

A Brief Outline of Things to Come

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Chapter Ten -

DOOMSDAY - Theodore H. Epp

DOOMSDAY is a word which is very commonly, yet very thoughtlessly used. Often it is employed to designate unlimited time. It is very possible that Satan may have something to do with the common use of this word, for certainly he would like to have people remain unconscious of the certainty of the judgment that is not too far in the future. One can clearly see, then, that if Satan inspires the careless use of such a word in our everyday language, soon men will become unconscious of the reality of coming judgment.

But the fact remains that judgment is sure for the unsaved and that it cannot be far in the future. **"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Hebrews 9:27). The final judgment for the unsaved is described in Revelation 20:11-15.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And 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. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

In many churches as well as modernistic circles much teaching has been set forth to make people believe that there is to be only one great general judgment, at which time all men will stand before CHRIST and will be separated as the sheep are from the goats. Much of this false interpretation of GOD's judgment plans is based upon a complete misunderstanding of Matthew 25:31-46.

It is necessary that we read this passage with care and note that it does not mean a general judgment of all people. The Scriptures plainly teach that the basis for separating true believers from unbelievers will be the Blood of JESUS CHRIST and that men will be judged according to the Gospel. Matthew 25:31-46 does not mention the Blood and atonement at all. Therefore, it does not refer to a judgment which separates sinner from saint.

It is well to understand that there are several great judgments-seven of which we shall enumerate.

1. Man was first judged and sent out of the Garden of Eden because of failure and sin. Today we are still reaping the results of this judgment. The record is found in Genesis 3:14-24.

2. The most important judgment preceding the one recorded in Revelation 20 is that of the judgment of sin upon Calvary. It was here that GOD, having placed sin upon CHRIST, judged Him for our sins.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:21-24).

3. Another judgment which is not very well understood by many is the judgment of the conduct of the believers.

This is known as self-judgment and is described in I Corinthians 11:31-32. **"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."**

It is, therefore, important that a man examine himself and, upon finding sin in his life, confess it to GOD and keep communion and fellowship clear. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (I John 1:9).

4. Israel, GOD's elect, will pass through Great Tribulation, which is a judgment specially designated for them to bring them, as a nation, back to their GOD and Father. A description of this judgment may be found in Ezekiel 20:33-38.

5. The believer will also be judged for his works at the appearing of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. **"For 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"** (II Corinthians 5:10).

The basis of this judgment is described in I Corinthians 3:10-15: **"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."**

The believer will not come into the judgment of condemnation, since his judgment for condemnation has been taken in the person of JESUS CHRIST, as is mentioned in the second

judgment; but the believer will meet CHRIST and will be judged according to his works done in the flesh during the time of his sojourn on earth as a child of GOD.

6. Another judgment which is of great importance is that of the living nations (Gentiles). This is described in Matthew 25:31-46. At the end of the Tribulation judgment the remaining Gentiles will be called before a special throne on which JESUS will sit upon this earth. They will be judged on the basis of their treatment of GOD's people, Israel. Genesis 12:2,3 states that GOD will either bless or curse the nations, depending upon how they treat His people, Israel. This will be fulfilled in the judgment described in Matthew 25.

7. The final judgment is often referred to as the Great White Throne judgment, or as we have chosen to call it, doomsday. This is described in Revelation 20:11-15. This judgment has to do with all who have rejected the LORD JESUS CHRIST as Saviour during their lifetime on earth. It is, therefore, designated as the judgment of the dead.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

In the Great White Throne judgment truth and justice will meet sin and rejection. It is known as GREAT because it is here that the Almighty Power will be seen. Men have scorned and ridiculed the powers of GOD, but at the Great White Throne these powers will be manifest to those who have rejected CHRIST during their lifetime. It will be great because of the vast crowds that will be there.

Possibly at no other place in all time or eternity will such great crowds meet in one place.

First of all, every rejecter of CHRIST, from the time of Adam until the final person who will have rejected Him during his life on earth, will be there. All the evil angels, including Satan and his hordes, will be present. The angelic hosts will also be present with CHRIST. Then all the saints who have believed and have become members of the Body of CHRIST will be with Him. In other words, every creature in Heaven, in earth, and under the earth will be present. CHRIST himself will be upon the throne.

