

WHERE JUDGMENT BEGINS

“... if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:16-17)

Unfortunately, everyone who claims to be a Christian is not saved. Please consider these quotations from Christ for His word will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

- **“Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matt 7:21-23)**
- **“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt 13:47-50)**
- Note that we have underlined “kingdom of heaven”. Thus these statements of Christ are not directed to the world at large, but to the family of God. Here are some other comparisons Jesus gave as warnings to those within the framework of His kingdom.
 - The kingdom of heaven is like a king settling accounts with his servants. The servant who showed mercy was saved, and the servant who did not was condemned (Matt. 18:23 - 35).
 - The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. At the banquet was a man without proper wedding clothes, and was cast into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 22:1 - 14).
 - Again Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to 10 virgins. The 5 wise virgins were prepared and were saved. The 5 foolish virgins were almost prepared but were lost (Matt. 25:1 - 13).
 - Jesus continued the comparison to a man going on a journey and entrusting his servants with various sums of money. The servants who invested the money were rewarded, and the servant who did nothing was condemned (Matt. 25:14 - 30).
 - Jesus continued by warning that Judgment would be a time of surprises (Matt. 25:31 - 46). When Jesus reminded the lost that they had failed to help Him, they were surprised and wanted to know “when” they had done so (Matt. 25:44).

While these Scriptures could be multiplied, surely you get the point. You can be a branch attached to the Vine, but if you do not bear fruit you will be broken off and thrown into the fire (Jn. 15:6). You can be in church, like those written to in Revelation, but if you refuse to repent you will have to face the consequences (Rev. 2:4; 2:16; 2:22; 3:3; and 3:19). Yes! There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1), but the question is, are you in Christ Jesus? Paul commanded the Corinthians to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). We need to do the same!

Remember! **“... we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Cor 5:10).** Please also remember that this Judgment begins with the Family of God!