

# TWO JUDGMENTS AND FOUR TYPES OF PEOPLE (LUKE 19:11-27)

EDITOR

## I. INTRODUCTION: ONE JUDGMENT, OR TWO?

The doctrine of the last days, eschatology, is closely related to the doctrine of salvation, soteriology. Unfortunately, errors in eschatology often translated into errors in the doctrine of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

For example, it has become common for Evangelical pastors and scholars to speak of *one final judgment* in which all people will be judged to determine whether they receive something they call *final salvation*<sup>2</sup> (or *eschatological salvation*).

John Stott said,

Twice Paul said that he did not “shrink” from his teaching responsibility. He did not “hesitate” (NIV) to declare anything profitable to them (v. 20), the whole counsel (or plan) of God (v. 27). Perhaps these phrases refer to the same thing, since all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable (2 Tim 3:16). What was this “whole purpose of God”? Doubtless it included the great doctrines of creation by God (as Paul unfolded this in Athens), redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit; the bringing into being of the church; the ethical standards of Christian discipleship; *together with final salvation and final judgment*. Much of contemporary preaching appears very

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<sup>1</sup> See Grant Hawley, “Dispensationalism and Free Grace: Intimately Linked, Parts 1 and 2” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Spring and Autumn 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Nearly all who use the expression *final salvation* today suggest it refers to receiving the verdict that your works confirm or cause you to be finally justified by Christ at the final judgment. Final salvation is future and it is unknown. That is, you can’t know if you will end up spending eternity with Jesus or with Satan.

thin in contrast to the whole purpose of God Paul unfolded (*italics added*).<sup>3</sup>

A. W. Pink wrote,

Though the perfect life of Christ must not be exalted to the exclusion of His atoning death, neither must it be omitted as the believer's model. If it be true that no attempt to imitate Christ can obtain a sinner's acceptance with God, *it is equally true that the emulating of Him is imperatively necessary and absolutely essential in order to the saints' preservation and final salvation* [emphasis added]. "Every man is bound to the imitation of Christ under penalty of forfeiting his claim to Christ. The necessity of this imitation convincingly appears from the established order of salvation, which is fixed and unalterable. Now conformity to Christ is the established method in which God will bring many souls to glory. *For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren*' [emphasis his] (Rom. 8:29). The same God who hath predestinated men to salvation, hath in order thereto, predestinated them unto conformity to Christ, and this order of heaven is never to be reversed. We may as well think to be saved without Christ, as to be saved without conformity to Christ" (John Flavel).<sup>4</sup>

In an article entitled, "The Perseverance of the Saints: A History of the Doctrine," J. J. Davis, in a section entitled, "Perseverance in Recent Scholarship," says:

I. Howard Marshall has written a major treatment from a Wesleyan perspective. Marshall's work examines the OT and Jewish background and then in seven chapters discusses the relevant NT passages. He concludes that "while it is possible for a Christian to

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<sup>3</sup> John R. W. Stott, "Christian Ministry in the 21st Century, Part 4: Ideals of Pastoral Ministry" *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Jan 1989), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, *Eternal Security* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2005), 75.

fail to persevere after a genuine experience of salvation...*the main emphasis of the New Testament is on confidence and assurance of final salvation*" (emphasis added) [*Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (London: Epworth, 1969), 207]. The NT, he says, knows neither the "rigid logic of Calvinism" nor the "casualness of Arminianism" but "teaches us to put our trust in God" (p. 207).<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on 1 Pet 1:5 and the phrase "kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," John MacArthur writes,

That is a rich statement, guaranteeing the consummation of every believer's eternal salvation. The phrase, "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," speaks of *full and final salvation* [italics added]—from the curse of the law, the power and presence of sin, all decay, every stain of iniquity, all temptation, all grief, all pain, all death, all punishment, all judgment, and all wrath. God has begun this work in Christians already, and He will thoroughly complete it (cf. Phil 1:6).<sup>6</sup>

MacArthur continues,

Furthermore, Christians are protected *through faith* (italics his). Continued faith in Christ is the instrument of God's sustaining work. God did not save Christians apart from faith, and He does not keep them apart from faith. Our faith is God's gift, and through His protecting power He preserves it and nurtures it. The maintenance of a Christian's faith is as much His work as every other aspect of salvation. Faith is kindled and driven and maintained and fortified by God's grace.

