

Are Only Evil Angels Judged by the Saints?

A common belief handed down through centuries of Christendom is that all people possess immortal souls and that believers will go to a reward in heaven as some form of angelic being and take their place in some existing hierarchical structure of angels. Under this scenario, some Christians, e.g. former Popes and Archbishops (depending on your personal religious viewpoint), may rank with archangels such as Gabriel and Michael but most Christians will be subordinate to archangels and probably many other existing angels in the existing structure. Yet in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 3, in Paul's words to the all of Greek Christians at Corinth, we find "Do you not know that we shall judge angels?". Now the lesser is judged by the greater, so these words imply that Paul believed that the Greek Christians at Corinth would receive a reward which placed them higher than "angels".

How can this be? How can we be angels yet higher than angels? One answer is that the reward of the saved is to become beings which are not angels, and which are a life form which is higher than angels, but this conflicts with the traditional view that Christians will become angels. A defence of the traditional view is that Paul meant that only some group of lesser angels would be judged by Christians, not all angels, and the group most likely to be nominated are the fallen angels, the demons.

Unger's Bible Dictionary portrays this interpretation in "Judgment", item "7. The Judgment of Angels. These are fallen angels and are evidently judged in connection with the Great White Throne (I Cor. 6:3; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6; Rev. 20:10)."

In this article, we will examine this claim that the only angels to be "judged" by the saints are the evil angels.

The Analysis Method

As strange as it may sound, the Bible is deliberately written to confuse most people. This amazing fact is covered in detail in the article "You Can Prove Anything From the Bible!", but as confirmation here are just two sections of scripture:

Isaiah 28:9-13 (NKJV)

"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those [just] weaned from milk? Those [just] drawn from the breasts? {10} For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little." {11} For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, {12} To whom He said, "This [is] the rest [with which] You may cause the weary to rest," And, "This [is] the refreshing"; Yet they would not hear. {13} But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little," That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.

Matthew 13:10-17 (NKJV)

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" {11} He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. {12} "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. {13} "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. {14} "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; {15} For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' {16} "But blessed [are] your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; {17} "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous [men] desired to see what you see, and did not see [it], and to hear what you hear, and did not hear [it].

A common mistake in religion is the use of selected scriptures to justify a preconceived belief. This is accomplished by developing a doctrine based on various sources, e.g. family discussions, philosophy, selected historical writings, cultural traditions, national aspirations, and then grasping a section of scripture which appears to support that doctrine and declaring it to be a proof. Of course no one does this consciously or deliberately, but the observation that there are many sincere groups who have distinguishing doctrines based on a few scriptures which, on closer examination, are not verified by other scriptures, shows that it has happened many times over the centuries. This conflict with other scriptures leads to irrational acts by the believer in an attempt to retain the cherished doctrine, e.g. redefinition of meanings of English words, use of obscure or special or personal translations of the scripture, resort to ill-informed misuse of the original Hebrew or Greek.

And this problem is not confined to Christian groups. A recent example of a group with a non-conventional view of the universe was the Heaven's Gate cult. There is no doubt these people were sincere and were convinced of their beliefs -- they deliberately took their own lives to go to what they thought was a better life with aliens in the heavens travelling in a UFO in the tail of the Hale-Bopp comet. Over a long period of years, Applegate built up an elaborate set of views, by means of which he was able to explain various known events. Because the philosophy explained the events, Applegate's followers made the deadly mistake of assuming it was correct. There are many other philosophies and hypotheses which explain the same events. With a little thought you can even make up your own. It can be as strange as you like but be careful to distance it far enough from reality that no-one can prove it is wrong. Of course you can't prove it is correct either, just that it explains the events.

Then of course there is the Buddhist view, or views, of the world and the universe. And the Hindu, the Taoist, the Moslem, etc. Each one postulates a set of teachings to explain life, death, suffering, and the after-life. To their sincere followers, each religion does this correctly. Believing a philosophy does not make it true. Even if it explains whatever you want explained, it is still not necessarily true.

