

JOHN 5:22 CLARIFICATION of the word “Judgment”

(Scripture verses are NKJV; words in brackets [] were added by the translators; underlining is my emphasis.)

Many times when reading Bible scripture—God’s Word, a statement seems so clear and positive that there could be no further discussion as to its meaning. In a recent conversation it was pointed out that a basic tenant of the New Testament is that the Father was choosing the Bride of Christ; that it is the Father who determines who the bride is to be, and who will be invited as guests to the wedding. This makes the Father’s decision an eternal life and death judgment concerning those individuals.

A quick response in that conversation was a total rejection of the Father’s role in choosing the bride and who would be invited to the wedding, which is the eternal life and death judgment. This comeback was based on **John 5:22** *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgement to the Son,”* Therefore, it would be Christ making the final decision as to who his bride would be, not the Father. In this present society that would make sense.

The following scripture was then quoted to show that the Father was making a judgment to determine eternal life or eternal death. **John 15:1-2** *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser. Every [branch] in me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”* As the vine dresser, the Father cuts off the branch that does not bear fruit. Each one of us is pictured as a branch connected to the vine, Christ. The action of the Father in cutting off an unproductive branch, which is then reserved for the fire, is a determination of the judgement of guilt (not a punishment for that guilt). The analogy that Christ uses here is a perfect metaphor for this temporary life. We have only one opportunity to bear fruit, just as the grape vine only bears fruit on a new branch for that year, equating to our lifetime.

By the Father cutting off the branch that is not bearing fruit He is making the eternal life and death judgment about that person. **Matthew 22: 11-14** gives the essential qualifications for attending the wedding feast. *“When the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast [him] into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few [are] chosen.”* He is cast into outer darkness where he awaits his punishment.

What should be understood from this parable? The King represents God the Father. The wedding garments are pictured as the fruit of the grapevine. **Galatians 5:22-23** *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”* The fruit spoken of was pictured by the way Christ lived His life. Then what is the ultimate goal that God has set for man? It is the putting on of the character of the Father via the Son; living life as they would.

The king referred to in **Matthew 22** is not addressing how a specific individual is dressed, but is judging the individual’s character, which is represented by the wedding garments of all of the

guests. In fact, He not only judged the one who failed to have on an acceptable garment, but judged all those who were at the wedding to have on an acceptable garment. This judgment that the Father has made is a determination of either eternal life, or of guilt; meaning they are cast out, waiting for the final judgment. There can be no doubt from these scriptures that the Father is making a judgment that determines the guilt of this person, who is then cast into outer darkness to await the judgment of punishment.

The Bible is intrinsically true. Therefore, that which appears as a contradiction or error is always our lack of rightly dividing the word of truth. To better understand the statement in **John 5:22** that Christ does all the judging, it is necessary to understand what is meant by the word “judgment.” The word “judgment” is used four times in this section of the Book of John. The English word used here for judgment is a translation of one of three Greek words, numbered 2917, 2919 and 2920. These numbers can be known by comprehending the meaning in **John 5:19-24**: *“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly I say to you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son does also in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to [them], even so the Son gives life to whom He will.’ For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”*

Verse 19 tells us that the Father sets the agenda, and the Son follows the example. **Verse 20** says that the Father is teaching the Son, and is doing marvelous works through Him (Christ). **Verse 21** explains that both the Father and the Son have the power to give life; this could mean bringing one back to physical life or to the ultimate, eternal life. Obviously this would require judgment by the Father or the Son.

In Verse 22 “the Father Judges (#2919) no-one.” This word—along with #2917 and 2920—shows there are two types of judgment. The first is the determination of guilt, and the second is what the punishment will be. This is similar to the present judicial system in the United States. The jury determines the guilt or innocence of the accused, and if the verdict is guilty the judge then passes sentence; that is, the judge determines the punishment. **Verse 23** gives the reason for honoring the Son. The problem when reading the Bible in English is that there is only the undefined word “judgment.” The determination of which judgment is made is by the context of the scripture presented.

Verse 24 speaks of those who were previously judged innocent—meaning that no judgment of penalty would be given to them.

Two points are made clear. One must believe in the Father, who Christ revealed to the world, and one must also believe that it was the Father who sent Christ. Because of their belief in the Father who sent Christ they will not come into judgment (#2920) by Christ. It has been shown in **Matthew 22:11-14** that the judgment of innocence had already been made by the Father. If one

truly believes this fundamental truth, that it was the Father who sent the Son, one would come to the realization that all of their commands must be followed. One of the fundamental reasons for Christ coming in the flesh was to set an example of how we are to live our lives. **John 14:21, 23** *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."* **Verse 23** *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.'"*

As already stated the word translated as judgment carries two meanings. First, whether guilty or innocent, and if guilty, what should the punishment be? By understanding that there are two types of judgment, the "All judgment" of **John 5:22**, will be determined. Is it one of guilt or one of punishment? The Bible describes this second phase, the white throne judgement, beginning in **Daniel 7:9** *"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment [was] white as snow, And the hair of His head [was] like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;"*

Revelation 1:13-15 says, *"and in the midst of the seven lamp stands [One] like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair [were] like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a flame of fire; His feet [were] like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;"*

And in verse **Daniel 7:10** *"A fiery steam issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened."*

Revelation 20:11-12 *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the 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."*

John 5:24 makes it clear that all judgment of **Verse 22** is about the judgment of what the punishment will be. The Father has put that solely in the hands of Christ. Why is this? It is because Christ lived as a human being and would understand what the pulls of the flesh would be. His judgment (Lord Jesus) would be with perfect understanding. That judgment is found in **Luke 12:43-48**, and it opens our understanding of what this judgment of punishment for all those found guilty will be. *"Blessed [is] that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for [him], and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint [him] his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare [himself] or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes]. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten*

with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, to him they will ask the more.

It is clear that the words translated as “judgment” in the English Bible has more than one meaning. As pointed out, by studying the scriptures and then applying the correct definition for the word “judgment,” it has been clearly shown this word can be either of guilt or innocence. If guilty a judgment of punishment follows, thus clarifying the statement in **John 5:22** that all judgment is one of punishment administered by Christ, not one of guilt which was made by the Father.

John 15:4-8 ***“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned.”*** (Who was it that cast out the unproductive branch?) ***“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples.”***

Each one is fed by men appointed by Christ to feed them. These are the true ministers of His word. **Ephesians 4:11-14** ***“And He Himself gave some [to be] apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”***

Verse 14 presents the responsibility of the individual making the judgment as to who are the true ministers of Christ. The Bereans solved this problem as recorded in **Acts 17:10-11** ***“Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily [to find out] whether these things were so.”***

Today, people must carry out that same responsibility to study the Word, to see if they are being taught correctly.

Christ makes this statement twice; in **Matthew 20:16**, and again in **Matthew 22.14**. The many that are called is a relative number to which He compares to the few who are chosen as shown in **II Thessalonians 2:13-14** ***“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Man must be an individual capable of conducting his life so that he recognizes exactly who gave him that life, while having deep respect for God who gave him this gift. Man must recognize and celebrate this gift weekly on the Sabbath. It is necessary to have a right attitude to those with whom they have daily contact. This entails not lying, nor stealing, or killing. It means honoring those who continue to give life—the Father and the Son. It means not interfering with the special relationship between husband and wife. And most importantly it means not to contemplate anything contrary to how we should be dealing with God and our fellow man, which would be the harbinger of a deceitful character. Thought should *always* precede action! How we conduct our lives reveals our character. Our actions underscore our character—either righteous or unrighteous.

Ephesians 4:13 *“till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”*

Matthew 5:48 *“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”*

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