But to say that faith is God's gracious gift, which He maintains, is not to say that faith

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<sup>5</sup> J. J. Davis, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 34, 2* (Lynchburg, VA: The Evangelical Theological Society, 1991): 226-27.

<sup>6</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Master's Seminary Journal Volume 4, 1* (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, 1993): 16-17.

operates apart from the human will. It is the faith *of Christians*. They believe. They remain steadfast. They are not passive in the process. *The means by which God maintains their faith involves their full participation* (emphasis added). They cannot persevere apart from faith, only *through* faith (italics his).<sup>7</sup>

According to most Evangelical teachers today, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bema, is another name for the Great White Throne Judgment. The idea that there is one judgment for believers and a separate judgment for unbelievers is rejected by most Evangelicals today.

Why would anyone consider it good news that our final destiny is unknown to us and that it will be determined on the basis of how our works stack up at some final judgment? It's amazing to me that so many people who believe in a coming final judgment to determine their eternal destiny, both Calvinists and Arminians, manage to keep hope alive that they will get a good report concerning their works.

This sort of theology is certainly not well suited for perfectionists or other overly sensitive people. In fact, it isn't well suited for anyone. This is the doctrine of the Judaizers of Galatians, not the doctrine of the Lord and His apostles.

Michael Horton, himself a proponent of a mild form of Lordship Salvation,<sup>8</sup> nonetheless criticizes those within Lordship Salvation who place what he considers to be too much emphasis on self-examination. While discussing the antinomian controversy, Horton writes,

In America, however, Cotton found a lethargic populace regularly scourged with threats and calls to excessive self-examination. Despairing of ever attaining assurance of God's favor, many of the people gave up entirely, and New England fell into quite a secular period. Again the lesson was demonstrated: legalism produces antinomianism.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Christ the Lord: The Reformation and Lordship Salvation*, Michael Horton, Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), esp. 15-57, 146-47.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 143-144.

A few pages later, after quoting Cotton, Horton adds,

In other words, if my faith is too weak to have full assurance based on an unconditional promise, how on earth can I expect to get any better handle on my assurance by turning inward and taking inventory?<sup>10</sup>

## II. WHY USE THE PARABLE OF THE MINAS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION?

Many texts in Scripture could be used to address the question of one judgment or two. However, most of them require comparing that text with other texts. By comparing multiple texts, the argument can be made.

For example, we could discuss texts like 2 Cor 5:9-10 and Rom 14:10-12 that discuss the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bema. Then we could compare those texts with others like 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim 2:12; 4:6-8; and Rev 2:26, which indicate that ruling with Christ is only for believers who endure in the faith. Then we'd have to look at other texts, like Rev 20:1-10, that teach the millennial kingdom. Putting it all together we could show that the Bema is before the Millennium and the Great White Throne is after the Millennium (as Rev 20:11-15 follows Rev 20:1-10).

The beauty of Luke 19:11-27 is that we don't need to go to other texts to answer our question. This one text, all by itself, shows that there are two separate judgments, one for believers and one later, for unbelievers. We go to other texts to confirm and complete<sup>11</sup> our understanding, but those other texts are not needed to prove the point.

In this parable, the Lord Jesus discusses two groups of people at two separate judgments. Jesus' servants will be judged first. The result of this judgment (the Judgment Seat of Christ) will

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>11</sup> This parable does not discuss details like the length of time between the two judgments (1,000 years, 2 Cor 5:9-10; Rev 20:11-15), the condition of being Jesus' servants (believing in Him, John 3:16; 8:30-32) and of being His enemies (not believing in Him, John 1:11; 8:33-59), what His servants were to do (confess Him, Matt 10:32; and, of course, serve Him in all areas of life), and what the wicked servant failed to do (endure in his confession of Christ, Matt 10:33; 2 Tim 2:12).

be that praise and rewards are given or withheld.<sup>12</sup> Jesus' enemies will be judged last. The result of that judgment (the Great White Throne Judgment) will be that the enemies are slain, that is, excluded from Jesus' kingdom altogether.

Luke 19:11-27 is a key passage dealing with the accountability of Christians.

