

# There Will Be Justice

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## Introduction

There were two interesting stories in the news this past week. I consider them related, in a way. Before I explain my take on these two stories, and make some application from the Bible, let's discuss them for a few minutes. The first story concerned the death of the lawyer, Johnnie Cochran. The second story concerned the death of the handicapped woman, Terri Schiavo. Let's discuss.

DISCUSSION - What thoughts come to your mind when you think of these two stories? In what way(s) might these stories be related.

These two events of the past week led me to today's topic, because they both resonate with injustice. Rightly or wrongly, Johnnie Cochran was a lawyer that, to many people, is synonymous with injustice. The death of Terri Schiavo ended a chapter in our country's history that is filled with questions of right and wrong, just and unjust.

This world is filled with injustice. Why, for example, is it ok for Bill Gates to have so much wealth that his personal income recently had to be excluded from the national averages to avoid skewing the numbers, while others live in poverty and despair? In my most current issue of "Israel My Glory" (excellent magazine, by the way), the cover shows a couple who obviously are in poverty. They are dressed in rags and standing in the doorway of a shack that looks like it is barely able to remain upright. The implication is that this is their home. The caption is a quote from the prophet Jeremiah who says, "*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?*" (*Lamentations 1:12*) Poverty, pain, despair, and yes, INJUSTICE are everywhere. Events such as happened this past week only serve to remind us of that which we already know.

But the question begs to be answered, will there ever be justice? How can all the wrongs be righted? How can the right ever win when the wrong is so strong? It's hard, when faced with tsunamis of injustice all around us to accept the hymn writer's words, "This is my Father's world, and let me ne'er forget, that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet."

Well, let me spend a few minutes this morning reminding myself, and reminding you, that God is, indeed, PERFECTLY JUST, and will one day make everything right. There are various judgements mentioned in scripture, including:

1. The judgment of the cross which includes the judgment of the believer's sins
2. The self-judgment of the believer whereby we avoid God's judgment for sins, cf. *1 Corinthians 11:31*
3. The judgment seat of Christ, cf. *2 Corinthians 5:10*
4. The judgment of the nations, cf. *Matthew 25:32f*
5. The judgment of fallen angels, cf. *Jude 6, 1 Corinthians 6:3*
6. The great white throne judgment (or "last judgment") of unbelievers at the end of the Millennium, cf. *Revelation 20:11*

For sake of time today, though, we will only look at three of them. All three of these judgements remind us that there will be perfect justice. After all, we know and accept that God is a God of perfect justice, one who makes everything right.

*The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. (Psalms 103:6)*

*The just LORD is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. (Zephaniah 3:5)*

*He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)*

*And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. (Revelation of John 15:3)*

Notice some thoughts about justice.

## **Justice for God**

I don't want to spend time on this one this morning, but it is important to understand it. Let's talk about this thought for a few minutes.

QUESTION - I entitled this point, "Justice for God." Why does God need justice? In what way(s) has God been wronged?

- God has been wronged by our sin.

*For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. (Psalms 5:4)*

*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity... (Habakkuk 1:13)*  
*Romans 3:23*

- Sin MUST be paid for

*Romans 6:23*

*The soul that sinneth, it shall die... (Ezekiel 18:4,20)*

- Sin HAS BEEN paid for

*Romans 5:12, 6:23*

QUESTION - If sin, the thing which wrongs God so, has been paid for on the cross, is there any further justice required by God?

ANSWER - No.

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

God made a way for perfect justice to be provided - the Savior's death, burial, and resurrection paid the price - "IT IS FINISHED" and justice was served.

## **Justice for the Lost**

QUESTION - The pastor just preached a message on the Great White Throne judgement. What do we know about this judgement?

READ - Revelation 20:11-15

QUESTION - If Johnnie Cochran died a lost man, he will one day stand before God at this judgement, along with all others who die without Christ. What kind of defense will they give?

ILLUS - Johnnie Cochran used lots of theatrics and lawyer-speak in his famous O.J. Simpson trial. For example, there was the "if the glove don't fit, you must acquit" act. No such thing exists at the Great White Throne judgement. All such things are usually means of avoiding justice, not obtaining it. Usually, innocent people do not need technicalities of the law, and theatrics of attorneys, go prove their innocence.

- This judgement is only for those without Christ.

QUESTION - How do we know this, based on the passage we read?

- This judgement has only one outcome - hell.

QUESTION - How do we know this, based on the passage we read?

- This judgement ends in PERFECT JUSTICE.

Sin must be paid for, in order for God to have justice (remember our first point). If it was not covered by the provision of the cross, then the only possible outcome from the White Throne judgement is a guilty verdict, meaning the defendant must pay for their own sin forever and ever in hell.

## Justice for the Saved

QUESTION - What is the judgement seat of Christ? Who will be there? What will happen there?

READ - *2 Corinthians 5:8-11, esp. vs. 10*

READ - *Romans 14:10-12*

1. At the judgement seat, Christians will give an account.

QUESTION - Will there be tears or discomfort at this place? Refer to the 2 passages we just read. What did Paul say about the judgement seat that supports your answer?

Clearly, we will give an account. The very term "judgement seat" which Paul used, teaches that.

QUOTE -

Bema (judgment seat) in secular usage had four meanings:

1. One's stride, or manner of walking (which reveals character).
2. A platform for a public official (cf. Acts 25:6, 10, 17).
3. A "rewards platform" in sporting contests. Because of this meaning, some claim the "bema" is only a place for rewards - not judgment. But in secular legal contexts it also denotes
4. The place where litigants stood for trial. Paul repeatedly stressed this meaning; Acts 25:10, Romans 14:12.

