

The Great Judgment Morning

There is a day coming that some people like, some are dreading, and some could care less! This is the great Judgment Day – a day that will really happen. Hebrews 9:27 states that the Judgment Day will happen! There is a song recorded, among others, by Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys that goes by the name, “The Great Judgment Morning.” Written by Bertram H. Shadduck and Leander L. Pickett in 1894, it has appeared in numerous songbooks and been recorded countless times; this simple yet powerful song contains four verses and a refrain.

*I dreamed that the great judgment morning/ Had dawned, and the trumpet had blown;/
I dreamed that the nations had gathered/ To judgment before the white throne;/
From the throne came a bright, shining angel,/ And he stood on the land and the sea,/
And he swore with his hand raised to Heaven,/ That time was no longer to be.*

Verse one talks about the judgment itself. It is important to note that all the events of this song are a dream. Today we know that God does not communicate through the use of dreams but instead through His completed Word – II Timothy 3:16-17. Since the Word of God is “perfect,” we have no need for any other source of information from God. Notice that all nations have gathered for the judgment. All will be judged because the “blessed Gospel is for all!” Paul writing to the Romans stated that the Gospel is the “power of God unto salvation, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to **every one** that believeth” (Romans 1:16, emphasis mine), meaning Jesus died for all and “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). Lastly, Romans 14:10 states “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” The final line of the verse states that time is no longer an issue; the dead cannot go back to Earth and try to do the right thing.

*The rich man was there, but his money/ Had melted and vanished away;/
A pauper he stood in the judgment,/ His debts were too heavy to pay;/
The great man was there, but his greatness,/ When death came, was left far behind!/
The angel that opened the records,/ Not a trace of his greatness could find.*

The second verse teaches that riches do not help. At the judgment there is a great reversal of roles: the rich are no longer rich just as the poor are no longer poor. The rich in this world are poor in the judgment and possessions on Earth do not mean everything! Our Savior stated, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). It is also important to note that one cannot buy their way into Heaven. There is a false belief going around that one can sin as much as they want to and go to Hell and burn these sins away until they are ‘worthy’ to enter Heaven. There is one problem with this idea of Purgatory – **the Bible does not teach this idea!** If the Bible does not teach it, why believe it? Simon the Sorcerer learned he could not buy his way into Heaven in Acts 8:18-23. He pleaded with Peter to give him the Holy Ghost so he could make a profit off of this gift. The lesson he had to learn was riches cannot buy the grace of God. If that were true, no one could afford it – it cost the only perfect person to walk this Earth’s death on the cross to earn our salvation. One final thought on this verse is that death is the great equalizer. God truly is “no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34), and will, therefore, judge everyone equally, according to His Words (John 12:48).

*The widow was there with the orphans,/ God heard and remembered their cries;/
No sorrow in heaven forever,/ God wiped all the tears from their eyes;/
The gambler was there and the drunkard,/ And the man that had sold them the drink,/
With the people who gave him the license,/ Together in hell they did sink.*

The third verse of the song teaches that those that are often neglected on Earth will not be neglected on the Judgment Day. On Earth, sometimes the widows and orphans are often overlooked; that is not true in the eyes of God. In his general epistle, James wrote, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). It is a command for us in Scripture to take care of the widows and orphans. Period. That is the Word of God! Notice that on that Day, God wipes the tears from their eyes – showing His ultimate compassion. Faithful Christians know that they must have the confidence that when praying, God hears what is happening – "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John 5:14). In Heaven, there will be no need for tears because all the things that cause tears will be gone. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). Examine, though, who else will be there. Not only the sinner (in the case of the song, gambler and alcoholic) but also the one that permitted the sin (in the song, the one that sold the drink and the license) is also there. Jumping down from the comforting verse in Revelation 21, verse 8 provides a list of sinners that will be there: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Going down the list, some terrible things are mentioned; there is a catch-all to the list: "and all liars." God, as already mentioned, is no "respector of persons" and also sees all sins as equal.

*The moral man came to the judgment,/ But self-righteous rags would not do;/
The men who had crucified Jesus/ Had passed off as moral men, too;/
The soul that had put off salvation,/ "Not tonight; I'll get saved by and by,/
No time now to think of religion!"/ At last they had found time to die.*

The final verse in the song illustrates the Biblical truth that no one can escape the judgment. The "good" and the "bad" are present – even those men some 2000 years ago that crucified our Savior on the cross are present. Everyone is there, it will be a "who's who" of people for certain. There is a bone chilling thought, however, mentioned at the end of the song. Too many people have said the same words and faced the same end. Honestly, one person to say that is too many. There are two men mentioned towards the end of the book of Acts that sadly said the same sentence. Felix, in Acts 24:24-27, was preached to by Paul and he was visibly moved by the message; "And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (verse 25). Sadly, there is no Biblical record of this 'more convenient time.' Agrippa, in Acts 26:28, was also preached to and stated, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." To be almost persuaded is to be almost lost in his current state. Why would someone want to delay the most important decision of their life? They would not want to delay a not-as-important decision yet they put off obeying the Gospel. As the invitation song so truly states, "Tomorrow may be too late!"

*And, oh, what a weeping and wailing,/ As the lost were told of their fate;/
They cried for the rocks and the mountains,/ They prayed, but their prayer was too late.*

The refrain of the song tells of the chilling fate of the unprepared on the day of judgment. They will be like those mentioned in Revelation 6:16, "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." On the day of judgment, even the most beautiful prayer for help will be too late!

Do not be afraid, the Judgment Day is coming. Instead of dreading it, be ready and excited for it to happen. (It will happen whether one wants it to or not!) Be prepared and not live in fear of the Judgment Day!

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