

What Do You Mean by The Judgment

Good afternoon to all of you from abroad, east and west, and north, central, and South America. It's always a delight to have a chance to meet the ministry and their wives from the Latin countries. Their experience is in many ways somewhat different from the vast majority, but yet we do have areas of Europe where undoubtedly certain similarities do exist in day-to-day experience. I'd like to address the question of what do we mean by the judgment. Perhaps the best way to look at this matter is to have a little understanding of the official Catholic view, which may or may not be understood by many parishioners. We're all familiar, of course, with the art form that we see at the Vatican, but most people do not know what leads up to it or how the Church at Rome would officially explain such matters as the judgment and its relationship to the millennium, the binding of Satan, the second coming of Christ, the first resurrection. I was recently privileged to go to a Catholic bookstore in another state. This happened to have been Iowa. I not uncommonly go to the one in Southern California, but sometimes different areas give different emphases. The local one here, a very prominent store, gives a great deal of information aimed perhaps more at the collegiate and the adult area. This other one was certainly aimed at parents and children and specific doctrinal material. I learned from that what we generally knew, but I think it is wise for us to understand. When we speak on the world tomorrow or write in the plain truth or in our booklets about the millennium, we assume that our understanding of the millennium as a thousand years, which follows the return of Jesus Christ, is what the millennium means to our Catholic listeners. But I should let you know, of course, that to those who are in tune with the official Catholic teaching, the millennium began with the establishment of the Church by Jesus Christ in the first century, and we are near the close of the second millennium. Now that's strange.

How could this be the second millennium if there's only one? But that's a part of the problem. That is, this is all a millennium. This is why when about a thousand or a thousand and one AD occurred, the world was very concerned that the end was about to come, because when they read Revelation, they read it in terms of the thousand years. And most people didn't understand living at that time, and most who have read history have never understood why the world should have been concerned when the first millennium of the church was finished.

But how would you say, could you have the millennium starting with the church and preceded by the binding of Satan? When we say this is the devil's world, this is not God's world, his civilization, his society? Well, the answer is very simple. For these near 2,000 years, according to the official Catholic teaching, Satan has been bound. This is God's world. That's why we can have the kingdom of God in the form of the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, in the millennium, it took some time to establish the kingdom of God in terms of the state when the Roman Empire was converted, that in fact Satan was bound when Christ himself judged Satan. And Satan in that sense cannot, that's strange, because it says it cannot deceive the nations. And yet, what is this that has happened? So this is another one of the enigmas. The answer, of course, is proposed officially, is that Satan cannot force you to do something that you do not want to do. And in that sense, he is bound. Well, if this is God's world, and if Satan is bound, what would the world have been like if he had been loose? And then, of course, we learn that before Satan is bound, there is the first resurrection and the second coming. Well, now, how is this understood? Officially, it's understood on the basic premise that in fact, one is, participates in the resurrection through baptism, and the second coming is really the coming of the Holy Spirit, which came to the church.

And so, the concept of the first resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the binding of Satan, and the millennium are all construed as terms in such a different manner that it would be impossible for you to use those terms on our program or for me to use them here and have them understood by a Catholic audience that pays attention to the official doctrine of the church. I think you need to understand that. And this, of course, leads to the question. Since when the millennium ends, we learn about the judgment in Hellfire or Gehenna fire, the whole idea is that when the millennium is over, after the person has been reigning, who represents the government of God in the state, as well as the leader of the church, who represents Christ, who is the Lamb of God in heavenly pastures, while the shepherd is here on earth, ruling the church, when those two individuals perish at the hands of Antichrist, the end is about to come, and the final judgment, and such a view, of course, is so different from what we have in our minds for the next one thousand and more years, that indeed the only way to explain this is to have a better understanding ourselves as to what the judgment is, and to recognize, of course, that there are Catholics who don't know the official teaching, who have been listening too long to the World Tomorrow program, or to other people, and have other ideas in their heads. The same is true of Seventh-day Adventists, who believe in many cases that God has, in fact, essentially a seven thousand-year program, and the millennium is going to be barren for a thousand years. That's because they have wedded some of their doctrine with ours, only to learn in their official literature that there is no seven thousand-year plan. We need to realize, perhaps better than we do, that if we're going to explain, we must understand what different facets of the world believe. Some of our audience is made up of people who know nothing of the Bible. Some of our audience is made up of people who know a great deal about the Bible, and some is made up of people who are confused because how we word things and how we explain things seem so different from what they have been taught. Those words have different meanings for different people. What then is it like to face the judgment? Is it best understood by the Sistine Chapel, which many of you have either seen in art or personally visited, where you stand in fear of an angry God hoping that Jesus Christ has been prevailed upon by his mother to petition Christ, to petition his father, so that we may not end in hellfire, but in some way may ultimately participate in the beatific vision in heaven? Is this the picture, or is it something quite different? There was a Roman ruler who was newly come to office. This is in the book of Acts. His name was Felix, and he had a chance to listen to Paul because Paul had been imprisoned, and he wanted to know what the basis of the imprisonment was. That is, the trial had not come, but surely there must have been some reason for his arrest. It is interesting to see what Paul's message was as he addressed rulers.

