

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

THERE'S A GREAT DAY COMING

Acts 24:24-25

Four hundred seventy soldiers took Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea, a distance of about 70 miles. The whole company stopped at Antipatris where 400 returned to Jerusalem; the 70 horsemen continued to take Paul to Caesarea. Those in the cavalry went on with Paul and presented Paul with the letter from Lysias to governor Felix.

Felix had been named procurator of Judaea about 52 A.D. He was a scoundrel by all accounts. Guilty of murder, and all sorts of immoral deeds. History presents him as one of the most depraved men of all time.

He came with his wife Drusilla to hear Paul speak. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I. Her father murdered James, her great-uncle Herod Antipas slew John the Baptist, her great-grandfather, Herod the Great, killed the babes of Bethlehem. Her brother Agrippa II gave her in marriage to the king of Emesa, Aziz. The young queen was only about 16 when Felix, with the help of Atomos, a Cypriot magician, persuaded her to leave her husband and marry him. She was the third wife of Felix.

Paul's message was straightforward and to the point. What he said was aimed at the two principal subjects in the audience that day.

"Nothing could be more terrifying than to speak of righteousness to a man of such iniquity; of temperance in all things to a man of such unbridled lust; or to drive home what was said on these topics by depicting the judgment to come." (McGarvey)

"As he glanced back over the stained and guilty past, he was afraid. He had been a slave in the vilest of all positions, at the vilest of all epochs, in the vilest of all cities. He had crept with his brother Pallas into the position of a courtier at the most morally degraded of all courts. He had been an officer of those auxiliaries who were the worst of all troops. What secrets of lust and blood lay hidden in his earlier life we do not know; but ample and indisputable testimony, Jewish and Pagan, sacred and secular, reveals to us what he had been--how greedy, how savage, how treacherous, how unjust, how steeped in the blood of private murder and public massacre during the eight years which he had now spent in the government, first of Samaria, then of Palestine. There were footsteps behind him; he began to feel as though the earth were made of glass." (Farrar, Life of Paul)

So it is with all who face the Judgment of God unprepared.

I. Judgment, A Day of Greatness.

A. The greatness of the Judgment, in no way denies or overlooks the fact that there have been many great days in the history of God's dealing with man.

Each twenty-four hour period of that eventful first week in Gen. 1 and 2 was a great day.

A great day when Noah and his family entered the ark.

When Abraham ascended the mountain to offer Isaac his son as a sacrifice to God.

When Moses and Israel marched triumphantly from Egypt's oppression and tyranny, crossing the Red Sea under God's guidance.

When God gave Moses the decalogue from the summit of shaking Sinai.

When Joshua led the people across the swollen Jordan into the promised land.

When Gabriel, the heavenly messenger, was dispatched from the Palace of the Universe to despised and insignificant Nazareth of Galilee to inform the Galilean maiden Mary that she was heaven's choice to be the very virgin spoken of in Isa. 7:14.

When, on the brutal brow of Calvary, the sinless Son of God, died for the sins of the world.

When, on that now historic first day of the week, our crucified Lord, became our resurrected King.

When, on the day of Pentecost, the church was established in Acts 2.

But, what a day, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1Thess.4:16-17)

B. Why Will This Be Such A Great Day?

1. The Judge Will Be Great. Not man, not a Roman emperor, or earthly king. But Jesus the Son of God.

Think of those who spent their lives, denying that Jesus ever lived.

Those who admitted he lived, but never ascribed to him divinity.

Those who acknowledged him as the Son of God, but never allowed Him to influence their living.

"For the father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son..." Jno.5:22

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divided the sheep from the goats..." Mt.25:30-31

Acts.17:30-31 "...commandeth all men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed a day in which he will..."

2. The Standard Will Be Great. --The Word of God.

The bible doesn't mean much to the masses today. They view it only as only a human compilation of man's search for a mysterious object he calls God.

Even many religiously oriented people have paid little attention to the Bible.

Righteousness will determine the standard of Judgment. "All thy commandments are righteousness." (Psa. 119:172)

"He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day."

3. The Audience Will Be Great.

Who will be at the Judgment?

Jesus in Mt. 11:20-24 declared that "Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon would all be at the Judgment. "And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, will 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."

"All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ..." Rom. 14:10

"All appear before the judgment seat of Christ..." 2Cor. 5:10

"I saw the dead small and great standing before God..." Rev. 20:12

II. Judgment, A Day of Brightness.

1. A day of brightness for all who have prepared for the Lord's return. The brightness will be exhibited by the wonderful words the triumphant Saviour will express that day.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.... Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Mt. 25:21)"

2. It will be a bright day because of what will be revealed about the Messianic Master they have served, and the divine nature of the Christian religion that has espoused their earnest energies and deepest devotion while on earth.

"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

Judgment will vindicate fully the Christians faith, hope, and love and exhibit to an entire assembled universe that every opposition to Christ was misplaced and every objection to Christianity was totally unwise.

On that day, it will be seen that He is worthy of universal admiration, for having redeemed the church. He shall then be admired or glorified in his people:

1. for having conceived the plan of redeeming them,
2. for being willing to become incarnate, and to die to save them,
3. for the defense of his church in all its persecutions and trials,
4. for raising his people from the dead,
5. for the virtues and graces which they will exhibit in that day.

"This appropriate honor of Christ in the church has never yet been fully seen. His people have been comparatively few in number, and scattered upon the earth. They have been poor and despised. Often they have been persecuted, and regarded as the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things. The honours of this world have been withheld from them. The great have regarded it as no honour to be identified with the church, and the proud have been ashamed to be enrolled among the followers of the Lamb. In the last day all of this will be changed, and the assembled church will show to admiring worlds how great and glorious is its Redeemer, and how glorious was the work of redemption."
Albert Barnes.

The Bible will be vindicated as the word of God.

The Church will be fully vindicated in that day as being in holy harmony with all the bible claims.

What a day of brightness it will be.

III. Judgment, A Day of Sadness.

Sadness is no stranger to this world. There have been many sad days since the beginning of time.

It was a sad day when Adam and Eve were banished from the excellencies of Eden and compelled to enter a world that would reluctantly yield to them a meager living.
When Sodom was destroyed because of her sin, and Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt.
When Israel turned from God at Sinai and worshipped a golden calf.
When the one hundred twenty year old Moses scaled the summits of a Moabite mountain and from Pisgah's peak surveyed Canaan's enticing land and yet was not permitted to set foot upon its sacred soil.
When David lusted after and committed adultery with the bathing beauty Bathsheba.
Judas Iscariot, one of the chosen twelve, sold the innocent blood of Jesus, for silver.
When Ananias and Sapphira lied to God, sought to deceive the apostles, and made mockery of their religion.
When Demas forsook Paul for the love of the world.

But, the saddest day of all for humanity will occur when the wicked are raised to the resurrection of deadly damnation. (Jno. 5:28-29)

The day the unrighteous are placed on the left hand of Jehovah's presiding Judge of the living and dead. (Mt.25:41

It will be a sad day when those unprepared to meet God hear "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Mt.7:23 "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels..." Mt.25:41

The verdict of eternal damnation will be sad. The ring of finality will characterize every syllable of the penetrating pronouncement.

No higher court will review or rescind this irrevocable decree.

Only one way tickets will be available for those who make their last journey.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE JUDGMENT DAY?