

Grace Or Judgment?

*"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;
but that the world through him might be saved."*

John 3:17 KJV

I am fascinated by the reasons some people have for not believing in the Lord and instead prefer agnosticism or outright atheism.

Some of the brilliant agnostics/atheists of the last two centuries have had a difficult relationship with their human father. Some had their father desert the family by running off with a woman. Others had fathers who did not care for the family as they ought to have done.

Also some fathers were cruel. Most atheists of note had genuine difficulties with a human father and some psychologists feel a poor father image caused these people to reject a God Who called Himself "Father".

Some, of course, feel uncomfortable with the accountability that believing in a Creator automatically brings with it. They desire to live as they wish and so reject the notion of a God to whom they must give account some day.

Once a person denies a fu-

ture judgment they can then live in the comfort that their actions will not condemn them at some future date.

Our verse today should encourage people to give serious thought to the message Jesus brought with Him. It was a message of salvation and reconciliation to God.

Jesus' first concern was not to write people off, but instead to urge them to repent and believe in Him and be forgiven.

The first coming of the Saviour was to call people to Himself for salvation and eternal life. Only at the second coming will the theme of judgment be prominent.

Today is a time of grace and salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). At the end of this age there is only judgment with no hope of salvation on that day.

Jesus said in Mark 2:17 "I came...to call...sinners to repentance." KJV.

So the Good News is the first part of the Christian message

and the latter part is that judgment shall come on all who refuse the Good News.

The Lord even asks people the question, in Ezekiel 33:11 "Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die...?" NIV. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but calls on all people everywhere to turn and come to Him.

May we act mercifully to those who have not yet turned and urge them to study the teaching of Jesus and see that He is full of grace and mercy.

What a gracious Saviour is ours! How lovingly ought we to represent Him to those who still sit in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke 1:79). May you find opportunity today to speak for your Saviour to those who so desperately need Him.

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