(Walk Thru the Bible)

DISCUSSION - Knowing that there will be a day of perfect justice at the Bema - the judgement seat of Christ, and that every believer will have his or her day in court, how does it make you feel? What does it speak to your soul?

QUOTE - (Daniel Webster) - "My greatest thought is my accountability to God."

QUOTE - (James Denney, 1856-1917) - "It is Christians only who are in view here. All that we have hidden shall be revealed. The things we have done in the body will come back to us, whether good or bad. Every pious thought, and every thought of sin; every secret prayer, and every secret curse; every unknown deed of charity, and every hidden deed of selfishness; we will see them all again, and though we have not remembered them for years, and perhaps have forgotten them altogether, we shall have to acknowledge that they are our own. Is not that a solemn thing to stand at the end of life?"

2. At the judgement seat, Christians will be rewarded.

QUESTION - From the 2 passages we read, what leads to this conclusion?

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)*

QUESTION - What does this verse teach us? Is it an encouragement? Why?

QUESTION - What do you think of the following quote by respected Bible preacher and scholar, Alexander MacLaren, "The Judgment seat 'is meant for us professing Christians, real and imperfect Christians; and it tells us that there are degrees in that future blessedness proportioned to present faithfulness.'?"

### 3. At the judgement seat, EVERYTHING WILL BE MADE RIGHT.

There are aspects of the experience that I shudder to consider.

- Every wrong act I have committed will be on display.
- I have always been prone to speak before thinking. (Beth likes to tell me that "Your mouth is going to be the death of you.") She may be wrong about it killing me, but it will certainly be on display at the judgement seat. I do not look forward to hearing again some of the things I have said.
- Every evil, unkind, lustful, or wicked thought will be verbalized.
- Those things I did and said and thought in the dark, thinking that nobody knew, will be known.

QUESTION - What response should such knowledge produce in us?

Paul said, "*knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*" In other words, knowledge that He would stand before God at the judgement seat and give an account, awoke an even greater desire in him to serve and be ready for that day. So it should be with you and I.

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ  
And He shows me His plan for me;  
The plan of my life as it might have been  
Had He had His way, and I see  
How I blocked Him here and I checked Him there  
And I would not yield my will,  
Shall I see grief in my Savior's eyes;  
Grief though He loves me still?

Oh, He'd have me rich, and I stand there poor,  
Stripped of all but His grace,  
While my memory runs like a hunted thing  
Down the paths I can't retrace.  
Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break  
With tears that I cannot shed.  
I'll cover my face with my empty hands  
And bow my uncrowned head.

No. Lord of the years that are left to me  
I yield them to Thy hand.  
Take me, make me, mold me  
To the pattern Thou hast planned.

So, there are aspects of the experience that will be unpleasant. But there are also aspects that will be wonderful.

- Everything I have done for Christ will be on display, and rewarded.  
Have you ever tired of serving God with no apparent thankfulness? Have you faithfully attended church services, even when others mocked? Have you tried to remain true to the Bible and prayer, even when it didn't seem to

work? Have you labored in silence, while others took the credit? Have you wondered whether anyone would ever see or know the things you do for your Lord?

He knows, and He will reward on that day.

On that day, there will be perfect justice. Everything will be made right.

- Every word you have spoken for Christ will bear fruit on that day.

Have you ever been misunderstood in something you said, even though your intentions and motives were pure?

On that day, there will be perfect justice. Everything will be made right.

- Have other Christians wronged you? Have you been the victim of unkind or vicious attacks from believers? (It happens, friends, although it certainly should not.) Have you been let down by others in whom you trusted and confided? Have you been hurt by those who should have treated you as a brother or a sister?

On that day, there will be perfect justice. Everything will be made right.

- Have you labored in prayer, and seen no evidence of its fruit. You will on that day. What we could not see of Christ's working through our prayer, we will rejoice in at that day.

On that day, there will be perfect justice. Everything will be made right.

- Have you sometimes wondered whether it is worth it? It costs something to be a Christian. In America, we do not normally face bodily harm for our faith, such as believers in other parts of the world do, but there is still a cost. Do you sometimes wonder whether it is worth the cost? On that day, you will be rewarded, and you will know it was, indeed, worth the cost.

On that day, there will be perfect justice. Everything will be made right.

## **Conclusion**

I do not totally understand how God can solve all the problems and make everything right. One of the reasons we have such a flawed system of justice in this country is because it is not possible for human beings to execute perfect justice. In our world, justice for one may mean injustice for another. Justice for the Schindlers of the world may mean injustice for the Schiavos, and vice versa.

God, however, is PERFECTLY JUST, and He will make it all right.

ILLUS - My good friend and brother Mark Flanagan used to teach this class. During a recent period where we were without a pastor, several men from the church took turns filling the pulpit. One Sunday it was Mark's turn, and being a man who is always self-deprecating about his speaking ability, he was very nervous about it. I do not remember much about his message that night, but I do remember his closing illustration, which will stay with me forever. He told of a little boy (maybe it was him, I don't remember), who had broken something dear to him. He did what most little boys do, and ran to his daddy to get it fixed, and his daddy fixed it for him. I will never forget Mark's application from that simple illustration - "my father is God, and my father can fix anything," he said.

*There Will Be Justice*

This world is full of injustice. Johnnie Cochran, whether he was saved or lost, now knows about perfect justice. Cases like that of Terri Schiavo leave us shaking our heads at the injustice of our world. But remember this, our father is God, and our Father can fix anything. One day, there will be PERFECT JUSTICE. One day, EVERYTHING will be made right.