### III. JUDGMENT ONE: THE JUDGMENT OF JESUS' SERVANTS LUKE 19:16-26

The parable begins with the Lord talking about two groups, His citizens who hated Him and didn't want Him to rule over them, and His servants whom He entrusted with money and said, "Do business till I come" (Luke 19:13-14).

Clearly the citizens who hated Him represent unbelieving Israel, and more broadly, all unbelievers.

Equally clear is that His servants are a separate group.

Without going into the outcome of the judgment of the three servants at this time, we can see initially that the servants are judged first.

The judgment of the servants is discussed in vv 16-26. The second judgment, the judgment of His citizens who hated Him and didn't want Him to rule over them, occurred at some time after the judgment and is discussed in v 27.

That the three servants are servants is clear both from the introduction to the parable in vv 11-15 and from the fact that the first and third servants are specifically called *servants* by the Lord at the judgment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of the Judgment Seat of Christ, see Earl D. Radmacher, "Believers and the Bema," *JOTGES* (Spring 1995): 31-43; Bob Wilkin, "The Biblical Distinction Between Eternal Salvation and Eternal Rewards," *JOTGES* (Spring 1996): 15-24; Zane C. Hodges, "We Believe in Rewards," *JOTGES* (Autumn 1991): 3-11.

<sup>13</sup> Even so, most commentators, as we shall see, understand the third servant to be an unbeliever who is cast into the lake of fire after this judgment.

## IV. JUDGMENT TWO: THE JUDGMENT OF JESUS' CITIZENS WHO HATED HIM LUKE 19:27

When the Lord says, “But bring here those enemies of mine” (v 27), three things are clear. First, the enemies of Jesus are not His servants. This is a separate group (note the adversative, *but*). Second, the enemies were not present in the judgment of the servants. These people *must be brought to the Lord* for their judgment to take place. Third, the judgment of the enemies occurs chronologically *after* the judgment of the servants. Now we cannot tell from the parable itself whether the time gap between the two judgments is a matter of minutes, days, months, years, or what. But we know from other Scripture that the judgment of the servants occurs before the Millennium (cf. 1 John 2:28) and the judgment of His enemies occurs 1000 years later, after the Millennium (cf. Rev 20:11-15).

## V. THE RESULT OF EACH JUDGMENT

### A. THE SERVANTS RECEIVE DEGREES OF RULERSHIP IN JESUS' KINGDOM

*Servant One: Wholehearted Faithfulness Results in Maximum Rulership (vv 15-17).* The first servant gives a very humble report: “Master, your mina has earned ten minas” (Luke 19:16). He does not boast that he had turned the one mina into ten minas. He recognizes that what he has was given to him by his Lord and he is just reporting on his stewardship.

Absent any other information, we see this as a very good result. This is a ten-fold return on investment. In fact, as the parable unfolds, we see that our suspicion is correct. This is the best result of the three servants discussed.

Every Christian can and should be like this first servant (2 Pet 1:3). We can all maximize our lives for Christ (1 Cor 9:24-27).

The Lord’s response to this first servant is wonderful: “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17). Faithful service

in this life will result in a position of authority in the Lord's coming kingdom. In this case the man will be given rulership over ten cities.

Because the first servant is the most faithful of those studied, his reward is also the greatest. He is given twice as many cities to rule over than the second servant.

It should be noted that the rewards mentioned are service rewards.<sup>14</sup> This is the same sort of reward as we see after Presidential campaigns. After his election, the new President begins to appoint the members of his administration, including his cabinet and foreign ambassadors. These appointments are rewards for work during for the President during the campaign.

*Servant Two: Halfhearted Faithfulness Results in Half Rulership (vv 18-19).* The second servant too is humble: "Master, you mina has earned five minas" (Luke 19:18). Since we've just heard that the first servant earned ten minas by his investing, we realize that the second servant was half-hearted in his service.

Like the first servant, he had received one mina. Thus we wonder what the second servant will hear from his Lord. Will he be rebuked? While the man was faithful, he was far from the ideal servant.

The second servant doesn't hear "Well done, good servant" and he doesn't get ten cities to rule over. Yet the second servant does get in and does rule. The Lord tells him, "You also be over five cities" (Luke 19:19). There is no praise and there is no rebuke.

The reward is proportional to his return on investment. He brought a five-fold return on what the Lord gave him; hence he gets authority over five cities in the life to come. He will not have as great an opportunity to serve as he could have. But he will still have a significant position of rulership in the coming kingdom.

