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P.O. Box 13006, Roanoke, VA 24030-3006

This newsletter is also available on our website: www.ptnews.org

E-mail address for general communication: mike@ptnews.org

E-mail address for orders: deedee@ptnews.org

Our Judge is Coming

Part Two

“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” – [John 5:25](#)

By Mike Wingfield

This month's newsletter is a continuation of an article published in the February edition. In the previous newsletter, I began to address the Biblical facts about our day in the future courtroom of God. In part one, I examined the first four of five questions that need to be answered about this extremely vital future event in which all of humanity will participate.

According to the Bible, God will judge every person who has ever been conceived. Everyone will have their day in the court of God. When that day comes, God has ordained that we will stand before the God-man, Jesus Christ. Jesus will be our judge. Jesus will judge each person because we have all been created by Him. He has given us the gift of life and the privilege to live in His creation. Therefore, we must all stand before Him to give an account to our Creator and Redeemer. When that day of our judgment arrives, Jesus will examine our words, deeds, and motives and compare them to His holy standards recorded in the

Word of God. His judgment will be true, fair, comprehensive, and predictive.

Now, let us give a Biblical answer to the fifth and final question that needs to be answered concerning our judge and our judgment day.

5. When will God Judge us?

The Bible consistently connects the timing of man's judgment with the miraculous and supernatural resurrection of his dead physical body. In [John 5:21-29](#), Jesus spoke of the resurrection of the dead and their judgment as occurring together in close proximity. He said: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”* ([John 5:25-27](#)) The Apostle Paul consistently taught that

the judgment of God for the New Testament believer is connected to the Rapture of the church. ([1 Corinthians 4:3-5](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#)) In [Revelation 22:12](#), Jesus said: *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."* According to [Revelation 20:12-13](#), the resurrection of all of the dead sinners out of hell will be immediately followed by their judgment.

This is a very important matter for us to grasp. I have heard so many preachers say at a funeral that the deceased have "gone on to receive their rewards." This is really not what the Bible teaches. When a believer dies, their soul is ushered immediately in the presence of their Lord in heaven. ([2 Corinthians 5:8](#)) However, the believer does not experience their judgment before God at that moment of time, or when they arrive in heaven. As mentioned in the previous passages, all church saints will be judged simultaneously at the time of our Lord's coming at the Rapture. This simply means that all of the church saints who are in heaven have not yet been judged. In His infinite wisdom, the Lord has determined and ordained that the judgment of the believer must wait until the time of the resurrection of his physical body, and the completion of our redemption when we will be made like our Lord. ([Philippians 3:21](#); [1 John 3:2](#))

At this point in time, Jesus is the only person who has been physically resurrected from the grave. ([1 Corinthians 15:20-23](#)) Therefore, no person has yet been judged by the Lord. Please notice that [1 Corinthians 15:23](#) states that every man will be resurrected *"in his own order."* While we do not and cannot know the exact time of the resurrection of the dead and the coming of the Lord ([Matthew 24:36, 42, 44, 50; 25:13](#)), we do know the order of these events. As with everything else, God has ordained that there would be an order to the resurrection and judgment of all persons. Let us now attempt to unravel the many Biblical texts that give us a hint at when these resurrections and judgments will take place.

First, please notice that Jesus spoke about two different resurrections and judgments. In [John 5:28-29](#), He said, *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."* Notice that the Bible refers to the resurrection of Christ and the saints as *"the*

first resurrection." ([Revelation 20:5](#)) Jesus also called this *"the resurrection of life."* ([John 5:29](#)) Therefore, the second, or final resurrection is for all of the sinners of all of the ages. Jesus referred to this as *"the resurrection of damnation."* ([John 5:29](#))

Let us more closely examine each of the resurrections and judgments. Notice once again that [1 Corinthians 15:23](#) is speaking about the first resurrection and its accompanying judgments connected to Christ's coming. By God's design, He has ordained that there is an order to the resurrections and judgments. The first resurrection of the saints takes place in three stages, according to three different groups of saints that will each be uniquely judged because of what they endured for the cause of Christ in each of their different time periods [dispensations of time- [Ephesians 1:9-10](#)]. Remember, as mentioned before, the Lord does not judge us all the same, but according to our individual circumstances or reference to His management of time (dispensation). So, let us examine the three phases of the resurrections and judgments.