Many religions go a little further and also seek some support from their God or gods, either in the form of words from a priest or prophet or from the written words of the sacred writings.

Most Christian groups hold doctrines which have at least some Biblical supporting scriptures, few hold to a doctrine without claiming there is any scriptural basis. And of course, everyone sincerely believes their doctrines are correct and solidly supported by the Bible. Each group can see flaws in the doctrines of other groups but is unable to see flaws in its own.

How do we avoid the deliberate stumbling block of Isaiah 28? The answer is provided in there in verse 10 - precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. The truth is in there, but scattered: precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. Finding one or two parts may provide only a dangerous unbalanced view of the true situation. The whole truth is found only by searching for all the scriptures relating to the topic, carefully analyzing and studying them, accepting them as saying what they say, treating plain scriptures first and obscure scriptures later, and finally -- not initially -- coming to a conclusion.

This is the method we will attempt to follow in this investigation.

What is "judge"?

In the New Testament, there are seventeen Greek words used for "judge" and its forms (judgment, judged, etc): aisthesis (Strong's New Testament number 144), anakrino (350), bema (968), gnome (1106), diakrino (1252), dikaiokrisia (1341), dikaioma (1345), dikastes (1348), dike (1349), hegeomai (2233), hemera (2250), krima (2917), krino (2919), krisis (2920), kriterion (2922), krites (2923), praitorion (4232).

The word which Paul used in 1 Corinthians 6:3 in "we shall judge angels" is "krino", Greek word number 2919 in Strong's Concordance.

Here are the comments by two scholarly sources on this word:

Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament has this to say of krino:

to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by impl. to try, condemn, punish:- avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think.

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Thomas Nelson, 1985) contains, in "Judgment":

Krino primarily denotes "to separate, select, choose"; hence "to determine," and so "to judge, pronounce judgment." "The use of this verb in the NT may be analyzed as follows:

- (a) to assume the office of a judge, Matt. 7:1; John 3:17;
- (b) to undergo process of trial, John 3:18; 16:11; 18:31; Jas. 2:12;
- (c) to give sentence, Acts 15:19; 16:4; 21:25;
- (d) to condemn, John 12:48, Acts 13:27; Rom. 2:27;

- (e) to execute judgment upon, 2 Thess. 2:12; Acts 7:7;
- (f) to be involved in a lawsuit, whether as plaintiff, Matt. 5:40; 1 Cor. 6:1; or as defendant, Acts 23:6;
- (g) to administer affairs, to govern, Matt. 19:28; cf. Judg. 3:10;
- (h) to form an opinion, Luke 7:43; John 7:24; Acts 4:19; Rom. 14:5;
- (i) to make a resolve, Acts 3:13; 20:16; 1 Cor. 2:2:

All the Scriptures Using "Krino"

The Bible is written as "here a little, there a little" and we need to consider all relevant portions, so here is a complete listing of all the scriptures using krino.

Matthew 5:40 (NKJV) "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

Matthew 7:1 (NKJV) "Judge not, that you be not judged.

Matthew 7:2 (NKJV) "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Matthew 19:28 (NKJV) So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 6:37 (NKJV) "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 7:43 (NKJV) Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

Luke 12:57 (NKJV) "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?

Luke 19:22 (NKJV) "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.

Luke 22:30 (NKJV) "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

John 3:17-18 (NKJV) "{17} For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. {18} He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 5:22 (NKJV) "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

John 5:30 (NKJV) "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 7:24 (NKJV) "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

John 7:51 (NKJV) "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

John 8:15 (NKJV) "You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

John 8:16 (NKJV) "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

John 8:26 (NKJV) "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

John 8:50 (NKJV) "And I do not seek My [own] glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

John 12:47 (NKJV) "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

John 12:48 (NKJV) "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

John 16:11 (NKJV) "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

John 18:31 (NKJV) Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,"

Acts 3:13 (NKJV) "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let [Him] go.

Acts 4:19 (NKJV) But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

Acts 7:7 (NKJV) 'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.'

