4,000 years of God's relationship with mankind. They are also distinct from the next 1,000 years commonly referred to as the Millennium. During that age, God will reign on earth:

MICAH 4:1-2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *that* the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; **He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.**" For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

The people once again be taught directly by God how to walk in His ways⁶. What is different from this present age, however, is that the people will also have teachers who whisper in their ears, reminiscent of the days of the judges and prophets:

ISAIAH 30:20-21 And *though* the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner [*hidden*] anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers. 21 **Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"** whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.

This speaks of "hidden" teachers. Perhaps that is a reference to the Holy Spirit 'hidden' inside people in the last 2,000 years. Who knows? Regardless, people during the Millennium will be taught by God AND the children of God! Until then, our Teacher has placed His mind inside the future children of God so they can truly walk in The Way of our Teacher. With that in mind:

1 PETER 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, **conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear**;

So never forget—every single day is a day of judgment in this life. Even though no one whispers in our ears these days, our "walk" is directed by Jesus Christ Himself whose mind is in us!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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⁶ Also Isa. 2:2-3.