Phase 1 of the First Resurrection- Christ's Resurrection

This initial phase of the first resurrection took place at the resurrection of Jesus Christ approximately 2,000 years ago. The Bible is adamant that Jesus' resurrection is *"the firstfruits of them that slept."* ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)) After His resurrection, He ascended back to His Father in heaven. This completed the first phase of the first resurrection.

The Jewish people understood the explanation of Jesus' resurrection as being *"the firstfruits of them that slept."* ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)) The Feast of Firstfruits was a celebration of the early spring harvest in Israel. The people were commanded to bring the first of their harvest to the temple and offer it up to the Lord as a sacrifice. Their obedience to this command also recognized that when they honored God in this way, it would guarantee the blessing of God's provision upon the rest of their harvest. ([Proverbs 3:9-10](#)) So, Jesus' resurrection from the grave is God's promise to all of us that the harvest of our body from the earth (see [1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44](#)) will take place.

Phase 2 of the First Resurrection- The Rapture

This phase of the first resurrection has not yet taken place. It is the same as what we refer to as the Rapture. This

phase is reserved for those who are *"in Christ."* ([1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)) This designation in the New Testament refers exclusively to the body of Christ -- the church. The church began in [Acts 2](#) at the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, following the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Whenever Jesus referred to the church during His earthly ministry, He always used the future tense. ([Matthew 16:18](#)) Therefore, the Rapture is exclusively for the saints who lived during the Church Age.

At any moment, the Rapture of the church could take place. When a member of the body of Christ (the church) dies, his body is buried. But, his soul (the invisible, inner spirit of man) is immediately ushered into the presence of His Lord in heaven. ([2 Corinthians 5:6-7](#)) His body is symbolically viewed as being *"asleep."* ([1 Thessalonians 4:15](#)) However, notice that at the Rapture, the soul of this person will come back with Jesus from heaven. ([1 Thessalonians 4:14](#)) His soul returns to earth with Jesus to be united with his body in the grave, and *"the dead in Christ shall rise first."* ([1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)) *"In the twinkling of an eye"* ([1 Corinthians 15:52](#)), the living saints at the time of the Rapture, *"shall all be changed"* ([1 Corinthians 15:51](#)) and *"be caught up together"* with all of the dead church saints that have just been resurrected *"to meet the Lord in the air."* ([1 Thessalonians 4:17](#))

It is my firm conviction, based upon Scripture, that the judgment of the church saints will take place in the air at the very moment they see Jesus. Let us examine the evidence that points to this conclusion.

First, the chronology of the book of Revelation demands that the church saints will be resurrected or raptured, and judged before the Tribulation Period begins on the earth. [Revelation 4-5](#) depicts a gathering of resurrected saints who have been judged (notice they have crowns) and are worshipping their Lord in the heavenly throne room of God.

Who are these saints in [Revelation 4-5](#) who have been resurrected and judged? Remember that at this point in time only Christ has been resurrected. As we shall see later in this article, the Old Testament saints are not included in this resurrection before the Tribulation Period begins. This forces us to conclude that the resurrected and judged saints in [Revelation 4](#) must be the church.

In [Revelation 5](#), these saints witness a very significant event. All of heaven is focused upon a special scroll that is sealed with seven seals. By the context of Scripture, and the events that transpire in this chapter, we are able to conclude that this scroll is the title deed to the universe. Jesus steps forth in this chapter and takes the title deed of the universe from the hand of His Father. Then, Jesus begins to open the scroll by breaking one seal at a time. The breaking of these seals sets in motion God's divine act of judgment upon the kingdoms of this world, and the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God at the end of the 7-year Tribulation Period. (See [Revelation 11:15](#).)

Please notice that when Jesus breaks the first seal on this scroll, He invites the rider on a white horse to ride onto the stage of human history. This rider is the Antichrist. Therefore, [Revelation 6:1-2](#) represents the beginning of the Tribulation Period. This agrees with the chronology set forth by the prophet Daniel. According to [Daniel 9:27](#), the beginning of Daniel's 70th prophetic week of 7 years (the same as the 7-year Tribulation Period) will begin when the Antichrist confirms the covenant with Israel for 7 years.

