

referred to its penetrating nature (Rom. 2:16) and righteous character (Acts 17:31), while Peter underscored its inescapable gravity (I Pet. 4:17,18). Therefore, to deny its implications is to ignore reality and to count God a liar.

But Jesus laid great stress upon one aspect of the judgment, that is often overlooked by superficial readers of the Bible—the many *surprises* in the form of sudden, last-minute discoveries that will characterize that day. Any view of coming judgment would be incomplete without a consideration of this somber aspect—one to which we will now turn.

## *The Mystified Masses*

*“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen”*

*Revelation 1:7*

The first group to encounter the sudden, surprising nature of judgment day will be the unsuspecting, unsanctified millions who will be thrown into a panic as they realize that the day they were taught to discount as unworthy of an intelligent turn of mind, has actually dawned to their eternal dismay. In a moment’s time, they will recognize that the thought of accountability to God, which they have persistently sought to distance from their contemplations, is, after all, a dreadful reality.

The stark amazement of that moment will leave them mystified, and perceiving that they have no avenue of escape, and that their condemnation is inevitable, they will become suicidal. The Apostle John describes their panic-stricken cries as does Mathew their wailing:

*“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”*

*Revelation 6:15-17*

And—

*“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”*

*Matthew 24:30.*

With such consternation will the unbelieving world encounter the first judgment day surprise: the discovery that judgment is a realized fact.

## *The Speechless Man*

*“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless”*

*Matthew 22:11,12*

Tuesday before His Friday crucifixion, Jesus was blitzed with a series

of questions to which He responded with superb and characteristic wisdom. It was in this context of controversy in the Temple court that He told the parable of the Marriage Feast of the King’s Son, and related a judgment-day surprise that will await many in that solemn hour. The case concerns a duly invited guest, who by his spiritual neglect, proved himself unworthy of participation in the marriage festivities. He actually had the audacity to enter the marriage banquet without donning the provided, but required wedding garment. This wedding garment we take to mean the practical effect of saving faith in the form of Christian character and conduct. Christ’s telling illustration warns the religious hypocrite, who is long on profession, but short on practice, that his substitution of a religious claim for practical godliness will not escape the notice of the Great King when his life comes under final review. Acceptance of the invitation, attendance at the banquet, interest in the solemn festivities, and mingling with fellow guests, will never compensate for heart-felt and life-changing salvation. Friend, do you have this necessary wedding garment? If not, you are travelling, though perhaps in earnest, a religious road that leads to ultimate rejection when the last minute discovery discloses your fatal oversight (I Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:3-6; Gal. 5:19-21; Isa. 61:10;

Matt. 7:13,14; Gal. 6:7).

## *The Misguided Many*

*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”*

*Matthew 7:21-23*

In warning of another potential judgment day surprise, Jesus discloses in Matthew 7:21 ff. that a misguided emphasis, even among them who name the name of Christ, can result in one’s being debarred from entrance into God’s Kingdom. This fact raises a crucial question, “Upon what basis is one entitled to entrance into God’s Kingdom?” or, to state it another way: “What is the proof of genuine discipleship?” Matthew 7 leaves no doubt that verbal claims and supernatural demonstrations of power, as important as they are in Christianity, do not necessarily entitle one to entrance into the Kingdom. There is a more fundamental issue; and that is the issue of obedience to God’s will from the heart. It is not until we permit the Sermon on the Mount to transfer our focus from outward demonstration to an inward change in our governing disposition, that we have truly embarked

upon the pathway into the Kingdom. Our profession of Christianity must be coupled with practice, but genuine practice can only proceed from an heart purified by faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ (Luke 6:46-49; Matt. 5:3-8; Rom. 6:17; Gal. 6:15).

### *The Castaway Children*

*“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”*

*Matthew 8:11-12*

Perhaps one of the most tragic and lamentable of the judgment day surprises will be those sons and daughters of the faith, heirs to unprecedented spiritual privileges, cast upon God from the womb by pious parents, familiar with the oracles of God, privy to the way of righteousness from earliest childhood, who, due to spiritual indifference, are cast into outer darkness! Despite every inducement to faith and holiness, these ungrateful souls have forsaken their own mercy. Such were many of the Jews in Jesus’ day, and such are many in our day, who have abandoned their spiritual birthright to blessing for one morsel of Esau’s lentil soup (Rom. 3:1,2; Heb. 12:15-17).

### *The Belated Seekers*

*“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall*

*not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are”*

*Luke 13:24,25*

As Jesus warns in the above passage, the day of opportunity is of limited duration. There will come a time, whether when the Spirit ceases from striving with a man (Gen. 6:3), at death (Heb. 9:27), or at Christ’s coming, after which every attempt to find God will be too late. Because the belated seekers did not agonize to enter in when they could, they could not enter in when they would. Such will be the last minute discovery of untold multitudes, who neglected so great salvation by failing to give the more earnest heed to what they heard, when they heard it (Heb. 2:1-4; Hosea 5:6; Prov. 1:28; 29:1; II Cor. 6:1,2; Isa. 55:6,7). Will you not *turn today* to the One Who has been striving with you and find Him mighty to assist and save you through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ?

### *The Foolish Five*

*“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them... Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not”*

*Matthew 25:3,11-12*

The ten bridesmaids, so similar in many respects, will in the final moment of truth, discover either their prudence or imprudence, based on the presence or absence of an extra supply of oil.

The danger noted in this somber passage serves as a perpetual warning to carnal and careless believers, who fail to ready themselves for the Lord’s return, by failing to cry mightily unto God for the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s anointing.

### *The Blind Church Member*

*“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”*

*Revelation 3:16,17*

To be on the verge of being vomited out by Jesus, and yet, to be convinced of spiritual well-being, is certainly the height of spiritual ignorance and the depth of religious deception. Such was the case with the blind Laodiceans, and such will be the case with many now at the close of the age, as their spirituality is weighed in the balances of Christ’s true assessment, and found wanting. May Jesus enable each and every one of us to avoid such a judgment day surprise, by repenting of all known sin, and conducting a thorough self-examination (II Cor. 13:5), while we humbly place the full weight of our confidence in the faithfulness of Him Who *“loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”* (Rev. 1:5).

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# JUDGMENT DAY SURPRISES

## *Sudden Last-Minute Discoveries In The Coming Day Of Reckoning*

**W**hile most men are vaguely familiar with the coming judgment that awaits mankind, not all are fully apprised of the specific nature of that most solemn day. This ignorance is due in some measure to the unpopular nature of the subject, and also to the unwillingness of many pastors and churches to blow the trumpet concerning the somber day of reckoning. However, despite their reluctance to address the coming judgment, the Scriptures are replete with references to its nature, inevitability, and finality (Matt. 5:21,22; 11:24; 12:36; Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10,11; Heb. 6:2; 9:27; 10:27; Jude 14,15; Rev. 20:11,12). In fact, the thought of coming judgment is so pervasive in Biblical thought, that it is absolutely impossible to claim to follow Christ and ignore the many warnings that every man will eventually stand trial before Jesus Christ. Christ Himself made judgment His constant theme (Matt. 23:33; passim). Paul