Mr. Armstrong did not explain in years past the same things exactly that he would explain here or on the World Tomorrow broadcast or in the magazine.

Certainly not quite the same thing in the same manner we do in the correspondence course. So Paul also addressed things a little bit differently when he was talking of an official. That is, he talked about things that officials' minds are on. In chapter 24, Paul is introduced. Now when Felix had heard a number of things in verse 22, having a significant knowledge of the Jewish way of life and of Christianity, when Lysius, the chief captain, shall come down, he will say, he said, I will know the uttermost of your manner. Then he commanded a centurion, verse 23, to keep Paul, and he gave him a certain amount of liberty, and his acquaintances were not forbidden to come to him in prison.

And after a certain number of days, Felix and his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jewish, sent for Paul, that is, Felix specifically did, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now of course this is Luke writing to the church. Luke is not writing to Felix. Luke is writing to the church to explain the history of the church and any of those others who might in general be interested. So he speaks of it concerning faith in Christ. What does faith in Christ involve? So we read, and as he, Paul, reasoned.

So Paul was doing what Greeks love to do and what Jews love to do. They reasoned. They proposed ideas. They countered ideas. They challenged ideas. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and he answered and said, go your way for a time, and when I have a more convenient season, I'll call you and we'll have further discussion.

That is, the more he learned of righteousness, the more he felt condemned because he was greedy for money. He was having his hand out. He hoped that money should be given him of Paul. That was the kind of man. He thought he was really going to get money from Paul, so he gave this audience, and instead of Paul giving him gold and silver, he gave him a lecture. Though this one was free of charge.

And he discussed the question of righteousness. That is right doing. This has to do with citizenship, good conduct, and you can imagine the importance Paul would have put on the example of people who are in official capacity to set the right example. Next point, to be temperate. That is to have self-control or from the point of view of the nation to be able to exercise self-government.

This term can have the sense of self-government with respect to a people. The Romans had another view quite different from that. They lorded it over many peoples and places. Paul was not saying the Jews should have self-government.

He was pointing up the responsibility that any major power has to see that a people learns to govern itself properly. And if you want to know part of the problem of Africa today, it is that not a single colonial power ever made this a part of its duty, and every one of those nations of Europe failed.

You go to Africa and you will see the results today.

As a consequence of being there and not educating them for this fundamental duty of national self-control, then individual self-control. And we reflect that self-control, self-government, to be able to govern yourself, your mind, your emotions, your heart, your duty. And we reflect it in terms of temperance with respect to how we word our thoughts, with respect to how we eat, how we drink, how we live our lives.

Then Paul addressed the judgment to come, because if you had a knowledge of law, the right way to live, and you exercise self-discipline in living that law, then you have nothing to fear for the judgment to come.

Felix had done nothing right, it appears, in the first two areas, and when he heard about the judgment to come, that did it. He knew too much, because he had a great deal of knowledge, that's why it says very clearly he trembled, because he in fact now had it presented so logically that he had no excuse to have his hand out for money.

Then the judgment to come was a part of the faith of Christ, the faith in Christ that we have, and a part of his message. When it said he came to preach the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God, which is defined in the prayer that most people recite verbatim, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is if God's will is done in heaven, and if it is not done on earth, it's because human beings have followed the way of the devil, and this is the devil's world, and he is not yet bound.

Because when he is bound, there will be no longer a time when the nations will be deceived.

They will have to have their deception removed, but no further active deception on his part will occur, and it may take even one to two generations to fully remove it, because at any time we have upwards of three generations living on earth, or sometimes four depending on how young mothers

are when they have children or fathers for that matter. The story of the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God, is a story that involves what we call the judgment to come. We learn of course of different ways in which this judgment to come is described. If we were to turn to John, chapter 5, we will have one way of looking at it. The gospel that John wrote, chapter 5, as it's now numbered, in verse 22, for as the father, I'll go back to verse 21, raises up the dead and quickens even so the son will do likewise, that is, he does what the father shows. For the father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the son. God knows how to judge the one whom we know is the father, and Jesus followed his example from eternity, though he was not then the father and not then the son, each one, they were in that sense the creator God and the spokesman for the God realm, the God government, and one followed the example of the other. The father, Jesus said, is greater than I, and he knows how to make judgment, how to make decisions, how to perceive, and to get at the facts, how not to just look at the way things appear, but to understand the way they are. And once Jesus also endured human flesh and what it was like to be on earth, he was fully prepared to handle the judgment of all human beings, so that in fact the father turned the responsibility of administering the kingdom wholly over to the son, because the son had proved that he could do the father's will. And when that work is finished, the son delivers up the kingdom, the father doesn't have to try to take it back because the millennium was botched.

You might reflect back on the last decade, some of the things that went on in the church of God.

When the father has finally committed all judgment to the son, the son judges the world.