Therefore, on the basis of this clear chronology in [Revelation 4-6](#), we are forced to conclude that the church saints will be resurrected and judged in order to participate in the events in heaven recorded in [Revelation 4-5](#), before the Tribulation begins on earth in [Revelation 6](#).

This leads me to conclude that the judgment of the believer must take place at the moment we meet Christ in the air. When we look into His fiery eyes ([Revelation 1:14](#)), at that split second of time, He will judge us. I have concluded that the fiery judgment of our works, mentioned in [1 Corinthians 3:13-15](#), is in reality the all-knowing, all-consuming eyes of Jesus. [Hebrews 4:12](#) speaks of the piercing work of the Word of God that is *"a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* Jesus is the living Word, and His eyes are described in [Hebrews 4:13](#) as eyes of judgment: *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."*

Therefore, in conclusion, the second stage of the first resurrection will take place at the time of the Rapture of the church. This will be immediately followed by the judgment of all the church saints, probably before they

enter into heaven for the worship service described in [Revelation 4-5](#).

This judgment of the New Testament believer is commonly referred to as "the Bema Seat Judgment." This term is taken from the Greek word in [2 Corinthians 5:10](#): *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* In the ancient Roman world of Paul's day, "the bema" was a raised platform where athletes were awarded for their performance, and governmental authorities sat in judgment over the accused who were made to stand before them. We have several examples of this in the New Testament. ([Matthew 27:19](#); [John 19:13](#); [Acts 18:12-16](#)) Therefore, when believers in the church of Corinth read Paul's letter to them, they knew he was saying that all believers would stand before the King and Judge of the Universe, Jesus Christ.

Some people struggle with the idea that all church believers will be judged simultaneously by Jesus. It is true that Jesus will judge us all as individuals, but this does not demand that He judge us chronologically one at a time. Remember that as God, Jesus knows all things. ([Psalm 139:1-6](#)) He is everywhere present at the same time. ([Psalm 139:7-12](#)) God is able to search all of our hearts and judge us all at the same time. ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)) Jesus certainly displayed this attribute to His disciples during His earthly ministry. ([John 1:43-48](#))

God is not limited to listen to only one person pray at a time. The Holy Spirit can bring conviction and illumination to the millions of believers at the same moment in time. Yet, in a very precious and real way, we all are only focused on the personal work of the Spirit in each of our lives.

I admit that all of this is very difficult for our finite minds to grasp. However, our problem is that we think in terms of God being like us. God is not a finite creature. He is the infinitely powerful, yet personal, God who inhabits all of eternity in the eternal now! *"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."* ([Isaiah 57:15](#)) When we consider the ways of God, we are trying to grasp that which is unfathomable.

Our finite minds cannot begin to grasp or search out just how great God is! *"His greatness is unsearchable."* ([Psalm 145:3](#)) *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."* ([Romans 11:33](#))

Phase 3 of the First Resurrection- The resurrection of Old Testament and Tribulation saints

According to context of [Revelation 20:4](#), the saints who will die during the future Tribulation Period will be resurrected and judged at the end of this unique period of time. Their resurrection will coincide with the revelation of Christ and the ensuing Battle of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation Period.

While speaking about the time of His revelation at the end of the Tribulation Period, Jesus said: *"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect [chosen ones] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* ([Matthew 24:31](#)) I believe that *"his elect"* in this text refers to all of the resurrected Old Testament Jewish believers [who have just been resurrected], and the living Jewish saints that have survived the Tribulation that will be gathered in Israel for the beginning of the kingdom promised to Israel. This agrees with [Daniel 12:2](#): *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."* The context of [Daniel 12](#) indicates that the resurrection mentioned by Daniel is connected with the end of the Tribulation Period.

So, the Old Testament saints and the dead Tribulation saints will be raised simultaneously in connection with the revelation of Christ. They will be raised and judged to join the church saints in their preparation for their service to the Lord as they reign with Him in the millennial kingdom mentioned in [Revelation 20:6](#). Their judgment is mentioned in [Daniel 12:3](#): *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."* (Compare this to the description of the resurrected body of the church saints in [1 Corinthians 15:40-42](#).)