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<sup>14</sup> Other rewards are mentioned in the Book of Revelation, including the right to eat of the fruits of the tree of life and the hidden manna, a secret white stone with a special name engraved, special white garments, the right to enter the New Jerusalem by its gates, and an exalted name. While these rewards are certainly beneficial to the recipient, they all seem to enhance the person's ability to serve and glorify Christ.



Some commentators suggest that the missing “Well done, good servant” is not significant. They think the Lord left that off to save space.<sup>15</sup>

However, what of the fact that one will rule over *ten cities* and the other only over *five cities*? Clearly the second servant gets half the authority in the life to come.

When we compare this parable with the Parable of the Talents in Matt 25:14-30, the contrast between the first two servants is even clearer. In the Parable of the Talents the Lord gave “each to his own ability.” The first servant received 2.5 times as much as the second servant: five versus two talents. Both servants doubled the sum given to them. Both servants received identical commendation, unlike in the Parable of the Minas.

In Luke 19:11-27 all of the servants received the same sum, one mina. This suggests that unlike the Parable of the Talents, we are looking at a group of servants who had equal time, talent, treasure, and truth to invest. The first servant shows what was possible for all of them: ten minas. The second servant only gained five, hence he only received five cities to rule over.

Clearly the first two servants show that the Lord holds us accountable for what we do over the course of our entire Christian life, and that our reward will be commensurate with our productivity. Now this is still based on His grace, for apart from His grace, we can do nothing.

I am encouraged greatly by the fact that even if the Lord finds that I was not wholehearted in my service, I can still reign with Christ. Now I long for his “Well done, good servant.” But it’s good to know that ruling with Christ is not all or nothing. Actually there is a huge allowance for failure here.

*Servant Three: Unfaithfulness Results in No Rulership (vv 20-26).* Here is where most interpreters badly misinterpret this parable.

Since many people can’t conceive of a wicked servant as spending eternity with the Lord and His people, they conclude this servant must represent an unbeliever and then they try to make that fit the particulars of the parable.

John Martin, says of the third servant, for example,

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<sup>15</sup> Bock says, “Jesus really only needs two figures to make his point that some are faithful and ‘others’ are not” (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 2: 9:51-24:53* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], p. 1537).

He was not at all concerned about the king's return so he did not bother with the king's business. Matthew related that the third servant was thrown out of the kingdom (Matt. 25:30). This indicates that this servant really belonged to the group of people who did want the king to reign over them (Luke 19:14).<sup>16</sup>

While surely well intentioned, Martin has ended up turning the passage on its head.

There is plenty of evidence that the third servant is a believer and that he will spend eternity with the Lord.

First, the third servant is one of Jesus' servants. He was given a stewardship by Christ. He had the potential of ruling with Christ in the life to come. Unbelievers are not given a stewardship and unbelievers have no possibility of ruling with Christ in the life to come (unless and until they cease to be unbelievers).

Second, the third servant is not one of those citizens who hated Him and didn't want Him reigning over them. Verse 27 shows that he is distinguished from that group.

Third, v 27 indicates that the citizens who hated Jesus were slain. In light of Rev 20:14-15, that refers to the second death, which is being sent to the lake of fire. More discussion of that point is given in the next section. However, since the third servant is not part of that group, he was not slain. He was not sent to the lake of fire.

In his commentary on Luke, Leon Morris comments,

The story finishes on a note of frightening severity. Those who rejected the nobleman and sent their embassy after him (14) are not forgotten. Safely installed in the kingdom and with accounts with his trading partners finalized, the nobleman commands the destruction of those he calls plainly *these enemies of mine*. They have set themselves in opposition to him; they must take the consequences.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> John Martin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, New Testament Edition, s.v., "Luke" (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983): 253.

<sup>17</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke*, Revised Edition, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 302.

Note that he implies that *all* of Jesus' servants are "safely installed in the kingdom" with Him. He does not consign the third servant to the category of enemies of Jesus.