He administers the government of God. The will of God is being done on earth as it is in heaven.

Not that sins, mistakes, and faults may not occur, but it will be a quite different world because the motivations will be quite different. So all judgment is committed to the son, so that men should honor the son even as they honor the father. Now we learn the responsibility in the gospel message or the good news is that the decision as to the outcome of every human life and the rewards and punishments, that will be administered by Jesus Christ.

The story is not finished, however. We should go on. The father has life in himself. He is given to the son to have life in himself, verse 26. Then we read, that's because he's now an immortal spirit, no longer flesh and blood. And he has given him authority to execute judgment. So Jesus restated that. He has been given this authority because he is the son of man. He would not have been granted this until he proved that he could overcome sin in the flesh. And he knew what it was like to have to resist society, resist the devil, resist for that matter one's own temptations, and to know how to overcome and to set an example. So not until he was also the son of man was this responsible turned responsibility turned over to him.

Jesus therefore says, Marble not at this because that time is going to come, an hour in which all that are in their graves will hear his voice.

But they won't all hear it at the same time. Jesus did not expound that here.

They shall come forth, some to a resurrection of life, those who have done good, and some to a resurrection of judgment. The authorized version has damnation, that is an improper translation, the attempt of the new King James to correct it, and the attempt of the new international version to accommodate to the general traditional view by using the word condemnation misses the point. There will be those who will come up to a resurrection of condemnation, but the vast majority are going to come up to a resurrection of judgment. And in any case, both resurrections lead to judgment. And the word in the Greek is essentially just a Greek form with a K rather than a C. That is

our word crisis. That is where the decisions are to be made based on evidence. There is coming, in other words, a judgment period. Jesus said, I can of my own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just. But it didn't seek to do his own will. That's why his judgment is just because he learned to judge as the Father himself, who is the supreme, all wise Creator God. We move along. If there's going to be a judgment of every living human being, and if Jesus Christ is that judge, because he also had been a man and knew what it was like to be a human being, we also learned that there's going to be a judgment of angels. And this is a very important addition to our story in Jude verse six, no chapter, Jude verse six. The angels that kept not their first estate, those who abandoned the earth and attempted to dethrone God, because they didn't want any competitors on earth, did not want God to carry out the implications of the work that he had already been doing on earth, over which they were given responsibility. So they left their own habitation. They have been reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. Now, if the millennium is being pictured by the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, and of course there is an eighth day afterward, that in Christian literature has come to be known as the great day, the Jews knew it as the eighth day. Jesus expounded what that great day meant, so that angels are going to be judged. They are reserved to the judgment of the great day. Then when we look at Revelation chapter 20, we discover that the devil is described as being let out and then ultimately punished after the millennium, after the days of the Feast of Tabernacles and Symbol are over.

So here, Jude is addressing the very thing that is only fully clarified in written form for us when the apocalypse or the book of Revelation came to be written.

Now, if angels are going to be judged, and by the way, I will turn to a verb, the authorized version obscures the whole story. I think it's important because some translations make it clear and maybe none make it as clear as it should be. What we are told is that the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, Revelation 20-10, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever. It happens to be that the verb shall be, the verb shall be is in the plural, in the Greek. It is not true that it is referring only to the devil, but the King James does not, because English does not convey plurality. Here, those who are Spanish speaking would immediately recognize that if properly translated, the verb is automatically in the plural.

The Spanish language could not allow an error of this proportion to enter in, let's say, to the text, because the English language does not differentiate singular or plural at this point.

Our grammar is deficient, and anybody who thinks English is perfect has a lot to learn.

This is a good illustration. Anybody who thinks Hebrew is perfect has a lot to learn.

You learn by translating and see how difficult it is to translate or get the thought clear.

This is true of human languages. So indeed, what we have is a statement that not only the devil, but they, that is, it's built into the Greek verb, who they is. That's the question.

That's referring to the devil and all the demons, because they are going to be dealt with.

But if Jude 6 says that the angels are going to be dealt with in the judgment of the great day, and here we have the devil referred to, and the plural verb, which never could refer to Satan alone, then we go to 1 Corinthians 6, 2 to 3. We learn a very important part of this lesson, Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 6. In the case of matters that we ought to be able to settle among each other, some of the brethren Paul said at Corinth had been going to the courts of law before the unjust, and washing out the church's linens, so to speak, in public. He said, don't you know that the saints, that is, those who are Christian and ultimately born again into the kingdom of God, shall judge the world? Isn't

that part of our duty? Jesus said of the 12, you will sit on 12 thrones judging the tribes of Israel. He said of the church at Thyatira, you're going to break, you're going to rule over other nations with a rod of iron, and if you need to, you will break them until they learn to obey God, just as you would break a piece of pottery.

And if the world is to be judged, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters just among ourselves? And do you not know that we will judge angels? Well, then how much more things have pertained to this life? Now, here Paul says we will judge angels. Now, it's a very important thing to note. We already learned that they're going to be judged after the millennium. We learned that the devil is going to be judged, I should say the devil is going to be punished, and the angels as a whole are going to be judged at that time, where the final decision will be made, based on what they had done from their creation till that point in the judgment.

