

Breadth of Mind and the Bible - The End Game

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This title is a bit of a mis-statement. There is no “*end*” for those who have eternal life. Nor is this a “*game*.” But, there will be an end to sinners being able to inflict sin upon others - and there is a specific role each Christian will play in that conclusion. So, maybe this should be titled, “*Breadth of Mind and the Bible: The Christian’s Role in the Final Saga of This Age.*”

Revisiting the Two Corinthian Bombshells

Some Christians in Corinth were involved in lawsuits against one another. Paul was appalled by this, and proceeded to drop two bombshells that have resounded from that moment, through the rest of this age - and beyond. “*Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?*” Now, bombshell one. “*Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?*” Bombshell two. “*Do you not know that we will judge angels?*” (1Cor 6:1-3). Paul presents this material as ...

Common Knowledge

These bombshells are questions with the answer already supplied. That means ... these were not inquiries. “*Do you not know ...?*” “*Not*” is the adverb, “*ou*” with an indicative verb (it is also in the perfect tense). This is a Koine Greek literary device for a strong statement. Paul is stating, “*Yes, you have known, and continue to know*” Know what? That “*the saints will judge the world*” and “*we (the saints) will judge angels.*”

Paul proceeded to admonish them as to how this common knowledge should be applied to their current circumstance (read the entire 1Cor 6:1-12 passage). But, for us the question is this: Do we, as Christians, know it is **our** destiny to judge the world ... and angels? “*How? When? Where?*” Let’s back up and see if we can piece this together.

Some Old Testament “Clues”

The first bombshell really should not surprise us. “*Let the godly ones exult in glory, let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth (throat) and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishment on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the judgment written. This is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the Lord!*

” (Ps 149:5-9). Then, as the Old Testament’s closes, another clue. “*But for you who fear My Name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip like calves from the stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the souls of your feet on the day which I am preparing,*” says the Lord of hosts (Mal 4:2,3). Two verses later, He speaks of “*the great and terrible day of the Lord*” - a future day of judgment, we now call ...

Judgment Day

“*He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead*” (Ac 17:31). There are actually two different Judgments. The sheep to His right will experience The Believer’s Judgment (Ro 14:7-12 & 1Cor 3:10-15). The goats to His left (unbelievers) are headed for The Great White Throne Judgment (Mt 25:31-46 & Rev 20:11-15). It’s possible the Believer’s

Judgment will occur just on the other side of the Christian's exit from this age. That judgment will be accompanied by rebukes and fires and (hopefully) commendations and rewards. The saint will then experience a final cleansing and confirmation in eternal righteousness. The saint will then be in Paradise (Lk 23:43) until reunited with his/her raised and recreated immortal body on the Last Day (Jn 6:39,40). Then judging duties at the Great White Throne will be assigned. The eternal states of Heaven and Hell will then be established. Let's look at this point by point.

The Time Line Just Forwarded ...

... is not the point. The dynamics of these coming transactions ... are the point. For example, the dispensing of rewards to the saints may come in several different ways. In Paradise, *if* the Believer's Judgment has already occurred and *if* operating on a linear time line, Christians might be watching their eternal rewards grow as God continues using their life's work, witness, and influence in this age. Can you imagine what Paul's writings are producing this very day worldwide? But, it is also possible God has already presented the "*final check*" - handing out rewards not yet actually realized in real time - since He knows "*the end from the beginning*" (Isa 46:10). God may do this in Satan's presence ... instilling a great panic in him ... letting him see the degree that saint will ultimately be used to "*plunder his house*" (Mt 12:29). This would not be unlike God. He did this with Jesus on the eve of the greatest battle of all time.

In the Upper Room, we read: "*during supper ... Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands ... rose from supper ... girded Himself about ... and began to wash the disciples feet*" (Jn 13:2-5). Jesus was not yet crucified (thus, victory had not yet been secured in real time) but, all authority had already been given to Him ... ahead of time. What an insult - what an assault - by God the Father! Satan's long devised plans and preparations - his best - declared, "**Failed!**" ... before the final assault even started. Jesus was even washing Judas' feet! One can hear the Father saying, "*You will 'bruise Him on the heel' - but, He is about to crush your head* (Gen 3:15). *Your fate is sealed.*" Put yourself in Satan's place at that moment and you may get a sense of this taunting - this mocking - by his Creator ... and the rage it would engender in the doomed god of this age (2Cor 4:4). "*He who is enthroned in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at (him). Then He will speak to (him) in His anger and terrify (him) in His fury*" (Ps 2:4,5). Oh, how he hates the Father. How he hates the Son. While Satan successfully stripped the Christ for a few humiliating hours, Jesus has eternally stripped him (Col 2:15) ... starting in the Upper Room.