This judgment is also known as great because of the occasion, for it is here that the eternal consequences will be determined. Eternal separation from GOD will be the result for all who have rejected His salvation in the days when they lived on earth. Furthermore, this judgment is great because of the dignity of the Judge.

He who was despised and rejected will then appear in all the dignity and majesty of the Godhead. Furthermore, it is great because it involves the salvation that has been offered.

Never in all the annals of history have we seen such a salvation offered to any man or being as that which was offered by GOD through His Son JESUS CHRIST at a cost which we will never understand until we see Him.

It is known as the Great White Throne. The word white speaks of the holiness and purity of the Judge. There will be no politics or juggling of facts there, for the one and only true, holy, pure One will be the judge. Furthermore, white speaks of righteousness - the righteousness of the

judgment - for men will at that time receive that which they have deserved. Their judgment will be absolutely righteous. White also contrasts greatly with the blackness of sin.

It is called the Great White Throne. Let us contrast three of the great thrones that are mentioned in the Scriptures, so that we may distinguish between them.

1. The Eternal Throne of GOD. It is from this throne, located in Heaven, that He governs the whole universe.

"And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne" (Revelation 4:2).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Revelation 22:3).

2. The Throne of His Glory. This throne is mentioned in Matthew 25:31 and is a temporary throne which will be located on earth immediately after the Tribulation. It will be the throne upon which CHRIST will sit to judge the living nations, or Gentiles, just before the kingdom period begins.

3. The Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11). This is the third and final great throne of a judge. It is a judicial throne; it is temporary and for a very special purpose. It is located neither in Heaven nor on earth, for verse 11 states that both Heaven and earth will flee from the presence of His face. Therefore, it must be located somewhere in the middle of the universe. This is not a throne of His mercy, but a throne of final judgment.

Isaiah describes a throne that had an altar beside it, where Blood may have been offered for atonement. But there is no altar beside the Great White Throne. Sin will be naked and exposed to all. There will be no Blood to plead.

THE JUDGE

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Revelation 20:11).

Who is this judge from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away? GOD reveals that all judgment is placed in the hands of the Son: **"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"** (John 5:22). **"And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead"** (Acts 10:42).

The once nail-pierced hands will here carry the scepter of authority; and the once thorn-crowned head will carry the crown of glory, majesty, and power. The One whose face was described as so marred that men fled from Him will now outshine the sun, and the atmospheric heavens and the

earth will Hee from His presence.

A further description may be found in II Peter 3:10:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

He who once was the Saviour has now become the Judge. This was foretold in Philippians 2:6-11.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant: and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

DOOMSDAY

He who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son will exercise His wrath because of the love that has been spurned. **"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"** (John 3:36).

Daniel gives us another picture of this great Judge and His throne:

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9, 10).

We also find that the angelic hosts and the saints will be accompanying the LORD JESUS CHRIST at this great judgment. A further word concerning these may be found in I Corinthians 6:2,3:

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

THE JUDGE

"And I saw the dead[^b]" (Revelation 20:12). The Scriptures reveal that there art three different kinds of death: physical death, which is cessation of life in this body; spiritual death, which is the absence of the life of GOD in man; and the second death, which is the eternal, everlasting

separation of man (body and soul) from GOD.

The dead spoken of in this passage before us are the spiritually dead, who were dead in their trespasses and sins and who remained dead because they had not received the life that was offered them; therefore, they are the ones to be judged and condemned to a second death.

There will be "**small and great**" sinners. All ranks of unsaved people - the high and the low, the respected, the outcast, the young, and the old-will stand face to face with Him whom they have rejected. There will be no hiding place. No caves or mountains will cover them or their sins from Him who will come to judge. This judgment will be in mid-air, and all of the unsaved ones will stand before Him in special, resurrected bodies given to them for this particular occasion.

They will be raised unto everlasting shame, according to Daniel - a shame which is now lacking - for sin will then be most prominent.

In most circles today, unless men fall into gross sin, the average sin is passed off without any shame. But there will be plenty of shame at that time. It will be a resurrection unto damnation, for the wrath of GOD will abide on them forever.

We note how carefully GOD designates the places from which these dead come. Revelation 20:13: "**And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.**"

The body and the soul of the unsaved will be reunited for this great judgment. The bodies may come forth either from the sea, where many bodies are buried today, or from the graves.

