

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The Day of Judgment. There are only two judgments given on that Day—eternal life or eternal death. The hope of those begotten into the Body of Christ is for a judgment of eternal life but all of us should have a healthy amount of fear for the other possible judgment of eternal death. Without it, there is a tendency to forget to “**examine ourselves** [so that] we would not be judged”<sup>1</sup> by God, which was a directive of Paul before partaking of the Passover.

In every part of society there are those who want to control others, usually in unkind ways. That should never be true of those with the Holy Spirit but the reality is that there exists within the *ekklesia* those who **JUDGE AND CONDEMN** others. These are the zealous Defenders of ‘Righteousness’ of the *Order of the Guardians of the Ecclesia* (surely, it must exist) who enforce universal religious compliance by deciding who will be in the Lake of Fire, denouncing the followers of Satan, branding the wicked with Scarlet Letters<sup>2</sup> (where “A” is for antichrist), and exposing Laodiceanism. These denunciations are always accompanied by a demand for repentance; not to God of course, but to themselves so they can weigh its sincerity. They are not being plain-spoken or righting a grave wrong; they are the experts in that special investigation branch of *White Gloves of Righteousness*. As editors of the Book of Life, they have great affinity for striking through names with red pens. Once a violator has been indicted, they ensure that the offense—small or large, real or perceived—becomes a permanent entry in their criminal records. To discourage more unrighteousness, an accounting of each offense is detailed by a tearful, gavel-pounding Presbyter from his elevated judgment pulpit who himself is always the target of their indiscretions. The *Order of the Guardians of the Ecclesia* has apparently been around a long time—Jesus exposed them as those ignorant of the beam<sup>3</sup> of unrighteousness impaled in their eye.

Obviously, this is a facetious description of a very serious matter. Amazingly, these people completely ignore the grave biblical warnings that they are condemning themselves. What warnings? The very plain warnings by Jesus and the apostles found “here a lot and there a lot” that simply say that really, really bad things will happen to those who judge and condemn others. And Jesus should know because He is the only Judge appointed to sit on the bench of the High Court of Heaven:

JOHN 5:22 “For the Father judges no one, but **has committed all judgment to the Son,**

ACTS 17:31 “because He [God] has appointed a day on which **He [God] will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus Christ]** whom He [God] has ordained. He [God] has given [proof] of this to all by raising Him [Jesus Christ] from the dead.”

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 11:31.

<sup>2</sup> Reference to the book *The Scarlet Letter* written by Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1850. “A” was for adultery.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 7:3-5.

As the supreme court Judge of the world, Jesus tells us plainly *how* He will judge:

MATTHEW 7:1-2 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 “For **with what judgment you judge, you will be judged**; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

MATTHEW 12:34-37 “Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 “But I say to you that for every idle [*worthless*] word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 “For **by your words you will be justified [judged as righteous], and by your words you will be condemned [as guilty].**”

The basis for judgment is the spoken word!! Jesus Christ will use our words in which we judge others against us. Paul also gave this warning. In his epistle to the Romans, Paul listed the traits of “ungodliness and unrighteousness”<sup>4</sup>:

[NET2.1+] ROMANS 1:29-32 They [*people of the world*] are filled with every kind of unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice. They are rife with envy, murder, strife, deceit, hostility. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, contrivers of all sorts of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 senseless, covenant-breakers, heartless, ruthless.

While he was describing the unconverted of the world, he next gives one of his most intense reprimands of the *ekklesia*:

ROMANS 2:1-3, 5-9 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, **whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge [try, condemn, punish] another you condemn [sentence] yourself**; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And **do you think** this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that **you will escape the judgment of God?** ... 5 But **in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent [unrepentant] heart you are [storing] up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who “will render to each one according to his deeds”**: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

Paul is clearly addressing the *ekklesia* because he mentions those who will receive eternal life in verse 7. But those of the *Order of the Guardians of the Ecclesia* might say they would never “**practice** the same things” that they condemn others for doing. However, that is not the only criteria. Paul also said that, in addition to hypocrisy, wrath is stored up for those with a hard and unrepentant HEART *and* whose DEEDS

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<sup>4</sup> Rom. 1:18.

are wicked. The judgment they are storing up will change the Day of Judgment into a Day of Wrath<sup>5</sup> and Day of Slaughter<sup>6</sup>, not a Day of Salvation<sup>7</sup> and Day of Redemption<sup>8</sup>. It stuns me that those who pronounce judgments of “You are going to the Lake of Fire” on others can even imagine Jesus Christ later saying to them, “Well *done*, good and faithful servant, ... enter into the joy of your Lord.”<sup>9</sup> Have they not heard that “*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?*”<sup>10</sup> Words MATTER:

MATTHEW 15:18-20 “But **those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.** 19 “For **out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false [testimonies] [lies], blasphemies [evil speakings].** 20 “These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

All of us can know what is in our heart simply by listening to what we say. “Evil speakings” are the result of “evil thoughts.” Jesus mentioned false testimonies (which are simply lies) but blasphemies can refer to anything from disrespectful comments and strong complaints to profanity, cursing, etc. Whatever we say to others—good OR evil—is what we should EXPECT to hear echoed back to us in the Day of Judgment!! However, do not think that eternal death is limited to those who judge and condemn others:

MATTHEW 5:22 “But I [*Jesus Christ*] say to you that **whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.** And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But **whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.**

Jesus Christ said that whoever is merely angry with someone or says they are a fool “**shall be in danger** of hell fire!” *Danger* in the Greek means held liable for or subject to, in this case, eternal death! While this has the caveat “without a cause,” that does not include ‘righteous’ anger that many who are judgmental and condemning like to fall back on (there is no such thing—refer to the article [Righteous Anger](#)). There is only one Judge; so unless your name is Jesus and you were anointed by God, then whatever anger you might feel is not righteous. Scripture says “there is none righteous.”<sup>11</sup> And, since all sin is against God alone<sup>12</sup>, unless you were the Lawgiver at Mount Sinai 4,000 years ago, you have no CAUSE. A much safer approach than anger and name-calling is to judge our own words<sup>13</sup>:

JAMES 3:6, 8-10 And **the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.** The tongue is so set among our members that **it defiles the whole body,** and sets on fire the course of nature; and **it is set on fire by hell.** ... 8 But no man can tame the tongue. **It is an**

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<sup>5</sup> Rom. 2:5; Rev. 6:17.

<sup>6</sup> Jas. 5:5.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. 6:2.

<sup>8</sup> Eph. 4:30.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 25:21, 23.

<sup>10</sup> Heb. 10:31.

<sup>11</sup> Rom. 3:10.

<sup>12</sup> Ps. 51:4.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor. 11:31.

**unruly [unrestrainable] evil, full of deadly poison.** 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and **with it we curse men,** who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

The tongue is a world of INIQUITY. The tongue DEFILES the whole body. The tongue is an UNRULY EVIL. The tongue is full of DEADLY POISON. The tongue CURSES people. Was James wrong? Not in my experience or, I suspect, yours. Who has not been guilty of saying poisonous things?

Jesus Christ revealed that the MINIMUM standard of acceptable behavior is much higher than what most have imagined. In fact, those of the *ekklesia* are liable for, and subject to, a condemnation of eternal death for far less serious offenses. Think I am exaggerating? Then notice this:

**JAMES 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned.** Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Bet you never saw that coming. James warns that merely grumbling or complaining about others can bring a condemnation of eternal death! He was so serious that he added, "the **Judge** is standing at the door!" Who is the Judge? Jesus Christ. What door? The door to eternal life<sup>14</sup>! If that door is not open, then the only alternative is the door to eternal death. Does all of this give you a new appreciation for the incredibly HIGH STANDARD of agape love that God requires both in words and deeds??

What about being around those who judge and condemn, get angry, are insulting, call people names, grumble and complain, or the myriad other sins like slander and gossip? Can anyone be sure they are immune to their influence? Perhaps it is time to reconsider fellowshiping with such people:

2 TIMOTHY 3:2-5 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors [*treacherous*], headstrong [*reckless*], haughty [*conceited*], lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness [*maintain the outward appearance of religion*] but denying its power. And **from such people turn away!**

Avoiding people who cause divisions and offenses<sup>15</sup> can be a matter of salvation. This is particularly true if a minister is doing it. Elders are warned, "**do not lord it over** those entrusted to you, but **be examples [of Jesus Christ]**<sup>16</sup> **to the flock**"<sup>17</sup> and exemplify the agape love of God. Those with destructive influences will receive a harsher judgment:

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<sup>14</sup> John 7:1-15.

<sup>15</sup> Rom. 16:17.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Pet. 2:21.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Pet. 5:3.

JAMES 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we **shall receive a stricter judgment.**

I cannot imagine what kind of judgment is harsher than that given to the laity but I doubt that James was overstating it. Any elder who judges and condemns (especially publicly), gets angry, insults others, calls people derogatory names, or simply grumbles and complains is NOT leading people to salvation. It does not matter how much of 'the truth' he thinks he knows; such a man is not on the path of righteousness. These angry elders and those of the laity are both storing up the wrath of the living God in the Day of Slaughter. The important question is who will blindly follow after them. The Bible gives details about thoughts and words that fill the hearts and mouths of those growing in agape love:

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, **whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report [commendable], if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate [think] on these things.** 9 The things which **you learned and received and heard and saw in me,** these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Notice verse 9—these virtues are what Paul TAUGHT the *ekklesia*. They are what every elder should be teaching and exemplifying and what every lay member should be doing! The true measure of an elder and everyone begotten by God is whether they are striving to lead lives that are pure, lovely, just, commendable, virtuous, and praiseworthy and are mindful of the needs of brethren. Paul said, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ."<sup>18</sup> He did not say to *follow* him, as the KJV wrongly translates it. He said to *imitate* his words and deeds AS he imitates Christ. Those who judge and condemn, get angry, are insulting, call people names, or merely grumble and complain are NOT imitating Christ—they are storing up words of judgment and condemnation for their Day of Wrath and Day of Slaughter! For everyone else, "imitate [all] those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."<sup>19</sup> For them, their treasure is the agape love of God that awaits in their Day of Salvation and Day of Redemption!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor. 11:1.

<sup>19</sup> Heb. 6:12.