And this is going to take place in the judgment of the great day, said Jude. So this is after the millennium. Why does this have to wait till after the millennium for the angels? Now, before I answer the question, let me point up that the devil is already judged, so I want to clarify the term, it's easily an easily made mistake to imply that the devil has not been. Let's turn to John first, for the moment, the Gospel of John chapter 16, verse 11.

The Holy Spirit is going to come and will judge the world of righteousness. I won't fill in and let's say convict the world of sin and make clear righteousness and judgment, and we read here of righteousness because I go to the Father and you see me no more, and then of judgment, verse 11, because the prince of this world is judged.

The Holy Spirit is going to teach the church, to teach the world about its sins and to explain righteousness and judgment. It's going to explain about sin because they refuse to believe the way they ought to go. It's going to learn about righteousness because that was lived by Jesus Christ who could not go to the Father in heaven in his presence if he had not been righteous.

Therefore, his is a perfect example. No other religious leader can make that claim.

And you shall see me no more, he said, till a certain time. And it's also going to, the Holy Spirit, convict the world of the judgment to come because the Spirit is going to make no one to the church, how to explain this even if it takes two witnesses in the future.

And it's going to be judged because the prince who is now in charge of the world has been judged and will be removed and the Messiah will replace him.

Now from this we learn something very important. Jesus Christ judged Satan.

God the Father judged Satan. Why was he judged then? Because when Christ came, he didn't have to deal with each little demon. They sometimes were around, of course, and he cast some out and didn't cast others out. But it was not come to replace the angels.

The angels. He came to replace Satan because when Adam was given an opportunity to obey God and did not, he did it willingly but not willfully. The devil came back in charge.

Adam could have displaced Satan. Satan had already proved he was a disobedient spirit from the very beginning. He never administered God's government right.

He did everything wrong. He did it from the point of view of self-centeredness, from the point of view of competition and not cooperation.

When Adam could have but did not succeed in resisting the devil, then Satan became the prince of this world again, of this society. He did it by ruling over human beings to whom the earth was given. God said to Adam, I give you authority over the fish of the sea, what's on the earth and what's in the heavens above.

You are the one who is going to be in charge if you do what I say, and he didn't.

And so the one who then took over in his place is the one whom Adam served.

And so Christ had to come to show that he could administer God's government and that Satan would be displaced. And so we read that Christ not only had to come to die for human beings, which is not the main theme of what I'm discussing today, but he also had to come on earth in the flesh and show that it was possible even for a mortal human being, not merely a spirit being, but even a mortal human being to administer God's government, that as human beings can have a mind that can communicate with God, angels can communicate with God.

We have a mind to understand. Now we are also told that in order to achieve this, we have to have the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, of myself I can do nothing. He did not say, look of myself, I can do everything without the Holy Spirit. The book of Hebrews says, Christ did this through the eternal spirit, which is to say that a human being can do it if the human being is in contact with the Almighty and the Spirit of God empowers one to do so.

So Jesus, the Messiah, that Galilean dreamer, as our Jewish friends like to picture him, he had the Spirit of God, not a demon, as the Pharisees accused him.

And by the Spirit of God, he both resisted the devil, and he obeyed God, and he established the church and the other things that were assigned to him when he came the first time.

Having shown he could obey God, and having shown also that the devil had no part of his ideas in Jesus' nature. There is that strange verse that few people really understand who read it. Jesus said, the devil has no part in me. He meant exactly what he said. The devil has his ideas in most everybody else, and sometimes the devil is in other people. This is why the German generals said what they did of Adolf Hitler. When that man spoke and addressed Neville Chamberlain, he spoke of having fallen from heaven, that he didn't come like Neville Chamberlain just from London to Munich. He had in fact fallen from heaven, and Neville Chamberlain never tumbled whom he was meeting with. He was meeting with the devil in the person of the German body.

Now Jesus Christ had nothing. Either of the devil's thoughts or his person, Judas tragically had the person of the devil in him at a certain point in time.

And once Jesus had proved this, he demonstrated that he could be both Messiah and King and Lord, and therefore the devil was judged as disqualified at that point at which Jesus proved himself.

But the devil has not been removed yet, but he has been judged to be unfit.

And even though Jesus had to finish the act of self-sacrifice by allowing those who did it in ignorance and those who did it willingly, if not willfully, to put him to death. He arose from the dead and ascended to the Father. This is the story of the Wave Sheaf and what was presented early Sunday morning. And the Father accepted him, which means that the Father accepted the fact that the devil has now no claim because someone has been capable.

Of living an entirely different kind of life and administering God's government on the earth.

And he is judged as unqualified and worthy of being cast out of the government over the earth.

So the devil has been judged, but the angels have not yet been. You see, under Lucifer, who became a devil, are angels. And under Christ are human beings composing the church who will be born into the kingdom of God as kings and lords. Now, we cannot judge angels until two things have happened. One, that we show we can obey God in this life, but that's not enough. That's why we do not judge angels at the first resurrection, but at the judgment of the great day, which follows a millennium. What God wants to know and what Christ wants to know and what is fair is this.