Even clearer is the discussion by Marvin Pate in his commentary on Luke:

Even though the action taken toward the disobedient servant was severe (even as it will be on Judgment Day for the unfaithful Christian), there is no hint in the text that the salvation of the faithless servant of the Lord was in jeopardy. Not so for the enemies of the nobleman, i.e., Christ, according to v. 27. The strong adversative "however" (*plēn*) seems to contrast the punishment of the unprofitable servant with that of the master's enemies (cf. v. 14) who did not want him to rule over them.<sup>18</sup>

Pate then makes the suggestion that the slaying of the enemies "probably had two focuses—historical and eschatological." He explains,

Historically, Jesus' enemies (i.e., the Jewish people who crucified Him) were indeed destroyed by the Roman army at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (cf. Luke 21:6, 20-24; 23:28-31). Eschatologically, Jesus' enemies, those who reject Him, will be consumed at His return (cf. Luke 21:25-27; 22:66-70; cf. Rev. 19).<sup>19</sup>

Of course, many take the opposite position. One line of support is that taken by Martin. They go to the related Parable of the Talents in Matt 24:14-30 and argue that since the third servant in that parable was cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, that means the third servant here is sent to the lake of fire. Indeed, Martin doesn't even say what the Parable of the Talents actually says. He says, "Matthew related that the third servant was thrown out of the kingdom (Matt. 25:30)."<sup>20</sup> But Matthew did not say

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<sup>18</sup> C. Marvin Pate, *Luke*, Moody Gospel Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 358.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Martin, "Luke," 253.

that at all. That is Martin's interpretation, without discussion or even mention of the outer darkness in Matt 25:30.

Space does not permit an extended discussion of that parable or the issue of the outer darkness.<sup>21</sup> However, the expression *the outer darkness* only occurs three times in the NT, all three times in Matthew. And the evidence is overwhelming that this refers to the darkness outside the well-lit banquet hall. This is a figure of speech for missing out on the joys associated with ruling with Christ.<sup>22</sup> While weeping and gnashing of teeth is associated with the lake of fire, it is not some technical expression that only applies to people there. It is an expression of grief.

Huber shows that scholars are not united in understanding weeping and gnashing of teeth as indicating those mentioned are eternally condemned, providing citations from Eduard Schweizer and Karl Heinrich Rengsdorf.<sup>23</sup> Huber then adds,

The usage of both of these descriptive terms in the OT and the NT verifies that they should be interpreted at face value as simply cultural and emotional terms with no theological significance inherently attached. What is crucial is whether or not believers are said to be the subjects of these terms. In Acts 20:37 (mentioned at the outset of this article) the term for weeping (*klauthmos*) is used to describe the sorrow of the Ephesian elders because of Paul's imminent departure from them. The Septuagint has a host of similar uses. This word is used in reference to Joseph in Gen 45:2; 46:29; it is used of the Israelites who wept over Moses' death (Deut 34:8); Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:3); of Job (16:1; 30:31); of David in Psalm 6:8 (appropriated by Jesus Himself in Matt 7:23 and Luke 13:27).

Examples of the phrase "gnashing of teeth" are considerably more rare. However, Job does use it as a description of God's anger toward him in 16:10. It is clear again that this term is not used

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<sup>21</sup> For a thorough discussion of *the outer darkness* see Michael G. Huber, "The 'Outer Darkness' in Matthew and Its Relation to Grace," *JOTGES* (Autumn 1992): 11-25.

<sup>22</sup> See Gregory P. Sapaugh, "A Call to the Wedding Celebration: An Exposition of Matthew 22:1-14," *JOTGES* (Spring 1992): 11-34.

<sup>23</sup> Huber, "The 'Outer Darkness,'" 20-21.

strictly for those suffering in hell. By using the deductive method commentators have assumed this phrase to refer to hell and have gone on from there to interpret the passage. This should not be done. This phrase should be interpreted from the *context*. In Matt 22:1-14 it has been determined from the details of the context that, for the premillennialist in particular, the “outer darkness” is not symbolic of hell. Neither, therefore, is the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” descriptive in this passage of one suffering in hell. This phrase again fits into the cultural background.<sup>24</sup>

We know that some believers at the Bema will experience shame (1 John 2:28). Such people will experience emotional pain. However, that pain will surely be short lived. It is inconceivable that people in glorified bodies would grieve more than a few minutes or hours, even over a big loss like this.