Acts 13:27 (NKJV) "For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled [them] in condemning [Him].

Acts 13:46 (NKJV) Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 15:19 (NKJV) "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble

those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,

Acts 16:4 (NKJV) And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Acts 16:15 (NKJV) And when she and her household were baptized, she begged [us], saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

Acts 17:31 (NKJV) "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 20:16 (NKJV) For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 21:25 (NKJV) "But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written [and] decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from [things] offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

Acts 23:3 (NKJV) Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

Acts 23:6 (NKJV) But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men [and] brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

Acts 24:6 (NKJV) "He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.

Acts 24:21 (NKJV) "unless [it is] for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.' "

Acts 25:9-10 (NKJV) But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?" {10} So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know.

Acts 25:20 (NKJV) "And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters.

Acts 20:25 (NKJV) "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.

Acts 26:6 (NKJV) "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.

Acts 26:8 (NKJV) "Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

Acts 27:1 (NKJV) And when it was decided that we should sail to

Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to [one] named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.

Romans 2:1 (NKJV) Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Romans 2:3 (NKJV) And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

Romans 2:12 (NKJV) For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law

Romans 2:16 (NKJV) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Romans 2:27 (NKJV) And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

Romans 3:4 (NKJV) Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged."

Romans 3:6 (NKJV) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

Romans 3:7 (NKJV) For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?

Romans 14:3 (NKJV) Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

Romans 14:4 (NKJV) Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Romans 14:5 One person esteems [one] day above another; another esteems every day [alike]. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

Romans 14:10 (NKJV) But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:13 (NKJV) Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Romans 14:22 (NKJV) Do you have faith? Have [it] to yourself before God. Happy [is] he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

1 Corinthians 2:2 (NKJV) For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NKJV) Therefore judge nothing before the time,

until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

1 Corinthians 5:3 (NKJV) For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

1 Corinthians 5:12 (NKJV) For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

1 Corinthians 5:13 (NKJV) But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

1 Corinthians 6:1-3 (NKJV) Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? {2} Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? {3} Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

1 Corinthians 6:6 (NKJV) But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

1 Corinthians 7:37 (NKJV) Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well.

1 Corinthians 10:15 (NKJV) I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.

1 Corinthians 10:29 (NKJV) "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another [man's] conscience?

1 Corinthians 11:13 (NKJV) Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

1 Corinthians 11:31 (NKJV) For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

1 Corinthians 11:32 (NKJV) But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

2 Corinthians 2:1 (NKJV) But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.

2 Corinthians 5:14 (NKJV) For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

Colossians 2:16 (NKJV) So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

2 Thessalonians 2:12 (NKJV) that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV) I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His

appearing and His kingdom:

Titus 3:12 (NKJV) When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

Hebrews 10:30 (NKJV) For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."

Hebrews 13:4 (NKJV) Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

James 2:12 (NKJV) So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

James 4:11 (NKJV) Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

James 4:12 (NKJV) There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

1 Peter 1:17 (NKJV) And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay [here] in fear;

1 Peter 2:23 (NKJV) who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed [Himself] to Him who judges righteously;

1 Peter 4:5 (NKJV) They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

1 Peter 4:6 (NKJV) For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Revelation 6:10 (NKJV) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Revelation 11:18 (NKJV) The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

Revelation 16:5 (NKJV) And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things.

Revelation 18:8 (NKJV) "Therefore her plagues will come in one day; death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her.

Revelation 18:20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and [you] holy

apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

Revelation 19:2 (NKJV) "For true and righteous [are] His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants [shed] by her."

Revelation 19:11 (NKJV) Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Revelation 20:12-13 (NKJV) 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. {13} The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Note the final words, "And they were judged, each one according to his works."

Examples For Us

If Christians are to judge, whose example should they follow?

Paul exhorted the Greeks:

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV)
Imitate me, just as I also [imitate] Christ.

Ephesians 5:1 (NKJV)
Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

Therefore we should look to God and Christ as examples. What is the Father's example in judging? The Father's example is to judge impartially according to each one's works:

1 Peter 1:17 (NKJV) And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay [here] in fear;

If the works are bad, then punishment is likely, but what if the works are very good?