Can you also administer the government of God in the kingdom of God? As the angels were asked to administer the government of God in the kingdom of God. Now, Jesus had already done this. He had proved he was in charge, because when he was in the kingdom of God, he cast Satan down. And the only thing that had to be proved in his case is whether he could also do it when he's flesh.

We reverse the process. We have to prove it when we're flesh, and we also have to prove it when we're spirit, that we can administer the government of God properly. So in this life, we resist the devil. We resist demons. And if you don't resist demons, it's possible for a converted mind to become temporarily demon possessed, and that demon or demons have to be cast out.

Has to be or they have to be cast out. Yes, it is possible for a person to have the Holy Spirit.

The demon does not displace the spirit of God. The demon displaces the human will.

The spirit of God does not determine your will. You do. The spirit of God is simply that spirit force that you, your will, your mind can call on in addition to your own.

Now, a demon does not link up with your mind like the spirit of God does. It displaces your will from your bodily functions and your mental functions.

And so the demon can be cast out. We should all know that. That's just a footnote in our comments for today. So we have to prove that we not only can resist the devil, society, our own nature, which has been influenced by the world and by the devil, but we can also resist angels. That is, demons who have disobeyed.

Then when we have proved that, we will be made immortal. But that's not the end of the story.

We are not then going to judge angels. We have to demonstrate over a thousand years of time that we administered God's government correctly and we were fair and just and honest. And when we have proved what we can do, then we will be given the responsibility of judging the angels who should have done equally well in their world and did not.

So we have now a general picture of what is going to happen in terms of future events, but much more needs to be said about the judgment with respect to the church today.

Let's look at the book of Romans when Paul was in prison. He wrote to the Greeks and Jews at Rome in chapter two. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.

The judgment of God is according to truth. So we are now introduced to the judgment of God, and we are going to read in the book of Romans chapter two a number of interesting verses, such as, for there is no respect of persons with God, verse 11, for as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law.

And as many have sinned in the law will be judged by the law. Now you will note that at this point there is meant to be a parenthesis in English. And so verses 13 and 14 and 15 and 15 only are plugged in. Paul was one of these who had a thought, never finished it, added two more, didn't use parentheses because he hadn't invented it yet, and then went on with the previous thought.

So we read, the judgment of God is going to be fair. He is no respecter of persons. If you sin without any knowledge of the law you will be judged according to your lack of knowledge.

If you sin with the knowledge of the law you will be judged according to how much you knew.

That's what he says there in verse 12. But we must then continue. When is this judgment going to take place? This is what's overlooked because people just read it on, read on as if verse follows verse, which is not the case. We're going to be judged. That's what he says, verse 16, in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. This is not the time when the nations who know not God, when some few who do know God, are going to be judged. The people who have sinned in this world with or without the knowledge of the law, they are going to be judged on the basis of what they knew in a time. That's what it says here in a time, a day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. That's according to the good news he announces. So that's a future time. We must distinguish the church from the rest of the world. Paul goes on and shows that we can have confidence of course in God, whether we be a Jew or a Gentile. But we won't go further. This simply links verses together that shows that God revealed to Paul the same thing that Jesus Christ understood, that the time of judging is going to be in the future. And that future judgment is going to involve of course two things.

What you did if you already lived and what you will do once you live again.

Paul does not go into any detail on that matter. That is left for us to perceive from Ezekiel 16, Ezekiel 37, Jesus Christ's account of the judgment in Luke and of course in Revelation chapter 20, and for that matter scattered prophecies throughout the Old Testament, that those are the ones that speak of that second resurrection. Now in this second chapter, it is significant therefore to take note of how this compares with the Gospel of John chapter 12.

46, I am come a light into the world that whoever believes on me should not abide in darkness.

If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not. This is not the time God is judging.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians, we already read that, chapter 6, that this is not the time that we're judging the world. Jesus did not come. He said, I judge him not. I'm only telling you what you ought to know. This is not the time in which I'm going to sit in judgment. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. That's his duty, the first coming. Then we go on.

He that rejects me and receives not my words. Oh yes, there is one that judges him. The word that I have spoken. You may think that you're not going to be judged merely because I as a person will not do it, Jesus said while I'm in the flesh. But what I say you have heard, and I've made it so clear, it came from God, that even those who do not like what I say bear witness to the fact that my message is from God. He said, because even Nicodemus knows that no man can do these works except God is with him. So the world had reason to know, and that's why many of his enemies tried to cover up the fact that they really knew he came as a messenger from heaven. He was not just a child born somewhere in Nazareth or Galilee. The words that I have spoken, those will judge him in the last day. Oh, we've already read about the judgment of the last day in the book of Jude, verse 6. So here Jesus himself, and Jude later in writing it, although we read it first, Jude also shows that there is, as Jesus does here, a judgment in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak in preparation for the judgment, so that the world would be without excuse and could not say that there was something missing that they didn't know. Jesus had rehearsed everything that the Father told him needed to be said, and Jesus rehearsed it often enough in the ears of the disciples and promised even that the

Holy Spirit would bring to your remembrance all these things, and that they would in turn write them down so that we can know. There's nothing that we are going to be judged on in addition to what is already revealed here. Now it may not all be written here, but the principles are laid out here. There will be nothing hidden in the law of God, no principle that we are going to be held accountable for about which we have never heard.