I must now take leave of you ... and address myself.

The Believer's Judgment - Appearing Before The Judgment Seat of Christ

I am destined for an unavoidable Appointment before the Lord. **It will come.** "*For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ ... each one shall give account of himself to God*" (Ro 14:10,12). While I do believe I am His, and have been pardoned, I still must be found as one who "*endures to the end*" (Mt 24:13). I have not yet reached the end. I must not assume or presume or continue with sin unaddressed - rationalizing it with some subtle, lethal form of thinking that where sin abounds grace abounds all the more - and risk being of that number whose "*condemnation is just*" (Ro 3:8 and 5:20).

He warns of neglecting the proper use of talents He has granted - or risk losing even what I thought I had (Lk 8:18). He is an austere Master, "*taking up what (He) did not lay down and reaping what (He) did not sow*" (Lk 19:21). When John, the Apostle of love, said, "*watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward*" (2Jn 8), it is clear his audience could choose otherwise - and have less than a full reward.

From this verse, it appears that when a Christian retreats from God-gained ground, loss ensues ... eternal loss. He alone will judge when I made u-turns and headed back toward Egypt.

Sometimes, I wonder if this is going to be a public vetting ... or a private scene. I hope private because of the embarrassment, shame and humiliation. But, that is just man-fear on my part. *"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him"* (Lk 12:4,5).

A realized hope of finding my name in the Book of Life (Rev 20:12,15) does not end this judgment matter. While I may have built upon the right foundation post-conversion, that does not mean all my activity was right. Jesus Christ will review each act, each word, each thought and alone determine what was in Him and what goes up in smoke. *"(E)ach man must be careful how he builds upon the foundation ... for the day will show it ... and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work ... survives, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire"* (1Cor 3:10, 13-15. Incidentally, if "*the day*" is a strict reference to The Last Day, then the Believer's Judgment does not come at the saint's exit from this age as suggested earlier). Some will emerge from this meeting empty handed - though still saved. My best case scenario - **best case scenario** - will be a mixture of triumphs and humiliations. When I think of some of the things in my post-cross experience, I find myself hoping for a quick gloss over. But, I do not think ... I will escape that easily. I suspect that along with the fires (plural) before me, the cost for pardoning the fuels of those fires ... will be fully unmasked.

As my fires rage, if I am able to talk, I suspect my utterances will parallel Isaiah's or Peter's: *"Woe is me, for I am ruined! ... I am a man of unclean lips ... depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"* (Isa 6:5 and Lk 5:8). It is likely Daniel's condition will be replicated: *"There remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me"* (Dan 10:17). As those fires burn out, and the cost for their expungement is being fully realized, my only hope will be an undeserved pardon, in the power of mercy - extended by the Judge Himself. But, that has always been my only hope anyway. Some things never change.

Well, I guess I am now ready to resume our conversation. But before moving on, the reason I suspect the Believer's Judgment will occur at one's exit is because I don't believe Abraham has been in Paradise for thousands of years with his failings still unaddressed before the Lord (Lk 16:19-31 with Lk 23:43). The same for David, Samson, Paul and all the rest of the redeemed. Conversion does not mean we never sin again. God would not need to rebuke, discipline or scourge us if we had no post-conversion sin problems. But we do, and He does (He 12:5-12). Upon entering Paradise, I just don't think we will be dragging those humiliations in there with us. All that will have been burned *"outside the camp"* (He 13:11-13).

Judging Fellow Christians

One reason we are not to judge brothers - damning them or their work - centers on the following passage: *"Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will for the Lord is able to make him stand"* (Ro 14:4). On one hand, God commands we must act when a professing Christian engages in clear-cut sin (Mt 18:15-17 and 1Cor 5:9-13). This **requires** judging. He also commands we *"examine everything carefully"* that a professing Christian teaches (which also informs his/her chosen practices) and then *"adhere to that which is good"* (1Thes 5:21). This requires **continual** judging. But at the same time, I am to always be aware that no genuine Christian will answer to me for any of his/her work and witness - good or bad, right or wrong, truth or error. They, just like I, will appear one-on-One with the Boss

of the Church (which He invented) and answer only to Him on his/her representation of His will, ways and priorities. In this context, He says, “*(t)herefore, do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts, and then each man’s praise will come to him from God*” (1Cor 4:5). My hands are full appraising my own motives and agenda without digging into another’s field. “*The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick. Who can know it?*” (Jer 17:9). I know in the New Covenant we have been granted a new heart, but if you think the old one has vanished ... it has successfully deceived you (1Jn 1:8).