1 Corinthians 15:58
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Revelation 11:18 (NKJV) The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

Impartiality demands that a reward be given, according to

the Father's assessment of the value of the works. This is the pattern followed by the Son, as shown in the following two parables.

Matthew 25:14-30 (NKJV)

"For [the kingdom of heaven is] like a man traveling to a far country, [who] called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. {15} "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. {16} "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. {17} "And likewise he who [had received] two gained two more also. {18} "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. {19} "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. {20} "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' {21} "His lord said to him, 'Well [done], good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' {22} "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' {23} "His lord said to him, 'Well [done], good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' {24} "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. {25} 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, [there] you have [what is] yours.' {26} "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. {27} 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. {28} 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give [it] to him who has ten talents. {29} 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. {30} 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Here the servants were rewarded according to how well they achieved the goal which was set before them. The servant who deliberately refused to work towards the master's objectives was also rewarded according to his works, with punishment which amounted to a negative reward.

Luke 19:12-27 (NKJV)

Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. {13} "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' {14} "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this [man] to reign over us.' {15} "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. {16} "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' {17} "And he said to him, 'Well [done], good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' {18} "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' {19} "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' {20} "Then another

came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. {21} 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' {22} "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, [you] wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. {23} 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' {24} "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give [it] to him who has ten minas.' {25} ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') {26} 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. {27} 'But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay [them] before me.' "

The lesson again is that those who do what is expected of them will be rewarded according to their output and those who deliberately fail will be punished.

As further assurance that judgment does not necessarily lead to a negative outcome, and that benefits are awarded for good works, consider the promise of Christ to his twelve disciples:

Matthew 19:28 (NKJV) So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:30 (NKJV) "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Should this be read as "sit on thrones condemning the twelve tribes of Israel"?

Finally, here is another promise from the Savior himself:

Matthew 25:31-46 (NKJV)

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. {32} "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides [his] sheep from the goats. {33} "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. {34} "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: {35} 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; {36} 'I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' {37} "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed [You], or thirsty and give [You] drink? {38} 'When did we see You a stranger and take [You] in, or naked and clothe [You]? {39} 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' {40} "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did [it] to one of the least of these My brethren, you did [it] to Me.' {41} "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: {42} 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; {43} 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me

in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' {44} "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' {45} "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do [it] to one of the least of these, you did not do [it] to Me.' {46} "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We must conclude that judgment in relation to people means assessing their works and attitudes and issuing a reward according to works.

Reward dispensed according to works should not be confused with salvation. As Unger's Bible Dictionary points out in the entry "Rewards",

"Rewards are offered by God to a believer on the basis of faithful service rendered after salvation. It is clear from Scripture that God offers to the lost, salvation, and for the faithful service of the saved, rewards. Often in theological thinking salvation and rewards are confused. However, these two terms must be carefully distinguished. Salvation is a free gift (John 4:10; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8,9), while rewards are earned by works (Matt. 10:42; Luke 19:17; I Cor. 9:24,25; II Tim. 4:7,8). Then, too, salvation is a present possession (Luke 7:50; John 5:24). On the other hand, rewards are future attainment to be dispensed at the second coming of Christ for His Own (Matt. 16:27; II Tim. 4:8). Rewards will be dispensed at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10). The doctrine of rewards is inseparably connected with God's grace. A soul being saved on the basis of divine grace, there is no room for the building up of merit on the part of the believer. Yet God recognizes an obligation on His part to reward His saved ones for their service to Him. Nothing can be done to merit salvation but what the believer has achieved for God's glory, God recognizes in His great faithfulness with rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ."

Judging Angels

How should angels be judged? God and Christ have set the example -- they should be judged according to their works, according to what they have done and how well they have fulfilled their commissions.

What commissions have the angels? Why has God made them? Why has God made them as angels and not as humans? Why has God made us as humans and not as angels? Why are we two separate groups?