Besides, this whole exercise of turning from the Parable of the Minas to the Parable of the Talents is a reversal of the analogy of faith. That hermeneutical principle says we start with clear texts and then understand the unclear in light of the clear.<sup>25</sup> It is widely agreed that Matt 25:14-30 is a tough text. Luke 19:11-27 is easily seen as a much easier passage to understand. Thus we ought to understand the third servant in Matt 25:14-30 in light of the third servant in Luke 19:11-27, and not the other way around.

Clearly we are dealing with three possible outcomes *for believers*, with a whole range implied between these as well.

## **B. THE ENEMIES ARE SLAIN (THE SECOND DEATH)**

This is not an evangelistic passage. So the Lord doesn't go over what a person must do to be born again. He expects the listener/reader to know the message of John 3:16.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 21, italics his.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, H. Wayne Johnson, “The ‘Analogy of Faith’ and Exegetical Methodology: A Preliminary Discussion of Relationships,” *JETS* (March 1988): 70. He says, “Obscure passages are to be interpreted by other clear and parallel passages in the Scriptures.” Johnson warns, however, that there is a subjective nature of the application of the analogy of faith (p. 80) and hence careful exegesis must be done in the use of this principle.

Clearly these citizens who hate him represent unbelievers, specifically unbelieving Jews, which is why they are called *citizens*. Of course the application extends to all unbelievers.

The issue is not Jesus ruling over their personal lives here and now,<sup>26</sup> it is Jesus ruling over them as Messianic King in the life to come after He returns. These Jews didn't believe He was the Messiah King and hence they didn't want Him to rule over them in the life to come.

Note that these people were not present at the judgment of the servants at the Bema. Jesus says, "But bring here those enemies of mine..." (v 27). Though details are not given, there is a 1000 year gap between verses 26 and 27. This is common in prophetic literature. For example, Zech 9:9 talks about Jesus' triumphal entry in His first coming and the very next verse, Zech 9:10, talks about His dominion in His Second Coming, which we now know is at least 2000 years later.

While details aren't given, *slaying* suggests eternal separation from the kingdom of Jesus, called the second death in Rev 20:14. They didn't want to be in His kingdom, and they will get their wish.

Revelation 20:11-15 gives more details than this verse gives. There we learn the full nature of their judgment. Implied is that their works (the books) are judged to determine their degree of suffering in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15 shows that they are not condemned because of their works, but because of their unbelief. While that is not stated in Luke 19:11-27, it is implied. After all, the third servant did not have any return on what the Lord gave him to invest, yet he is not slain.<sup>27</sup> In terms of good works, there seems to be

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<sup>26</sup>I am not aware of any Lordship Salvation proponent who, in an effort to prove Lordship Salvation, has used this statement about the enemies not wanting Jesus to reign over them. I suppose the reason it is rarely if ever so used is because the context so clearly is dealing with the coming kingdom, not with submission to Christ in this life. In addition, this would actually be a tough text for people with Lordship Salvation since the third servant, the unfaithful one, is not in the group that is slain in v 27. Rather than try to explain why the unfaithful person is called a servant and is judged with the servants and not with the enemies, they evidently go elsewhere for proofs of their position.

<sup>27</sup>*The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995) says concerning v 27, "The punishment of those who rebelled and actively opposed the king (v. 14) was much more severe than that of the negligent servant" (p. 1575). Previously *The NIV Study Bible* said concerning

little difference between the third servant and the citizens who hated Jesus. The reason why the third servant is not slain and the citizens are slain is belief in the Lord Jesus, though that is not stated directly.

## **VI. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHETHER THERE ARE TWO JUDGMENTS OR ONE?**

The practical difference is huge. It is a difference between assurance and non-assurance, between clarity in evangelism and non-clarity in evangelism, and between being properly motivated to serve God and improperly motivated to serve Him.

People who say that there is one judgment, not two, teach the following:

- There is a *final judgment* coming.
- At this final judgment everyone's works will be judged.
- The purpose of the judgment of everyone's works is to determine who gets *final salvation* and who does not.
- The warnings in Scripture about final judgment and final salvation are the means God uses to motivate believers to persevere in faith and good works.
- No one can be sure whether he will gain final salvation.
- God wants believers to fear hell.
- When we evangelize, we need to avoid giving people assurance based on their profession of faith in Christ.
- We are to tell people that only "true believers" will gain final salvation and that "true believers" are those who persevere in faith and good works until the end of their lives.
- Pastors should regularly warn their flocks that they may be false professors and that they must persevere if they are to be obtain final salvation.
- The call to discipleship is the call to everlasting life.
- One cannot believe in Jesus as Savior without also submitting to Him as Lord.