The word translated "**death**," referred to in this passage, speaks of the graves, or the dust of the earth. From the ashes the bodies will come forth. The word translated "**hell**" in verse 13 is taken from the Greek word hades, which means "**the abiding place of the soul of the dead.**" The souls will come forth from Hades, whereas the bodies will come forth from either the sea or the grave or where ever they may have been laid or destroyed.

THE JUDGMENT

According to this passage in Revelation 20:12, the books will be opened. GOD has kept a perfect record of all acts, deeds, opportunities and privileges rejected, etc. He does not need the books for Himself, for He never forgets; but He needs them as proof to the individual who will stand before Him. The books will be opened and, no doubt, man's understanding will be such that he will remember that what is recorded in the book is absolutely true. He will be without excuse.

He will be startled, of course, to find that sinful thoughts, words, and deeds committed in secret will suddenly come out into the open. In Numbers 32:23 we read: "**Be sure your sin will find you out.**" Men would love to hide all of their deeds in darkness, but the darkness is light to GOD. It hides absolutely nothing.

Proverbs 28:13 says: "**He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.**"

Nothing can be covered before Him, for in that day the sins of the mind will also be exposed. Men may have considered themselves to be sinless, or nearly so; yet we are told in I John 3:15 that "**whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.**" If there has been hate and malice in a man's heart toward a brother, GOD will have recorded it in the books and established that he is a murderer.

We look with horror upon the sin of adultery, yet very few will find themselves to be free from that sin. Matthew 5:27, 28 makes it very plain that "**whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**" It is, therefore, not only the act of sin that will be judged in that day but also the sins of the heart. No one will be able to stand against the sure record of GOD.

Paul says that judgment will also be according to his Gospel (Romans 2:16). "**In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**" John 3:18 says that "**he that believeth not is condemned already.**"

The Gospel is simply the good news that there is salvation in CHRIST JESUS - sin having been put away through His death. By His resurrection He is able to justify us and become our life. "**He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**"

Actually the judgment will center around the fact that men who stand in this judgment to be judged are the ones who have rejected the offer of salvation.

According to the privilege, opportunity, and knowledge that they have had, they will be judged. Men who have attempted to cleanse their own lives and by a moral life attain eternal life will find themselves judged. First John 1:7 tells us that the Blood of JESUS CHRIST "**cleanseth us from all sin,**" and Hebrews 9:22 says that without the shedding of Blood there is no remission of sin.

Some of the details of the judgment are left out, but we have indications that there will be degrees of judgment based upon the knowledge and the opportunity that the persons have had and have rejected. Several passages of Scripture indicate this very plainly. Read carefully Romans 2:11-14:

"For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.)"

The indication is very clear here that all who have rejected CHRIST will pass into eternal death, or separation from GOD.

In some way or another GOD will mete out righteous judgment. This will not be in terms of years, for we are told that the judgment is eternal. This is plainly indicated in Matthew 11:22-24.

"But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

In Luke 12:47, 48 we find this: **"And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."**

What is meant by this degree of judgment, we are not told in the Scriptures. The only thing of which we can definitely be sure is that a righteous GOD will deal righteously and justly with all sin. That the judgment is eternal we have already seen and established. Chapter 20 of Revelation makes this very plain. How the degrees of judgment will be meted out can be known only in the future.

This judgment is known to end in the second death.

The second death is the eternal, everlasting separation of man from GOD. Man will be cast into a literal, burning Hell, where he must remain for eternity, never again to have the privilege of seeing GOD or knowing His wonderful mercies. **"[And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire]"** (Revelation 20:14,15).

How can we escape this judgment?

First, we must be identified with CHRIST, for CHRIST is this eternal life. **"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."** We are given the privilege of becoming the children of GOD by receiving CHRIST[/b]" (John 1:12). **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."**

By being identified with Him, and having accepted Him, we receive everlasting life. **"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"** (John 11:25, 26). Man's basis for this eternal life is faith, for CHRIST says plainly, **"Believest thou this?"**

Only in this life do we have the opportunity of receiving CHRIST and becoming the sons of GOD. **"He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"** (Proverbs 29:1). **"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"** (Hebrews 2:3).

There will be no opportunity for a person to accept CHRIST after this life. It is now or never! If you are not a child of GOD, accept Him as your Saviour today.

~ end of chapter 10 ~