The Book of Hebrews tells us why angels were created:

Hebrews 1:7 (NKJV)

And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."

Angels were made to assist God. Assist God in doing what?

Hebrews 1:14 (NKJV)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Angels were made to be ministering spirits, ministering both to God and to humans. As God's ministers (v7), they assist God in his project with humans in bringing us from our present state to the breathtaking future which God has prepared for us. They assist humans in this process by carrying out the duties God has assigned to them. Angels, as part of "the whole creation", are awaiting the appearance of more sons of the God who created them at the resurrection of the dead (I Cor 15:12-57), of which Christ has been the first and only:

Romans 8:22-23 (NKJV)

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. {23} Not only [that], but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

After the project has been completed, it is fitting that those who have participated be rewarded, according to their contributions. That means that the angels, who are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation", should be assessed and rewarded for their part in helping humans reach salvation. Those who have helped will be pleasantly rewarded, those who have hindered will be punished.

This is the judgement that God has decreed that resurrected Christians will perform (I Cor 6:3). For one who has achieved salvation and been rewarded by Christ, it will be a joyful experience in personally rewarding those angels who have helped that individual during the sojourn as a human.

It makes no sense that only evil angels be involved in this judgment and that the good angels be ignored. God has set the pattern in his judgment of humans that the good be rewarded and the others be punished. Therefore, former humans, then translated into children of God, will follow their Father's example in the judgment of angels and reward the good and punish the wicked.

What About Unger's?

We read earlier that Unger's Bible Dictionary stated "These are fallen angels and are evidently judged in connection with the Great White Throne (I Cor. 6:3; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6; Rev. 20:10)."

Let us look at these scriptures closer and we will see that Unger's conclusion is not justified.

2 Peter 2:4

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast [them] down to hell and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;

Notice that these sinning angels have been chained and restrained, but they are not yet judged. They are reserved for a future judgment. This is in agreement with Paul's writing, the judgment cannot yet occur because the dead in Christ have not yet risen. That will happen at the return of Christ, as we saw above in Revelation 11:18. If they are not judged, why are they chained? The answer to this quite simple. What

happens in human law enforcement systems to those who are caught in the act of a crime? They are arrested and taken to a place of confinement by the police, and they are charged with an offence. They are not yet officially judged, even if caught in the act in front of a host of witnesses. Sometime later, at a suitable time and place, they are brought before a person or persons who are considered suitable for hearing the case. Evidence is produced, pleas are entered, both sides of the story are presented, and judgement is made by those recognized as qualified. The outcome may be freedom, perhaps with compensation, or it may be punishment. In the case of the angels who sinned, they were causing damage and disruption to the project which God is undertaking. Instead of helping by carrying out their assigned duties, they were attempting sabotage. Rather than judging and punishing them on the spot, they have been restrained so they can do no further harm, and they are awaiting their judgment time by those they sought to destroy, the Sons of God.

Jude 1:6

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Jude also confirms that their judgment has not yet happened but they are in a state of restraint.

Revelation 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [are]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

This verse in Revelation about the fate of Satan has a time setting after the return of Christ, after the end of the Millennium. The other demons are not mentioned and may or may not receive their reward at the same time.

We see that there is no evidence in these verses for the claim that only fallen angels will be judged by resurrected Christians, such as made by Unger above. Fallen angels will be involved, but so too will the faithful angels. Just as our labour in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58) but will be rewarded, so will the labours of the faithful angels also be rewarded. It will be our honour to dispense those rewards.

Written by Selwyn Russell (SRussell@acm.org), first published September 1997. Copyright Selwyn Russell 1997. Permission is hereby given to reprint or copy this article for non-commercial purposes with acknowledgement and creditation.

Latest update: September 1997

URLs of this page:

- <http://miso.wwa.com/~curadist/ReferenceLibrary/Christianity/SR/judangls.htm>
- <http://acsl.home.ml.org/SR/judangls.htm>

Further enquiries or suggestions for this Library? Email [The Keeper of the Archives](#).