Inexcusable Excuses

By Terry R. Townsend
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Have you ever thought about what folks might say to God at judgment for their failure to obey him? It's sobering, isn't it, to know there's a coming judgment – a day in which all men will give account of themselves to the Lord! Paul writes, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Let's consider a few inexcusable excuses.

Without question, millions of people will blame their lack of obedience on preachers. Unfortunately, millions today put more faith in mortal man than they do God. Yet, the Bible is abundantly clear that one must be a doer of the word and not a hearer only (James 1:21-25). False teachers are deceiving millions into thinking they have "peace and safety," when in reality they're on a collision course with destruction (1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Thus, it behooves us to test the spirits (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). Blaming false teachers at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

There will be many on the Day of Judgment blaming the weather for their lack of involvement in the Lord's work. When asked why they fail to participate in spiritual activities, many blame mother nature – too hot in summer, too cold in winter, too wet in spring, too windy in fall, etc. If truth be told, people will do whatever their hearts so desire! Inclement weather does not negate one's responsibility to serve God (1 Cor. 15:58). Blaming the weather at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

Undoubtedly, millions will blame their parents at Judgment for their failure to do God's will. How often have I heard non-

members say the following in a Bible study, “I see what you’re saying, but if what I believe was good enough for dad and mom, it’s good enough for me!” But what if dad and mom were wrong? Will God still grant you entrance into Heaven despite your failure to obey that which you knew to be true? The Bible says that one must obey Christ above all else, including family (cf. Luke 9:57-62; 14:26-35). In matters of faith, who should we ultimately listen to? Parents or Christ? Obviously, the answer is Jesus (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:1-3). Putting the blame on parents for your lack of obedience will be an inexcusable excuse.

Others at Judgment will use the excuse of profession for their failing to do the Father’s Will. I’m sure some will say, “I would have obeyed and served you Lord, but my job wouldn’t allow it.” Truth be told, millions are more interested in money than they are in God. Paul had it right when he penned, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” (1 Tim. 6:9-10 ESV). Jesus said that we’re to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). To blame one’s profession at Judgment will be an inexcusable excuse.

I’m sure that on Judgment Day some will use their lack of earthly substance (poverty) as an excuse for their failing to do the will of God. Some will probably say, “Lord, I wasn’t as blessed as others; thus, I didn’t do all I could.” I wonder if God will have standing beside Him the widow who gave two mites as an example to those making such excuses (cf. Mark 12:41-44)? The Lord expects us to do what we can with what we have (Matt. 25:14 ff). Blaming our lack of service on poverty will be an inexcusable excuse.

Another excuse many will make at Judgment will be that of

persecution. I can hear some now, “Lord, I would’ve served You, but I didn’t because I feared persecution.” But didn’t he tell us in his word that Christians would be mistreated on occasion (cf John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12). Didn’t he assure us his presence, protection, and panoply to help us overcome (cf. Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6; Eph. 6:10 ff)? Jesus said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Thus, fear of persecution as a defense for failing to obey God will be an inexcusable excuse on Judgment Day.

Finally, millions will offer unto God the excuse of procrastination; that is, many will say, “I wanted to obey You Lord, but I simply ran out of time!” I wonder if Felix will be among the masses who will make such an excuse (Acts 24:25)? The Lord is patient, and he gives men ample time to obey (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9-14); thus, to use procrastination as a reason for failing to obey will be an inexcusable excuse on Judgment Day.

Simply put, we can make all the excuses we want to as to why we fail to do God’s Will; however, on the Day of Judgment, God’s answer to such excuses will be this:

“Depart from me, ye that work iniquity!”

Judgement Day

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
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A reader requested that we explain how it is possible to confine a disembodied spirit to either Paradise or Torment at physical death, but that soul will still have to appear in a

final, public judgment.

This question attracts widespread attention and involves some basics of saving faith, so we thought it good to devote this month's editorial to some things mentioned in Holy Writ about present and future judgment.

The judgment of God on human motive and behavior is continuous. Every mortal motive and action is judged at the very moment it is indulged. The startling, infinite wisdom and power of the Mighty Maker of heaven and earth enable him constantly to look into the corridors of every human mind and to take note of every human work.

A staggering thought, but the attributes of God are limitless. The God with whom we have to do has no restrictions on his exhaustless power except for self limitations and things that would be inconsistent. Otherwise, he is no better than Hindu idols or the big-bellied images of Buddha. When we say, "God," we say "immensurable."

The eye of deity runs to and fro upon the earth and he sees every thought and deed. Furthermore, he judges every deliberation and endeavor at the precise moment it is entertained. This staggering concept is expressed in the song we used to sing: "There's an All Seeing Eye Watching You" (Rev. 4:6-8).

Some were offended by the thought of the big-eye of God tracking desire and performance and objected to the sentiment of the song and it has fallen into disrepute. How sad! The song expresses a sound biblical idea.

If we keep ever in mind that God knows and evaluates our thoughts and deeds, then our conduct will improve mightily – which it doubtless needs to do.

Jehovah "judgeth the peoples" (Job 36:31). "There is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Ps. 58:11). "My sayings" hath one

that “judgeth him” (John 12:48). “He that judgeth me is the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:4). The Father “without respect of persons judgeth according to each man’s work” (1 Pet. 1:17).

The word judgeth, as you know, is present tense, which means an ongoing action. It is happening right now. So, God immediately judges every thought you think, every deed you do. Furthermore, the Mighty Hand of God writes motives and performance in a heaven register.

Think about that!

God looks not only at the action but also at the motive that prompts the action and judges and records it.

How solemn that makes every passing moment. How seriously we must regard every thought and deed.

“There’s an All Seeing Eye Watching You”

When you die, based on your earthly behavior, you are assigned to be comforted in Abraham’s bosom, or to being tormented in flames of fire. The case of the rich man and Lazarus, as reported by Jesus in Luke 16:19-31, makes it clear that at the moment of physical death the spirit of every man is judged. A decision is made as to his eternal destiny.

There is a great gulf fixed and a disembodied spirit may not pass from one estate to another. If he is on the side of torment, that cannot be changed; if on the side of comfort, that cannot be changed.

Death fixes the eternal destiny of every spirit.

But wait a minute … have we not been saying that “there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” The person as already been judged. He was judged while he lived. Now that he is dead, he

is judged? Two judgments. One in life and the other at death.

Is that fair?

Unless you want to sit in judgment on God, it is fair to have at least two judgments – in life, and at death.

There is also to be a final judgment. When Jesus comes to earth the final time, sometimes called the second coming, all the nations will be gathered before him to be judged (Matt. 25:31-46). He will separate all the people who have ever lived upon the earth on the right hand and on the left hand. The saved – the sheep – are set upon his hand, and the lost – the goats are placed on his left hand. After the separation – the judgment – the Master will say to them on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the earth." And to those on the left hand he shall say, "Depart from me ye cursed into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

The ultimate judgment is two-fold. There is first a separation (judgment), and then there is a judgment.

Multiple judgments!

Is it fair?

Is it double jeopardy?

The answer is "yes, it is fair seeing that God does it;" and yes, it is double – maybe even triple – jeopardy. If God chooses to do that way, who are we to complain.

"Ye turn things upside down! Shall the potter be esteemed as clay; that the thing made should say of him that made it, He made me not; or the thing formed say of him that formed it, He hath no understanding?" (Isa. 29:16).

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