As each “event” is spread out before Him, very few scenes will be without blemish - especially any long-term endeavor. Fuel for fire will be mixed in. But, the genuine believer who watches all of his/her work consumed by fire ... will still stand. “*The Lord is able to make him stand*” (Ro 14:4). As my fires end, will He raise me up and show me “*gold, silver (and) precious stones*” (1Cor 3:12)? Will anything survive the flames? Will I hear, “*Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your Master*” (Mt 25:23)? I must rededicate everything right now.

“Know Fully”

Some estimate that only a billionth (or less) of our brain’s total storage capacity is used in a 70 year life span. Why does man have a brain with such immense storage capacity? Why would evolution produce, and retain, an organ with so much excess capacity? Evolutionists have no explanation for this. As Biblical Theists, we do. Man was not created for a mere 70 year life span. The storage capacity of our brain is a testimony of God’s original intent for man ... and a remnant of that intent. He has already informed us that “*not a head of your head will perish*” (Lk 21:18). So, ... what about the brain matter under that hair?

Something quite astonishing awaits each believer. Paul told the Corinthians, “*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known*” (1Cor 13:12). The word, “*dimly*” in Koine Greek is “*ainigma*.” We have derived the word, “*enigma*” from it. The Greek literally means, “*an indirect or indistinct visual image*” (Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, Vol 1, pg 280). But, this is clearly referencing our understanding. Things which we just can’t “*see*” now, we will then “*know fully*.” How fully? As fully as we have been known - by God. That means that all of life’s questions and all of our life’s perplexities will be known and understood. Mysteries, puzzles, riddles ... every enigma will be untangled. This is an astounding promise. That is one reason why we are told, “*let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right*” (1Pet 4:19). We ... will ... know.

So, when will we know in full? Well, as the Believer’s Judgment will be “*face to face*” with the Judge, and since He is the One who opens the “*mind to understand the Scriptures*” (Lk 24:45) - that moment (particularly after the flames have been exhausted and the believer is made to stand) seems like a pretty good time to have the mind opened to “*know fully*.” But, whenever it is, the breadth of mind gained at that instant will be phenomenal. We will be breathing in life ... an instant of empowerment, liberation, and “*joy inexpressible*” (1Pet 1:8). In that instant, all the bonds of darkness will be eternally shattered!

To “Know Fully” Does Not Mean “To Know Everything”

We will never know everything God knows. He will always remain a Creator of surprises and unending wonders. He will always be an inexhaustible fount of information and superlative

creativity. For example, energy, matter and the three dimensions we currently experience are all creations of God. He thought these things up ... and then made them. There is no telling what other "things" He will come up with. Even now, angels exist in another realm, yet can manifest themselves in many ways in ours (See Gen 19:1-22, Num 22:21-35, 2Sam 24:15-17, Dan 3:28, Mt 1:20, Mt 28:2-7, Ac 12:7, 2Cor 11:4, Mt 8:16, 28, and Jn 13:27 for a few examples). But I do think that whatever areas we personally delve into - nothing will be held back. We will always be learning (like the angels ... I am coming to that below), but if our particular area of interest does have a completion in its knowledge, we will be allowed to "fully know" the material. If my speculation about this proves errant, that can only mean ... the reality will be even better.

Confirmed In Righteousness Forever

Another miracle to be visited upon the saint is that he/she will be delivered from all remaining sin, and all sin inclinations, and be established in eternal righteousness. This may be simultaneous with the fires ending, being made to stand, and knowing in full. The saint will then be in full moral agreement with God, and yet be as far away from robotic as can be imagined. The saint will be a free thinker - knowing no bounds as to the depths of inquiry and investigative study - yet have no inclination to step outside the eternal guard rails of righteousness. The Christian's desire will always be ... to choose good. There will be no struggle about that ... ever.

