

Since death seals man's fate, why is there a judgment day?

February 2, 2024



Bob Prichard

Topic(s): Death, Eternity, and Judgment

Numerous times the Scriptures refer to the day of judgment, the day of the Lord, or the day of Christ. On that day, the Lord will judge all mankind. Paul wrote, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Recording his heavenly vision, John described the scene: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12).

Jesus described the scene as a great division between the sheep and the goats: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he

shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:31-33).

Many think of the great judgment day in terms of a trial, in which God weighs a person's good and bad deeds in the balance, but instead it is more a day for God to render final judgment, or give the final sentence for eternity. The vision of Revelation 20 describes it as the opening of the book of life, and other books describing the works of men.

The ultimate question of the day is: "Whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life?" That is all that will really be important that day. Those with their names in the Lamb's book of life will rejoice as the Lord says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). Those on the left will hear the awful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). And, "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

Death settles the issue of judgment. God judges every man according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). The idea of changing a person's eternal fate after death due to suffering in an intermediate state is foreign to Scripture. There is no second chance!

Jesus described the fate of a rich man, and the beggar Lazarus outside his gates. Both the rich man and Lazarus were in the realm of the dead, in preparation for the last great judgment day, but the rich man was in torment and Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom.

In torment, the rich man cried for Lazarus to come to comfort him, but Abraham said, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence"(Luke 16:24-26). All of us will stand before God's throne someday. We must be prepared. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (2 Peter 3:10). He enters our names in the book of life when we obey His gospel.