This third stage of the first resurrection will conclude the first resurrection. [Revelation 20:5-6](#) states: *"But the rest of the dead [those who remain to be resurrected - the unbelievers of all the ages] lived not again until the*

thousand years were finished. This is [concludes] the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death [mentioned later in [Revelation 20:14](#)] hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Having considered the Scriptural teaching concerning the resurrection of all of the saints of the ages in the first resurrection, we now turn our attention to consider the second resurrection. Remember that Jesus referred to the resurrection of those who *"have done evil"* as *"the resurrection of damnation."* ([John 5:29](#)) This is the same as the second resurrection, which is the bodily resurrection of all of the unsaved. Unlike the first resurrection, which has an order in three phases, all of the sinners of all of the ages are raised at the same moment in time to stand before the Lord. This judgment is called "the Great White Throne Judgment," taken from the description of the throne of God in [Revelation 20:11](#).

This judgment will take place at the time of the supernatural resurrection of all of the sinners. This resurrection and judgment will take place after the millennial kingdom has ended and before the entrance of the saints into the New Jerusalem on the new earth. ([Revelation 21-22](#)) The Apostle John, who is reporting as an eyewitness who has been supernaturally transported into the future day of the Lord ([Revelation 1:10](#)), testified that this Great White Throne judgment will take place as *"the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place found for them."* ([Revelation 20:11](#))

The resurrection of the dead sinners will include their soul in hell and the remains of their physical bodies on earth. [Revelation 20:13](#) states: *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."* Just like the redeemed who are not judged until the time of their resurrection, so the sinners too will not be judged until the time of their resurrection at the end of earth time.

The reading of [Revelation 20:11-15](#) is one of the most sobering accounts in the Bible. It is my understanding that this is the only time in all of God's plan when all of those who have ever lived, saved and unsaved, will be present at one place in this universe in the presence of God in His holy courtroom. All of the sinners will be

made to physically *"stand before God"* ([Revelation 20:12](#)) and face the facts as the Lord Jesus opens the books to judge *"every man according to their works."* ([Revelation 20:13](#)) At the end of each person's judgment, they will hear these solemn words that will echo in their ears for all of eternity as they suffer in the Lake of Fire: *"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* ([Matthew 7:23](#)) And then, John writes: *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* ([Revelation 20:15](#))

Friends, I need to remind you that those who have rejected God's Son, Jesus Christ, will suffer eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire! There will be no cessation or recess in their suffering. Some have concluded that the sinners will be burned up and simply be annihilated in the Lake of Fire. Others have concluded that God in His mercy will at some point in time allow those in the Lake of Fire to join the saints in the New Jerusalem for the rest of eternity. However, according to the eternal, unchanging Word of God, which is the Word of the eternal, unchanging God, this is impossible!

Please notice that the first inhabitants of the final place of damnation, the Lake of Fire, are the Antichrist and his False Prophet. [Revelation 19:20](#) says, *"These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."* They are cast into this place of eternal damnation before the millennial kingdom, mentioned in the next chapter, begins on earth. After this, a very powerful angel of God will open the bottomless pit of hell (not the same as the Lake of Fire), bind Satan, and cast him into this pit until the 1,000 years of the kingdom are fulfilled. ([Revelation 20:1-2](#)) After the kingdom of 1,000 years, Satan is released for one last opportunity to deceive the nations. ([Revelation 20:7-9](#)) After his defeat, *"the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."* ([Revelation 20:10](#)) Please notice that when the devil is cast into the Lake of Fire that the Antichrist and False Prophet are still being tormented. They have been tormented day and night for 1,000 years, and have not been consumed! The Bible is emphatically clear that those who enter the Lake of fire will *"be tormented day and night forever and ever."* ([Revelation 20:10](#))

Furthermore, God is holy and just, and can never go back on His eternal Word. He cannot have compassion on the

lost that are in the Lake of Fire because their sins have not been forgiven. They refused to confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior while they were living on earth before their death. ***"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."*** ([Hebrews 9:27](#)) There is no second chance after the first death. And, there will be no chance after ***"the second death."*** ([Revelation 20:14](#))