Resurrection on the Last Day

Paul told the Corinthians our bodies are "*sown in corruption (and) raised in incorruption ... sown in weakness (and) raised in power*" (1Co 15:42,43). The Christian is destined to exist in his/her physical body - but, a perfect and immortal one. Jesus said, "*this is the will of My Father; that everyone who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day*" (Jn 6:40. Also see 1Cor 15:50-54). "*What then shall we say to these things? ... He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*" (Ro 8:32). These stupendous bestowments are but crumbs from His table ... compared to what He already gave us. Boy ... what "*crumbs*."

The Door

Two thousand years ago, Jesus declared, "*I am The Door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved ... no one comes to the Father, except through Me*" (Jn 10:9 and Jn 14:6). This Door has been open since then, and as you are now reading this, still is. But, it will be closed. John told us we are living "*in the last hour*" (1Jn 2:18). When the Door closes, and the resurrection for both believers and unbelievers has been completed (Jn 5:28,29), the next event will be ...

The Great White Throne Judgment

About three thousand years ago, after listing a whole set of moral violations, God said to the perpetrators, "*These things you have done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you. I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes*" (Ps 50:21). The fact that one does not believe in Judgment Day will have no bearing on it ... or that unbeliever's presence in it. I once worked for a man who decided government did not exist. One evening, he phoned and asked that I bring bail money. His second wife, and unpaid child support, landed him in jail. He emerged from the cell block with his nose buried in a book, trying to deny the reality of steel bars, locks and prison guards around him. As we were driving home, he angrily said, "*I don't see what's so #*!/+ funny.*" To this day, I don't remember laughing ... outside.

God has kept a book on each unbeliever (Rev 20:12). It is filled with hostile decrees against him/her (Col 2:14). It contains every deed, every careless word, and even the secrets of each defendant's heart (Rev 20:13, Mt 12:36, and Ro 2:16). Our Creator states fact and deals in facts. I hope you realize this before that moment. Realization then ... will be of no benefit.

Concerning Jesus, "*God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*" (Phil 2:9-11). While "should bow" and "should confess" are in the subjunctive mood - indicating probability - this mood was sometimes interchangeable with the future ... thus, "*will bow*" and "*will confess*" (Dana and Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, pg. 170, footnote 2). But, even if this passage is the more common subjunctive (thus, an appeal for what all creatures should do), the next passages aren't. "*I have sworn by Myself ... a word that will not be revoked ... as I live, saith the Lord, 'every knee will bow to Me and every tongue will confess'*" (Isa 45:23 and Ro 14:11). "*All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot - did not - keep his soul alive ...*" (Ps 22:29). When the Lion of the Tribe of Judah decides to eternally arise, we will then see "*all things ... subjected to Him*" (1Cor 15:28). No votes will be taken about this matter, no counsel requested ... and none received. "*And they did not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds are all around them; they are before My face*" (Hos 7:2).

The Early Assignment

While Jesus is The Judge, that does not negate substantive employment of the saints in that work. Even now, He is The Teacher ... yet, He graces saints with the gift of teaching - and so employs them. Similarly, He alone is the Savior ... yet, He gifts and employs saints as evangelists and empowered witnesses. After the physical resurrection on the Last Day, the first assignment for believers will probably be ... this eternal judgment of unbelievers and the fallen angels. This will not be, or ever could be, an earned position. The saint is not innately superior. And this will have nothing to do with self righteousness. The saint will have been made righteous ... and that present reality will be all that matters. When the moment of eternal judgment arrives, the saint will be in full agreement with all His values and views ... with no hesitation.

The Saints: Judging Unbelievers

On Judgment Day, it is possible (maybe even likely) God will use those He delivered from the various sins as the judge of those who persisted in those sins. I will not be the least bit surprised to find Him using ex-abortionists as the judge of the non-repentant ones. Or ex-thieves as the judge of thieves, or ex-homosexuals as the judge of homosexuals ... and on down the line. Those who availed themselves of the power and mercy of God to become victorious over those sin patterns will stand as a testimony, witness - and judge - toward those who refused deliverance ... "*whose portion in life is of the world*" (Ps 17:14).