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the third servant, "those who neglect or squander what is given to them will become impoverished, losing even what they have" (p. 1575).

- The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a place where rewards are given out. It is a place where eternal destinies are determined.
- The Judgment Seat of Christ is another name for the Great White Throne Judgment.
- All believers will rule with Christ. There is no such thing as believers who will miss out on ruling with Him.
- There will be no degrees of rewards in the kingdom. Every believer will have the same fullness of life forever.
- Saving faith is not persuasion. That is *intellectual assent*.
- Saving faith is submission to Christ. Saving faith is active, obedient, and persevering.
- False assurance is assurance which is not grounded at least in part in our works.
- False assurance is assurance that is solely based on our faith in Christ.
- Faith without works cannot save anyone from hell. A lifetime of works must be added to faith in order to obtain final salvation.

The Free Grace position argues that there is no final judgment, no final justification, and no final salvation—unless by *final salvation* we mean what a person receives at the very moment of faith in Christ.

The Free Grace view hinges on two separate judgments. One cannot consistently be Free Grace and believe that there is only one judgment, final judgment where the destiny of people is determined by examining their works.

One can, of course, be Free Grace without knowing about the Bema or the Great White Throne Judgment.<sup>28</sup> But one cannot

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<sup>28</sup>Probably very few people at the moment of faith in Christ had even heard specifically about the Judgment Seat of Christ or of the Great White Throne Judgment. While the concept of *the final judgment* is probably something many if not most unbelievers have heard, even that concept is not universally known among unbelievers. Children in particular often do not have a conception of some judgment of their works to determine their eternal destinies. Thus some people, like Cornelius and his family in Acts 10 or the woman at the well in John 4, are quite open to believing in Jesus for the promise of everlasting life without hearing first an explanation of the two judgments. Of course, I see no reason why we could not explain the two judgments to unbelievers when evangelizing them if the issue comes up. For those already confused about this point, explaining the purpose of the two judgments could clear their confusion.



be Free Grace and believe in final salvation that is either by works or that is confirmed by works.

The concepts of final judgment and final salvation are antithetical to the Free Grace position. Jesus promised that the one who believes in Him “shall not come into judgment” (John 5:24). The context there concerns everlasting life. There is no future judgment regarding everlasting life for the believer. His eternal destiny is set.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Do you enjoy hearing someone tell you that you did well in a task?

The most important “Well done” we will ever hear will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ from the lips of Jesus. It isn’t guaranteed, but it is worth living for.

In the summer of 1982 I asked Dr. Charles Ryrie if he would preach my ordination service. He agreed to come and do it.

In the course of the conversation I told him how much I enjoyed preaching every week these past 4 months. His response has always stuck with me: “Bob, I’m glad you have preached God’s Word faithfully these past four months. I hope, however, that you will still be able to say that 40 years from now.”

While eternal life is received the moment we believe in Christ and is secure forever, approval is only received by putting our faith to work and approval can be lost.

Now the challenge is this, be faithful in the use of your time, talent, and treasure. Marcia Hornok pointed out to me recently that there is a fourth “T,” truth. Be faithful to apply and to teach the truth you’ve been given. The expression “to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48) applies to our time, talent, treasure, and the truth God has entrusted to us.

Our aim should be to maintain a standing of full approval. We want to maximize our lives for Christ so that we will hear those blessed words, “Well done, good servant. Rule over 10 cities.”

The two judgments are the Bema, before the Millennium, where believers will be judged to determine their degree of reward in the kingdom, and the Great White Throne Judgment,

after the Millennium, where unbelievers will be judged to determine their degree of suffering in the lake of fire.

The four types of people are the good servants, the half-hearted servants, the wicked servants, and the unbelievers who aren't His servants at all. Good servants will rule with Christ fully. Half-hearted servants will rule with Him in a more limited way. Wicked servants won't rule with Christ at all, though they will be with Him forever. Unbelievers will experience the second death and will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

The idea put forward by Lordship Salvation and works salvation that the Free Grace position promotes sin or is against the commands of God is ludicrous. The Free Grace position opposes sin and promotes holiness and perseverance. The difference is, the Free Grace position actually works.