A study of [Revelation 21-22](#) about the rest of eternity on the new earth, a totally new arrangement of creation, reveals that the sinners will remain in the Lake of Fire. ([Revelation 21:8](#)) The holy and righteous city, the new Jerusalem, is the dwelling place of God and the saints of all of the ages. ([Revelation 21:2-3](#)) No sin or sinners can possibly enter into or contaminate this new holy place. ([Revelation 22:15](#)) ***"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."*** ([Revelation 21:27](#))

I am convinced that all of us who are born-again and are part of the true body of Christ will participate in our resurrection and judgment, and then witness the remaining judgments and resurrections. We will be among the saints that will descend with our Lord at the end of the Tribulation Period to witness the resurrection and judgment of the Old Testament and Tribulation saints. ([Zechariah 14:5](#); [Revelation 19:14](#)) Likewise, I am convinced that we will be witnesses at the Great White Throne judgment of all the sinners of all of the ages. Two things convince me of this. First, [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) informs us that when we are raptured ***"so shall we ever be with the Lord."*** Jesus will be the judge at the Great White Throne judgment. ([John 5:27](#)) Therefore, where He is, we will be also. Second, notice that after this judgment, in [Revelation 21:4](#), Jesus will ***"wipe away all tears from [our] eyes."*** The only thing in this context that would make us cry is the scene of some of our family and friends being cast into the Lake of Fire. After wiping away our tears, Jesus will ***"make all things new."*** ([Revelation 21:5](#)) This would mean that Jesus will permanently take away any of our memories that would evoke a moment of sorrow for the rest of eternity. In [Isaiah 65:17](#), God says, ***"For, behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."***

Friends, it is not an accident that the last three chapters of the Bible highlight the resurrection and judgment of all who have ever lived. The fact that this is a vital part of the written progressive revelation of God should indicate just how important all of this really is. We have been created to live on this earth to prepare for eternity. All that we do, say, and think about, should be focused upon our resurrection and judgment day!

Friend, do not throw your precious life away! You have been created to know God and to spend eternity with Him in His presence. In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the most repeated title of Jesus is "the Lamb." At the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry, He was introduced by John the Baptist: ***"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*** ([John 1:29](#)) As God's lamb, Jesus came to die and shed His blood to satisfy the wrath of His holy Father against all sin. Nothing else, and no one else, can satisfy the wrath of God but the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

My friend, if you have not confessed your sins to the Lord and asked Him to forgive you of your sins, why not do it now? "I will wait," you say? Please do not take that chance! Millions are in hell at this very moment wishing they had not delayed giving their life to Christ. It is eternally too late for them! Do not let that happen to you!

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)) The Lord has promised: ***"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*** ([Romans 10:9, 13](#)) The Savior is waiting to save you! Turn from your sin and ask Him to save you.

Be ready for the shout that will take us out!

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Mike's Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Please pray for these meetings. Please call your family and friends who live near these meetings and encourage them to attend. It is very important for God's people to have a proper Biblical world-view. Please pray for the Lord to send an awakening!

March 27-30	Montvale, VA	Faith Life Baptist Church	1-540-977-6461
April 3-5	Winchester, VA	Greenwood Baptist Church	1-540-665-0368
April 7	Rocky Mount, VA	Bible Study: Franklin Heights Baptist Church	1-540-798-5110
April 9	Salem, VA	Faith Baptist Church	1-540-353-6357
April 10-12	Floyd, VA	New Haven Baptist Church	1-540-745-8465
April 17-20	Christiansburg, VA	Bible Baptist Church	1-540-382-5245
April 21	Roanoke, VA	Bible Study: Grace Baptist Church	1-540-798-5110
April 24-26	Springfield, OH	Donnels Creek Church of the Brethren	1-937-882-8060
May 1-4	Riner, VA	Fellowship Baptist Church	1-540-392-3032
May 5	Rocky Mount, VA	Bible Study: Franklin Heights Baptist Church	1-540-798-5110
May 15-17	Front Royal, VA	Front Royal Baptist Temple	1-540-635-8370
May 19	Roanoke, VA	Bible Study: Grace Baptist Church	1-540-798-5110
May 22	Boones Mill	Bonbrook Baptist Church	1-540-489-3337

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