

There's A Great Day Coming! Are You Ready?

by Larry West

It was the championship game. The atmosphere was electrifying as the two teams were playing the hotly contested basketball regional championship game in the O.C. Lewis gymnasium in Anderson, Indiana. The noise in that crowded place was deafening. Nothing seemed more important that night. People were hyper when cheering their own teams to victory. Finally, after the long game was about to end, with just three minutes to go, the visiting team lead by only two points. The referees suddenly called a foul against the visiting team. It was a chance for the home team to even the score. Excitement rose. The Anderson boy stepped to the foul line for his free throw. But, before he could do it, suddenly a referee slumped and fell. Players rushed over and stood. In seconds, a doctor was at his side. Then, there was the solemn announcement. He was dead! How could this be? But it was true. In the face of such tragedy, they couldn't go on with the game. The electrified gym became as though it were a mausoleum.

Every once in a while there is something that hits us in such a way we are reminded the game we're playing is short. It shocks us to the core of our beings.

God has set a day!

(Matthew 25:1-13)

He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained (Acts 17:31). It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

It's coming!

Someone has said, "You can laugh God out of your schools, you can laugh God out of your books, you can laugh God out of your life ... but you cannot laugh God out of your death!"

Here are some pertinent facts concerning what will happen on that day:

All will be there!

The Bible says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).

Some think they're going to be able to miss that day. John Bunyan once said, "When wicked persons have gone on in a course of sin, and find they have reason to fear the just judgment of God for their sins, they begin at first to wish that there were no God to punish them. Then, by degrees they persuade themselves that there is none. And then they set themselves to study for arguments to back their opinion."

There's something else that will happen:

All will be revealed!

Got any secrets? Had some you've conveniently forgotten?

The Bible says God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16). There is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13).

Everything will be opened up! Think of it! Everything ...

... *What we do!* The Apostle John said, "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:12-13).

... *What we say!* Out of His Own mouth, Jesus said, "For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36).

... *Even what we are thinking in our "hearts":* Jesus said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

It's called the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

We need forgiveness! All of us! And, praise God, where angels can not get forgiveness from God (2 Peter 2: 4), we humans can. Aren't you glad you're a human!

And it's a total gift! Better than anything you could get at Christmas!

By His grace we can be saved through faith in Jesus Christ, not of ourselves; it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). And that is the Good News of Jesus. He died on the cross to take away our sin problem (Ephesians 1:7) He came out of the grave to conquer our own grave problem (I Cor. 15:20-23). That is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 2:22-36). In His death, we are reconciled back to being friends with God, in His resurrection, we are promised resurrection to eternal life (Romans 5:10). Forgiveness and eternal life! I want that, don't you? Then, as it is with any "Grand Prize" we may win, we must obey the conditions of the giver. And Jesus is the Great Giver!

We must obey Jesus' very Own Words!

There is a huge painting hanging in the Supreme Court building in Switzerland that was painted by Paul Robert. Its title is "Justice Instructing the Judges." In the foreground are the litigants, the wife against the husband, the architect against the builder. Above them stand the Swiss Judges with their little white dickeys. How are they going to judge? You usually see Miss Justice painted with her eyes blindfolded and her sword held vertically. In this painting, the blindfold is gone and her sword is pointing downward, resting its point on a book on which is written, "The Word of God."

Jesus says, "He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him. The word I have spoken will judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

Shouldn't our response to Him be, "Then, Jesus, what are Your words? Especially, what are Your death threatening and life promising words? I want to believe them. I want to obey them! I don't want Your awful judgment against me on the last day!"

What are they?

Out of His own mouth He says, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Shouldn't our response be, "Then, Jesus, who are you?" I mean, after all, the word he has spoken will be our judge! Well, the High Priest once said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And Jesus said to him, "It is as you said" (Matthew 26:63-64).

Out of His own mouth He says, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

Out of His own mouth He says, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish." And He even says it twice! Luke 13:3 and Luke 13:5!

Out of His own mouth He says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Shouldn't our response to all of this be, "Then, Lord I believe! And when you open up the book of *my* life on that Great Day, you will find I obeyed your word! You will find I confessed your holy Name before men! Please confess mine before the Father in heaven! You will find I lived a repentant life. Yes, I conformed my life to that wonderful Gospel, I lived unashamed of it (Romans 1:16). You will also find I was baptized in water just as you demanded, and that's because I do want to enter the kingdom of God! I did all these "essential" things just as you commanded "out of Your own mouth!"

Yes, Lord, because I love You and want to be saved eternally by You, You will find I obeyed Your word You have spoken and by which I will be judged on the last day!

When Jesus promises life or threatens death, those are His salvation demands.

He says it another way. He asks, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" Then, He explains, "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:46-49).

Yes, there's a storm coming. It's called "The Last Day."

There's a great day coming! Are you ready?