
Words of Truth

Be Thankful That Jesus Is Your Judge

By: Brian A. Yeager

As I sit to write this article my recent jury duty experience is fresh on my mind. I sat on a jury wherein most of the jurors were willing to convict a man of a crime without ANY evidence that he actually committed the crime. Those jurors allowed emotions and their own assumptions to bring about their erroneous decisions. They disregarded the law that a man is presumed innocent until proven guilty. The judge had instructed this jury several times that this is how we were to reach our conclusion. Still, only few adhered to the rule.

The word of God teaches us to judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). This is nearly impossible for worldly people. People of the world do not think spiritually (I Corinthians 2:9-14). We should. People of the world exist in a different way of life than we do (I John 2:15-17). We see these things established by Paul's amazement that brethren would take one another before courts of unbelievers (I Corinthians 6:1-8). I am not amazed that the jury I sat on had people that didn't reason well or couldn't properly come to a righteous judgment. I knew, ahead of time, that their judgment would be flawed. I knew I would be serving with people that trusted in human wisdom. That tells us that it will be flawed (I Corinthians 3:18).

Human Judgment Is Flawed

Human judgment is flawed. When Jesus was sentenced to crucifixion, notice what was said: *"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him"* (John 19:4). Even though Pilate admittedly found no fault in Jesus, look at how he gave in to the mob mentality: *"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it"* (Matthew 27:22-24). Pilate, as the official of law at that time, permitted the execution of a just man.

Notice how the trial of Stephen went: *"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth*

shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us” (Acts 6:8-14). Stephen then gave his scriptural defense (Acts 6:15-7:53), but was nonetheless put to death by stoning (Acts 7:54-58). So, man has a willingness to put forth false witnesses to unjustly prosecute someone. Remember, this happened to Jesus as well (Matthew 26:59-61).

Assumptions are another problem we find when men are put in a position of judging one another. Notice what happened to Paul in Jerusalem: *“And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar” (Acts 21:27-31). Those Jews had assumed that Paul brought a Gentile into the temple and they falsely accused him of teaching against the Law. This is how human judgment often works. Thanks be to God we have a better system that will determine our eternal fate.*

A Righteous Judge

At the end of the world, we will stand before the Judgment seat of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:35-25:46, II Corinthians 5:10, and II Timothy 4:1). Jesus is called “the righteous judge” (II Timothy 4:8). He has given us the standard by which He will judge us, His words (John 12:48). Unlike juries that are chosen today, He really is a juror that is a peer (Hebrews 4:14-16). Unlike jurors of today that might be swayed by suggestion, emotion, false witnesses, agendas, peer pressure, etc.; Jesus will allow His Judgment to be based solely on what we have done or have not done (John 5:28-29 and Galatians 6:7-9).

When I heard some of the jurors talk they had revealed that they determined their judgment before they even considered the facts. They wanted the person to be guilty just based on the charge. They were merciless. When we stand before Jesus, He will have no agenda against us. Everything He has done has been for us (Matthew 20:28, Romans 5:6-10, Titus 2:11-14, and Hebrews 9:28). He does not want us to be guilty of sin (I Timothy 2:3-5). He is giving us time to be right (II Peter 3:9-10). He is being merciful (I Peter 1:3 and Jude 21). Brethren, be thankful that you will stand before the righteous judge rather than flawed humans who have impure motives and unreasonable thinking.

Conclusion

I do not mean to downplay the Judgment Day. For the unfaithful, it will be a terrible day (Hebrews 10:30-31). However, it will be a day of just judgment because we have a judge in Jesus that has no agenda (John 5:30). It will be a day wherein the evidence of our innocence or guilt will be real evidence. No assumptions. We will be before our Lord who knows everything we think (I Chronicles 28:9), say (Matthew 12:34-37), and do (Colossians 3:24-25). For sinners, it may be a scary thing that the Judge who knows everything will judge them. For us who are saved, we should be thankful that we will be judged on the things we’ve really said and done, rather than those things assumed or falsely witnessed. Be thankful for that!