The Saints: Judging Angels

When Paul asked/said, "*do you not know that we shall judge angels?*" (1Co 6:3), this is surely referencing fallen angels. God's "*chosen angels*" (1Tim 5:21) have no sin requiring judgment. (And if they are to be rewarded for their service to us [He 1:14] that will probably be a transaction of angel-to-Creator, as is believer-to-Creator.) This Corinthian passage is the sole passage informing of this coming "*ministry*." Normally, it is dangerous to build doctrine on a

solitary verse. But, in this case, the wording is so clear, that I know of no scholarship that wonders what Paul is saying. And, as seen above, Paul presents this destiny as one of absolute common knowledge. He even follows up by disparagingly asking the Corinthians how is it they are incompetent in rightly judging "*matters of this life*" - in light of these spectacular, eternally resounding, empowered by God, binding sentences to be levied by them upon both man and angel! In the vernacular of a 21st century, pro baseball fan, Paul is saying, "*You are destined for the Big Leagues - yet your actions declare ... you aren't even playing tee ball yet.*"

Angels: Chosen and Fallen - A Closer Look

As God was developing the salvation plan over the millennia, the angels, who are far superior to man in cumulative knowledge, age, and perspective - were infatuated. God's orchestration leading to the Christ, constituted "*things into which angels long to look*" (1Pet 1:12) - or, Koine Greek, "*things into which angels lust to stoop down and look into - to penetrate.*" They are creatures who grow in knowledge. God's activities superbly challenge, and overwhelm, even the most mentally brilliant of the angelic order, "*who are greater in might and power*" than any man (2Pet 2:11). In the cross, they witnessed ... and learned.

In forging salvation, diametrically opposing forces were brought together. On the cross "*lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other*" (Ps 85:10). Truth has not been abandoned in God's extension of mercy toward sinners, and justice has not been compromised in establishing grounds for peace for those same sinners. But, the cross has also created diametrically opposing dynamics in these two groups of angels. I am absolutely positive His "*chosen angels*" are awestruck by this entire affair - and have found God's activity stunning from that point forward. They are witnessing (and are employed in - He 1:14) an astounding plundering of Satan's house (Col 2:15, 1Jn 3:8 and Mt 12:28,29) ... plucking fools like me out of it ... with God remaining unsullied in the process. But for the fallen angels, the story is quite ... different.

At some point, each fallen angel learned, "*I am doomed ... eternally doomed.*" I know they know they are damned, because ... I know it. And they are greater in might and power (and knowledge) than me. The Legion in the Gadarenes demoniac(s) said to Jesus, "*Have You come here to torment us before the time?*" (Mt 8:29). So, it appears they already knew their fate. But, maybe absolute certainty of this reality struck when Jesus died - having navigated this life, and the cross, without sinning. Satan clearly had a great interest in getting Jesus to sin. After the failed wilderness temptations, we are told, "*he departed from Him until an opportune time*" (Lk 4:13). I do not know what Satan thought he would gain by getting Jesus to sin. Did he think it would somehow release himself from his doom? Did he think Jesus' fall would prove he is more powerful than God - thus making God unable to impose His damning will? But maybe this has nothing to do with gain. Maybe Satan, and his, just wanted to inflict inconceivable chaos in the Godhead. And, as a side benefit, all humans would be damned as well - as there would be no grounds for sin's expungement. That would be eternally killing myriads of birds with one stone.

As fallen angels have come to understand they have lost, and an eternal lake of fire, created by their Creator, awaits them (Mt 25:41 and Rev 20:10), shock waves have surely resonated through the ranks. Just because Satan himself is "*full of fury, knowing that he has but a short time*" (Rev 12:12) - that does not mean all the other doomed angels react in this same manner. While all are ultimately vicious, they are all still individuals. Before their fall, each were surely gifted in very personal and unique ways. They may have even possessed varying temperaments - in a righteous sort of manner. While the infection of sin perverts and warps all facets of the character - each fallen angel is still uniquely individual. Even in the human population, sin has impacted individuals

differently. Some become aggressive, some confused, some sly, some lazy. Some set goals and remain disciplined toward them, while others are overcome by circumstances or substances. Sin has adversely impacted each fallen angel in individual ways. A study of demon manifestations in the New Testament shows different kinds of evil and temperament. I am not altogether convinced the fallen angels infesting the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1-20) would also be employed in the divination girl (Ac 16:16-34), or the silver-tongued, disguised “servants of righteousness” espousing “doctrines of demons” (2Co 11:15 and 1Ti 4:1).

And here is another consideration. When a warring army knows defeat is certain, it is hard to maintain order in the ranks. Is it possible Satan’s ranks have descended into varying levels of confusion, disorientation, panic and rebellion ... even to him? I do not know if he can inflict harm on other fallen angels, and thus coerce continued obedience, or if such activity is even needed. Maybe not ... but if so, I will not be too surprised.

But, Can You Imagine the Angst ...