The patriarchs are held accountable not because they read the Bible, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and all who preceded, did not see a single page that we would now call the Bible, though they may have seen some background material, such as Moses refers to in the early part. But what they had was verbalized to them. They had it verbally. They walked with God from Sabbath to Sabbath. They learned what God wanted them to know by discussion.

Jesus did not choose to walk with you and me privately. He chose to walk in Judea, and to have certain people who were students record the message and to have it ultimately translated into English and Spanish or whatever language you like to read. And there you have the message and all that in preparation for the judgment of the last day after the millennium.

So we have quite a bit about this. Now we're also told in Ecclesiastes that God is going to bring individuals into judgment. Let's look at who they are. Ecclesiastes 11.

Rejoice, O young man in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, in the sight of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Therefore, remove sorrow from your heart, put away evil from your flesh, childhood and youth are vanity. Said you're going to enjoy life, you are going to be a teenager.

I must say that it is different growing up, I'm quite sure, as a teenager today than it was for us to grow up at the close of the depression and in a world war. It was different.

Solomon was writing to a period of time such as you as a whole, the younger people today have lived in. A minority would know a distinction and some grew up even in the church here well before the time that I did because some are a generation older than I am who are here in our presence. But in any case, youth has certain things it likes to do and it's perfectly sensible to enjoy youth. It's perfectly sensible to enjoy middle age, it's perfectly sensible to enjoy old age.

But you ought to know that in any case God is going to bring us to judgment, so he gives some advice.

This is a general picture that we have in which Solomon describes for all these things there's coming a judgment. Now what the nature of it is I have not yet gone into with respect to us today.

But chapter 12 in Ecclesiastes verse 14, God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether good or evil. We learn about secret things that people hide.

Every work is going to be brought into judgment whether good or evil. Now for those people who are not now being judged and who have died, that will be the judgment of the last day.

That will be the judgment of the last day. For those who are yet alive when Messiah returns, we learn that there is going to be an earlier judgment that we read of also in Revelation 20.

There we read the fact that, you're not the saints, we'll judge the world. We read that in 1 Corinthians 6. We sit on thrones judging the nations for a thousand years. That's Revelation 20. And we also discover very clearly in Revelation chapter 12, according to the text as it has been preserved officially in the Greek world, that the nations were angry. Revelation, if I said chapter 12, I mean 11,

chapter 12 starts on my page. It's chapter 11 of the book of Revelation verse 18. The nations were angry, and your wrath has come, and the time of the known, the time of the nations, not the dead, that they should be judged. Because when the first resurrection occurs, it says the rest of the dead live not again for a thousand years. So this is clearly not the time of the dead. The majority of the various texts over the years read dead because people could not believe what was written there. But when the Greeks consulted for the printed text at the end of the last century, the proper reading of this verse in their old, fine manuscripts, they found the word exactly as you and I would understand it, tone ethno, the time of the nations that they should be judged. Those are the living nations over whom Christ is going to rule. But those who have died in the past are going to be judged in the judgment of the last day that follows the judgment of the angels and the punishment of the devil and the angels. Now the question then arises, what is the nature of the judgment? If everything that is good and evil, everything public and private, some people's sins go before them. There are some people who are arrested for drunkenness, drunken driving. There are other people you never know that they were alcoholics. They had a secret sin. Some people drive and get in trouble. Others choose not to and are going to get in trouble.

They just didn't do it while driving. But God sees. But now let us look at the nature of the judgment for us, which I reserved to the last here. Romans 14-10. We'll start with this.

Romans 14-10. But why do you judge your brother? Why do you set at naught your brother or put a stumbling block before him? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Now we learned from this that Paul says, there is coming a time when we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ as illustrated by a verse in the book of Isaiah, as illustrated by a verse in the book of Isaiah, which reads, as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue will confess to God. So then every one of us, Paul concludes, will give account of himself to God.

Now, how does this occur? You will find this, of course, in Isaiah 45, verses 2-3.

We will quickly, pardon me, 45-23. My little Bible, sometimes I can't tell whether I have a comma or a dash in the margin. In 45, I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Surely, shall one say in the Lord, have I righteousness and strength. This is talking about the time when the judgment will begin for the house of Israel that is delivered from its enemies, and that judgment will lead to right conduct, not casting into the lake of fire unless there is someone who willfully rebels. But Paul uses this, if that's true of people in the millennium, it's also true of us who live before the millennium, that we are going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ as it is written. So we have the Scripture in Romans 14-10, and every tongue will confess to God. Now what we confess will be quite interesting to look at. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 5-10. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body. According to that, he has done whether good or evil. According to what he has done whether good or evil. Now that means that there are things that we can do that are good or evil. There are some people whose works are mostly good, and some people whose works are mostly evil, if not altogether evil. What is it going to be like? What is this judgment seat, and what is it that is going to be made known? Well, the answer becomes rather clear when we read a number of other scattered verses. Let's go back to Isaiah chapter 41 again.

