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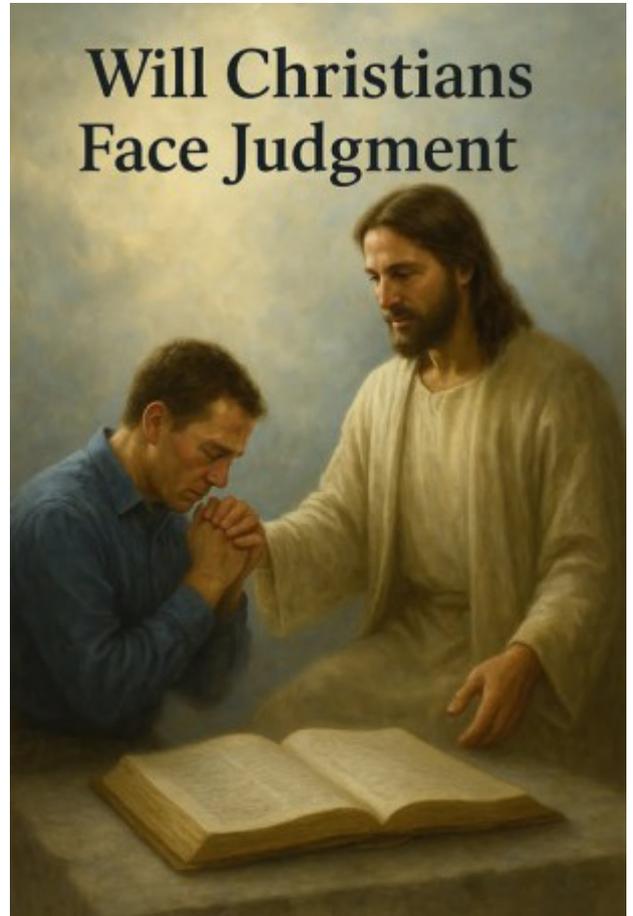
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Judgment - Will Christians Face Judgment?



By Dan Maines

Will Christians Face Judgment?

A few years ago, I asked a question many of us have probably asked at some point: "How can we receive rewards if we are not judged?" I have since come to a clearer understanding of what the scriptures actually teach. And as a fulfilled believer, I want to walk through that with you.

Let me start with what I was taught for years in the churches I attended. Romans 14:10-12 was quoted often and used to stir up fear or self-doubt about the future. They would say things

like, "Every knee will bow at the judgment seat," or "All of us will appear before the judgment seat of God." The implication was always that even Christians would face some kind of final reckoning after death, and that our eternal destiny might still hang in the balance.

I remember thinking, "Am I really going to make it to heaven? I'm still sinning. Will my life be judged at death, and will I be found good enough?" That kind of fear was always in the back of my mind.

Let's read that familiar passage:

Romans 14:10-12 "But as for you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you as well, why do you regard your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all appear before the judgment seat of God. For it is written: 'As I live, says the Lord, to Me every knee will bow, And every tongue will give praise to God.' So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God."

Now, if we just lift those verses out and read them by themselves, yes, it sounds like everyone, even believers, will face a future judgment. But context matters. When we read **all of Romans 14**, we see something different. The entire chapter is about how we treat each other in the faith. It is about not judging one another over disputable matters, like what foods to eat or what day to gather and worship. It is about living in unity, not enforcing our personal convictions on others.

Everything in that chapter revolves around this: let Christ be the judge. Not us. These are not eternal judgments being handed down. This is about how we live in the body of Christ right now. Paul was telling them to stop nitpicking and criticizing one another. Christ alone has the authority to determine what pleases Him in these matters of conscience.

The phrase "we will all appear before the judgment seat of God" is not some warning of a future post-mortem judgment for believers. It is Paul reminding them that Christ is the head, and He will evaluate His people, not on the last day, but in real time, in their lives, in how they treat one another.

If you are in Christ, then you are not waiting for judgment. You already have your answer.

Romans 8:1 "Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Let that sink in. **No condemnation at all.** None. That is not a temporary verdict. That is a permanent reality for those who are in Christ.

Even the Easy-to-Read Version gets it right: "So now anyone who is in Christ Jesus is not judged guilty."

How could we possibly still be looking ahead to some fearful day of reckoning if we are already told we are not guilty?

And Jesus Himself said it even more plainly:

John 3:18 "The one who believes in Him is not judged, the one who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

There is no future courtroom waiting to decide your fate. Jesus draws a sharp line: belief in Him means no judgment. If you believe, you are not judged. If you do not believe, you already are. The verdict has already been rendered, in Christ, you are free.

Paul quotes from **Isaiah 45:23** when he says, "Every knee will bow." He also uses this language in **Philippians 2:10-11**, where

he says:

Philippians 2:10-11 "...so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This isn't just about some moment in the afterlife. It is about Jesus being exalted as King. Those who surrender in this life bow willingly. Those who resist, including first-century Israel, eventually bowed in shame when judgment came in 70AD.

Isaiah 45:23-24 shows us that the bowing of the knee is about acknowledging God's sovereignty. It is not about Christians facing some courtroom at death. The final judgment already happened. Jesus said:

Matthew 16:27-28 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every person according to his deeds. Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

That judgment came in their generation. We are not waiting for it. The judgment seat of Christ was not postponed, it was fulfilled.

Now some people say, "Well, Jesus will still judge Christians after they die." Really? Let's think about that. Did Jesus not already take the judgment for us?

2 Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Jesus did not take your sin, die for you, rise again, declare you righteous, and then say, "But we'll still review everything you did

when you die." That's not gospel. That's confusion.

The truth is, God disciplines His children while they are alive, not as judgment, but as love.

Hebrews 12:5-7 "And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are punished by Him; For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts.' It is for discipline that you endure, God deals with you as with sons, for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?"

Discipline is for correction, not condemnation. And it happens in life, not in death.

So let's stop using fear to motivate Christians. If we are in Christ, we have already been judged and found righteous. Our rewards are already being lived out. Eternal life is not a future promise, it is a present possession.

John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

That's not future. That's now.

So stop worrying about what happens after death. Stop judging your brothers and sisters over opinions and disputable matters. Stop living under fear. And remember: Christ is your life, your righteousness, and your judge and He has already declared you forgiven.

Let's live like people who are truly free.

Key Points And Scriptural Support

Romans 14:10-12 is about how we treat others in this life, not a post-death courtroom scene

Context clearly shows it's about non-essential disputes (eating, days, etc.).

Romans 14:4, 10 – "Who are you to judge the servant of another?" makes this evident.

There is no condemnation for those in Christ

Romans 8:1 – "Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus."

That is a present, ongoing truth, not a future threat.

The final judgment was expected in the first century

Matthew 16:27-28 – Jesus said some of them standing there would live to see the judgment.

Hebrews 10:27, 37 – A judgment "about to come," and "in a very little while."

Discipline for Christians happens now, not after death

Hebrews 12:5-11 – "Whom the Lord loves He disciplines..." while alive, not post-mortem.

John 5:24 – "Has passed out of death into life... does not come into judgment."

Jesus took the judgment for His people

2 Corinthians 5:21 – "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf."

If you are in Christ, **you are not waiting to be judged.**

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