

Seven Surprises At The Judgment

Introduction. Usually when we think of a surprise, we think of something pleasant: a surprise party or gift perhaps. But not all surprises are pleasant. In fact, some of them are very unpleasant. The most unpleasant surprise I can think of is a surprise at the judgment. The Bible is full of verses which show that some will receive a different verdict than they expected.

The human mind can perform amazing feats, including the dangerous practice of self-deception. The mind can fool someone even when there is extraordinary evidence to the contrary. There is no more fatal self-deceptions than the ones we will examine in this sermon.

I can only hope that everyone who has rejected the gospel or everyone has become unfaithful has done so in the light of a thorough examination and careful scrutiny of evidence. However, I know for a fact that all too often, that is not the case. So in order for you to make an educated decision about your service to God, we will look at some surprises which you may encounter at the judgment.

I. ***Many Will Be Surprised When They See That The Judgment Is Certain And Final***

- A. All who believe in the Bible as God's inspired word will know their eternal destiny begins at the judgment. Judgment should come as no surprise to any because the Bible has been teaching its certainty for centuries.
 - 1. The psalmist (Psalm 96:13).
 - 2. Solomon (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).
 - 3. Jesus (Matthew 25:31-32).
 - 4. Paul (Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:12-16; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; 2 Timothy 4:1).
 - 5. John (Revelation 20:11-15).
- B. In fact, nothing is taught with more certainty by inspiration than the final judgment. In our judicial system there is the possibility that a higher court may rescind the verdict of a lower court. But even in our judicial system, the Supreme Court makes the final ruling. Beyond this there is no higher court to which the convicted can appeal. The verdicts handed down by the Supreme Judge that day will be final.

II. ***Many Will Be Surprised When All Individuals Will Be Present***

- A. Many years ago, Billy Graham said, "When you get to the judgment do not look for me, for I shall not be there." He quoted Romans 8:1 and injected the word, "judgment" for "condemnation." However, Paul was

not exempt from the judgment day because he later affirmed everyone would stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12).

- B. Jesus spoke of the people of Nineveh, Sodom, Gomorrah, and the Queen of the South who would be present at the judgment with the Galileans who had opportunities to obey the Lord, but did not (Matthew 11:20-24; 12:40-42). Even though all these people lived prior to the cross, Jesus affirmed that they would appear in the judgment.
- C. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11), therefore the judgment will be absolutely universal. It seems strange that Mr. Graham did not realize this fact when he announced to the world that he would be exempt from a judgment appearance. People like this are in for quite a surprise on that day of final reckoning.

III. ***Many Will Be Surprised When Christ Is The Judge***

- A. It still amazes me to meet people who deny that Jesus of Nazareth ever lived. Another amazing group are those who accept that Jesus was a historical figure, but never believe that He was anything beyond human. Even more amazing are those who believe Jesus is the Son of God but never allow this belief to prompt them to obey the gospel.
- B. There will be those in judgment who thought that Jesus and God were too good to judge mankind. But those who have accepted another Jesus are going to find themselves facing a judge far different from their false Christs which they formed in their minds.
- C. The Bible has been teaching all along that Christ will be the judge of humanity (John 5:22, 26-27). Matthew 25 constitutes one of the most graphic judgment scenes found in the entire Bible and Christ stated that He would be the judge (vss. 31-33).

IV. ***Many Will Be Surprised When The Bible Is Used As The Standard***

- A. The Bible does not mean much to the masses of our day. They view it only as a human compilation of man's search for a mysterious object he calls God. To such people it is man's book about God, not God's book about man and his need for salvation.
- B. What is more shocking is that religiously oriented people have paid little attention to the Bible. Pronouncements from preachers, papal comments from Popes, statements from synods, concoctions of creeds, and the fervency of feelings have been frequently preferred to what the Bible teaches.
- C. God's book reveals to us the standard in the judgment. God will judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth (Psalm 96:13). Righteousness will determine the standard of judgment and Psalm 119:172 states that God's commandments are righteousness.

Also, the Lord said His words would be the final standard (John 12:48).

V. *Many Will Be Surprised When Our Actions Will Be Revealed*

- A. In judgment, everyone will face their motives, thoughts, and attitudes. These all may have been successfully concealed from our friends, but none of them will be hidden from the all-seeing Eye (1 Corinthians 4:5; Hebrews 4:13; 1 Peter 3:12).
 - 1. In Revelation 2:23, the Lord is referred to as the one who "searched the minds and hearts." In that great day, there will be a terrible price to pay for all the motives, thoughts, and attitudes which have not been washed clean by the blood of Christ.
 - 2. Thankfully, all those evil motives, sinful thoughts, and wicked attitudes which have been forgiven by God will have been forgotten by God (Psalm 103:10-13).
- B. We will also give account of our words and works in the judgment (Matthew 12:36-37; 25:31-46). The average person speaks about 4,800 words a day. All these words will play an important part in our eternal destiny (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6; James 3:1-12; cf. Revelation 14:13).

VI. *Many Will Be Surprised When They See That Heaven And Hell Are Real*

- A. Unbelievers are totally oblivious to the eternal destiny that awaits them. Nobody on the left hand in that day will be an unbeliever! When they find themselves in torment, they will realize that their unbelief was illogical and unfounded (Revelation 21:8).
- B. On the other hand, those who walk by faith will find their eternal destinies glorious (Revelation 21:1-4). We will be far from those who were unbelieving, and who ridiculed our faith and obedience. Experience is a bitter teacher and the fires of hell will be the bitterest of them all.

VII. *Many Will Be Surprised When The Majority Is Lost*

- A. Many will be shockingly surprised that any will be lost at all. Universalism has long contended that all will be saved. Although this doctrine is quite comforting to many people, it is simply not true (Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23; 20:16; Luke 13:23-24).
- B. If the majority of responsible human beings will stand on Christ's right hand in judgment, the Lord had many opportunities to set the record straight. However, He steadfastly declared the doom of the mass of humanity.

- C. Man has a tendency to accept that certain groups will be victorious in the judgment regardless of what the word of God declares.
1. Many people will be surprised when the wealthy, learned, and powerful are not saved by their money, intelligence, or influence (1 Corinthians 1:26). If these people are saved, it will only be because of their humble obedience to the gospel of Christ.
 2. Many people will also be surprised to find that moral people are lost. Morality alone offers no shred of security in inheriting heaven (Acts 11:13-14). Morality does not remit sins. Only Christ's blood can accomplish this great work.
 3. Many people will be surprised to find that religious people are lost (Matthew 7:21-23). When religion is linked to wrong-doing, no matter how fierce the devotion or how ardent the emotions, that religion will condemn.

Conclusion. One of the most important aims of preaching and teaching is to prepare people for surprises at the judgment. It is my earnest intent to fully inform each and everyone of you of what lies ahead. Those who have not obeyed the gospel have a profound decision before them everyday. If you decide to reject the gospel, I want you to know and accept what lies ahead. Please do not make an uninformed decision. Study the scriptures and then determine your reaction to the gospel call. If you have decided to obey the gospel, we are ready to assist you.