Keep silent before me, O islands, addressing where the children of Israel are today, as distinct from the children of Judah, and let the people renew their strength. Let them come near. Let us come near together to judgment. Let's talk it over so the judgment does not have to be a problem.

Isaiah 41 says, look, let's get down and let's talk sense. Let's look at what you did. Let's look at what you should have done. Let's see how you can change things now. That's the way it shall be in the future. So to appear in judgment does not have to be a disaster unless your life is a disaster.

That should be clear. Judge yourself, and you won't have to be judged as a disaster.

Now we also note that it's called the judgment seat of Christ. In the ritual of the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies was an ark covered over ultimately with gold on top of the wood.

That was called the mercy seat. Now that's an interesting term. That is where Yahweh appeared, the God of Israel. He appeared on the mercy seat.

We read in Hebrews 9. Let's look at Hebrews 9.

The other is found in Exodus 25.17. You can make a note of that. In the Old Testament, it is described in Exodus 25.17. In Hebrews 9.5, there were two cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat, of which Paul says, we will not speak now in particular. What is the function of Yahweh on the mercy seat? Well, it's essentially the same function that he has now at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. We read in Hebrews 8.1. Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum. We have a high priest. The physical high priest once went into the Holy of Holies in the day of atonement. Now we have a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. And of course that mercy seat was an example of the throne of God in heaven. On the mercy seat, one appeared with the two cherubim. In heaven, the Father also had the son sit with him. But ancient Israel was not acquainted with the Father in a way that the patriarchs were or we can be. And so they only had the one who spoke to them directly. That's all they knew in particular. There were hints of something more just because the word God was plural.

So here we have the Messiah seated at the right hand as our high priest, a minister of the true tabernacle or of heaven itself. As such, he functions. What is his function? We learn that one of his functions is to impart the Spirit of God, verse 10, that I will put my laws in their mind and in their hearts. And they will come to know me so that one of his functions is to teach. The other function in verse 12 associated with this is I will be merciful. That's why it's called the mercy seat. To their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. So in the judgment that is pictured here as occurring based on the return of the children of Israel and the establishment of the new covenant, which you can read about in Jeremiah 31, verses 31 to 34. We don't have to turn there, but that's where this is taken from.

We learn that in the judgment there is forgiveness of sin in the millennium for those who live into that period of time. But that's an example of what Christ is also doing now. That is Paul picks these illustrations of what is yet to be done, sometimes applied to another time, and applies it to this mystery period, this near 2,000 years before the millennium, when God is not recalling Israel to the promised land, that is all twelve tribes, but a time that he is calling out the church, that is that mystery that was not that clearly defined in the Old Testament.

It was foreshadowed by the seven branches of the candlesticks, but it was the least explained period, how long this period would be, 2,000 years of building the church before the kingdom of God is established. So I would suggest that you ought to read, for instance, so we have this much, you ought to read the book of Hebrews chapter 10.

All of it is very good in this connection, but in Hebrews chapter 10, specifically verse 11, now every priest under the Levitical priesthood daily administered, but now we have a special high priest. This

is the covenant I will make with them that I'll put my laws into their hearts, verse 16, and in their minds I will write them and their sins and iniquities I'll remember no more.

So it is possible in the judgment to say that your sins are forgiven, if you acknowledge that it's sin, because you've learned what is right.

If their iniquities are blotted out and God says I will remember them no more, so where there is remission, there is no more than native further physical offering of animals.

Now we discover that Messiah is capable then of forgiving iniquity, not charging us with iniquity, no longer remembering sin, having sins blotted out. You can read of this also in Jeremiah 50-20. You can read in 1 John 2-12 how this function of Christ occurs today, based also on what Paul wrote in Hebrews, but I don't want to read the whole 10th chapter.

I will just call attention in Hebrews 10 to the very important one. I should not have overlooked this before I turn to John, having, therefore, brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ, verse 19, by a new and living way, verse 20, which he consecrated for us through that veil that once was there, that way of consecration made possible because Christ offered himself his flesh as the sacrifice for us. We now can, in fact, do what those people could not. Only the high priest could go through the veil and present physical blood on the mercy seat. Today Messiah is in heaven. He is our high priest. We can have access to God in heaven. We do not have to go through a priesthood on earth. We do not have to confess our sins to a priesthood on earth. The way to have access to God in the days of Moses under the Aaronic priesthood was through the high priest. So today our access is through the high priest who is Jesus Christ, who is Messiah, and who is at the right hand of God. The people did not have to confess their sins to all sorts of individuals. They simply had the high priest in Old Testament times take the sacrifices and make particular ones, in this case, the day of atonement to make reconciliation for the nation at large. They publicly acknowledged, whenever they sinned, by offering a sacrifice. They publicly acknowledged that they sinned, and sometimes it might have been forcibly brought to their attention. Sometimes it might not have been. But the access to God himself in that tabernacle was through the high priest. Today we have access to God the Father through the high priest Jesus Christ, and we have direct access to the mercy seat in heaven.

