

*You Pick The Sermon: How Do I Prepare For Judgment?*

*By Jason Huff*

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*Psalm 9:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12; John 5:22-30*

Our final Scripture reading today comes from John 5:22-30. May God add His blessing to the reading of His holy word. “Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out -- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”

I'm really glad for this summer's You Pick The Sermon series. We've covered topics I'd not expected. And for me, the greatest thing is that the questions you asked often led to more questions! That's what this final week's You Pick The Sermon is from: a question from a recent sermon. Several weeks ago, I mentioned in passing that all people face judgment. That led at least a couple of you to wonder if you were really ready for it, and if judgment means what we think. We still somehow picture God as angry, mad at us all the time, ready to zap us if it wasn't for Jesus. If we're all going to be judged, are we all in big trouble? Not only is it a great close to our summer series, it's a great way to lead into our fall series, Storytellers, where we'll make sure we understand the story of the Bible and the story of Jesus and how to tell it to others.

Today, we're going to focus on a few important things to know about God's judgment – first, judgment is something we long for and know is good, not bad. Second, God's judgment about our salvation is about His grace, not our good works. Finally, what we don't know about judgment is a good part of God's plan.

The conversation between Sandi and I went like this..... Sandi said she hopes she will go to heaven. I replied. If you believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior then it states in the Bible that you will go to heaven. Do you believe He is your Lord and Savior? She said "yes but I've done some bad sins in my life". I said "Well, Pastor and the Bible said that we will have to account for our sins but as I understand it we should still be in Heaven. What do you suppose it means we will have to account for our sins?" So we started contemplating what will happen

when that time comes and I said jokingly "maybe there are different levels for those who sinned more".

When we met up with Catha something was said that made Sandi and I joke about the different levels. What I tried to say was "according to Pastor we have to account for our sins". However, it didn't come out that way. Instead it sounded like I was saying "Well according to Pastor there are different levels". Her reply to that was "I don't think he ever said that". I tried to correct her and tell her we were joking around about the different levels (just like the clouds) but we got interrupted and never picked the conversation back up.

Don't worry Sandi and I do not think there are different levels of Heaven. But we still don't know what happens once we are held accountable for what we have done in this life. Since the Bible doesn't say, I am assuming you don't know this answer either. If I am wrong, please feel free to shed some light on this. :-)