... when they learned redeemed sinners have been slated - to become their damning judges? If I was a fallen angel, this knowledge would alternately sicken and enrage me. *“I have thousands and thousands of years of life experience in realms these peons have no knowledge of - and these pathetic, naive, shallow, babied, little newcomers are going to be empowered to eternally judge me? And each conversion produces another judge?”* This has been common knowledge in their ranks for at least two thousand years now. It is no wonder ... they long to kill us all.

Empowered Judgment

Righteousness, in this current age, has no home. Little pockets arise as God grants various domains for a season to those He calls “from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God” (Ac 26:18). But, when the saint exits (either by unfaithfulness or leaving this age), if there is no genuine replacement, things turn back to “normal,” which means, “alienated and hostile in mind” toward God and “engaged in evil deeds” before God (Co 1:16). “Only in the Lord (is) righteousness” (Isa 45:24). Righteousness, justice, and integrity - as defined by God - are elusive virtues for the natural man in the natural world. “There is none righteous, not even one” (Ro 3:10). This circumstance is at the heart of all the man-made trauma from Adam forward. And, as you are reading this article, this age is still intact ... with its continued travesties.

This does not mean that man has no concept of what righteousness is. Many unbelievers have an innate understanding of its broadest strokes. Murder, stealing, rape, kidnaping, lying, fraud - there are many activities deemed “unrighteous” by almost all cultures. But, one of the great historical frustrations has been the miserable inability to thwart evil and enforce righteousness. Stated another way, righteousness, and ensuing justice, in this age ... are victims. Quite honestly, this has caused many to become angry at God. Job, in his darkest hours, complained vigorously that the wicked now mocked him and “do not refrain from spitting at my face” (Job 30:1,10). Earlier he said “I will say to God, ‘... let me know why Thou dost contend with me Is it right for Thee indeed to oppress (me) ... and to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked? ... I am indeed not guilty; yet there is no deliverance from Thy hand’” (Job 10:2,3, and 7). “I desire to argue with God” (Job 13:3 - Also read chapters 16, 17 and 19 of this extremely intense episode). God decided to respond to the boil-covered Job, who had lost all his children and possessions to natural disaster ... and murderous, marauding bands of men. Here is a small part of God’s reply. “Now gird up your loins like a man ... adorn yourself with eminence and dignity ... pour out the overflowings of your anger and look on everyone who is proud and make him low ... and tread down the wicked

where they stand ... then I will confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (Job 40:7-14). Job was helpless in being able to enforce his **own** version of righteousness ... much less God’s. We are in a real mess. A real mess.

God sums up our current life and world, where righteousness languishes, in three little words. We reside in the “*present evil age*” (Ga 1:4). Fortunately, this sordid circumstance is to end. On Judgment Day, all platforms upon which unrighteousness has been able to stand will be destroyed ... never to rise again. At the Judgment, power will be granted to all agents of righteousness to fully, and forever, employ righteousness - “*to execute on them the judgments written*” (Ps 149:9). This unearned honor will fall to each Christian. Jesus’ statement will never be more clearly seen: “*He who is not with Me is against Me*” (Lk 11:23).

So, I Must Ask Myself ...

“Am I ready to stand, in full conviction, with the eternal Creator and judge man and angels exactly as He does?” My personal behavior attests otherwise. I still sin. I still sin a lot. In fact, the more I learn of God and His ways, the more I see how much I sin. And I see ... but a part. I don’t know that I have ever been able to echo Paul: “*For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the One who examines me is the Lord*” (1Co 4:4). If I ever said this to those closet around me ... they would just laugh, then laugh some more, then - well, you get the point. So, here I am again. I must become a wholly, holy righteous judge to man and angel. I must rededicate everything - right now.

Conclusion

The truly narrow-minded are those who have never honestly and vigorously sought God. But, I know I, too, am still so afflicted ... and have not yet attained the breadth of mind necessary to fulfill the saint’s role at the Judgment. But, I have determined anew that I am not going to allow anyone, or anything, to subvert this quest ... including myself. My opinions about God - what He thinks, values and chooses to engage in - will have no place there, nor should they. My goal is to become a Biblical Theist without flaw. I must apply myself to His Book, and ask Him to bow down to my level and teach me accurately. Then, I must not compromise or rationalize anything for my agendas. If I have any hope of gaining the breadth of mind necessary to be favorably employed and deployed by the King of all kings and Lord of all lords on Judgment Day, I must press on “*toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil 3:14). That is my objective and I hope to see you there ... beside us/Us.

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