Where God the Father is, and so we read in 1 John 2.12. I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I just picked this up because it shows sins can be forgiven. James 5.15 also shows in this period of time your sins can be forgiven. And if in the millennium they will be remembered no more, for those people then they need not be remembered now.

If they're going to be blotted out in the future, they can be blotted out for you today.

We have access to God the Father, Jesus Christ functions as our advocate. He acts both as a high priest and the one who represents us. He is not the accuser. We are today at a period of time when we can appear before God, acknowledge our sins in prayer, and have the high priest represent us despite the opposition or the lawyer who is the accuser. That is the devil. We read in Revelation 12 that the devil accuses the brethren day and night because prayers of the saints occur day and night around the world. And whenever our petitions are heard, Christ represents us and the devil tries to accuse. The devil tries to accuse. In many cases he has quite a case.

The problem is, how are you going to get out of it? By acknowledging you earn and that Christ paid the penalty in your stead. But when you acknowledge it, you also have to be willing to have the same attitude that God does toward you, that you want, sorry, you have to have the same attitude to others that you want God to show you. So in Luke 6.37, as well as Matthew 6.14 in addressing the

prayer, which says, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, it also says, forgive us as we forgive others. Forgive us as we forgive others. So we learn to be forgiving if we're going to be forgiven. We also learn to repent. As a result of which, of course, in Psalm 103, verse 12, God removes our sins from us as far as east is from the west, as far as east is from the west. Now, once the sin is removed, something happens under the terms and conditions of the New Testament that didn't happen under the old. We read in Hebrews 9.14 that under the Old Testament, there was no solution to the problems of conscience.

Today, there is a solution. When you are forgiven, you know you're forgiven, because you know God, you keep His commandments, you have an understanding. If you think you know God and don't keep His commandments, you do not really have an understanding, and in many cases, you do not have forgiveness in your conscience, because you simply are disobedient, and God forgives those who are willing to obey Him. And this leads up, of course, to two very important verses.

1 Peter 4.12 shows us that judgment is today on the house of God. That judgment is not just what I've described. That judgment may even include external punishments that can come.

But judgment today is on the house of God in more than one sense, not merely because of what's outside, but because this is for us the time of judgment. This is for us the time of judgment.

1 Peter 4.12. Now look at 1 Corinthians 10.13. There has no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man. God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you were able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it, whether it is the embarrassment of sin or false, or whether it is some persecution from the outside to put you under trial and stress. At least we had two brethren who have disappeared in Guatemala, both most certainly murdered. We have had individuals, prospective members murdered along the Burmese border and also in the Philippines. Problems can occur in violent areas of the world. God does not bring upon you a temptation that you cannot see your way through. That is a promise. But this is a time of testing. This is a time of crisis or judgment.

Most people don't know that the court is in session. It has been in session ever since the Holy Spirit came in AD 31 for the New Testament church. And you are expected to be in court every time there is a sufficient problem that you must address in prayer. And you must be available, so to speak, as Paul said, to be instant in prayer, in season and out of season. You must be ready to appear in court. That is, to be able to talk to the judge, to be able to talk to your advocate. I doubt that most people today in the church understand that when they are praying, they are participating in a divine court session in which the great judge is making decisions that you can be forgiven as you forgive others their trespasses.

And those things need never come up again. They are forgotten, removed as far as east is from the west. So that when you do bow down and acknowledge in the first resurrection, you do not have to do what the Seventh-day Adventist picture the saints doing, going over all the sins of everybody, to be sure that God did not make a mistake. Well, no, he didn't. But what else are they going to do for a thousand years, since there's nobody to judge? I would be bored looking at court records for a thousand years. I think you should take prayer seriously in the sense that what comes out of it determines where you stand with respect to your spiritual condition.

What is forgiven and what is not. Now we stand before the judgment that has been in session for more than 1,950 years. And you have an advocate and you also have an accuser.

And that's the function of Christ so that when the time comes and you are made immortal and notice you are already immortal before you will stand with Jesus Christ before that ultimate time. Right now you are mortal when you are before the mercy seat you're here on earth.

But through the spirit of God you can communicate. But then you will be immortal. You will be in his presence. And that means that you already have been given the free gift of eternal life. There's no more chance to be cast into the lake of fire. What you will acknowledge is that Jesus indeed paid the penalty and made it possible for you to be immortal. And he will reward you according to your works. What have you done with your time? What have you done with your mind? What have you done with all the opportunities that are before you? And you will be given according to the means that you have put to work. Whether of money, of energy, of mind, of course all of it has to do with character.