

Ezekiel 9:1-11—God Won't Judge The Righteous With The Wicked

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Revision

Last week we started a new section in the book of Ezekiel. It's been almost one and a half years since God first revealed Himself to Ezekiel and gave him his first set of prophecies which mainly dealt with the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. During this time, Ezekiel has been busy acting out all the prophecies in the way that God instructed him to. One example was when God told Ezekiel to lie on his side for over a year to demonstrate the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

Now in chapters 8 through 11, more than a year later, Ezekiel receives another vision. The big picture is that God is withdrawing His presence from the temple because of the persistent sins of the people. The key verse is Ezekiel 8:6, ***“Furthermore He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary?”***

In chapters 8 through 11 we will see God slowly, unwillingly, reluctantly, gradually and stepwise move away from where His physical presence, His shekinah glory, had been dwelling above the cherubim on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies for hundreds of years, ever since Solomon dedicated the temple in 2 Chronicles 7:1-3.

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 NKJV

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. ² And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. ³ When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying:
“For He is good, For His mercy endures forever.”

We'll learn about how God's presence leaves the temple next week.

One of the main points last week was how the elders were outwardly worshipping God, but their hearts were full of sin and idolatry, with disgusting and pornographic images covering the inner walls of the temple, which represented their hearts. What should have been a place where God was worshipped and glorified had degenerated into a temple secretly dedicated to worshipping idols. ***“Then He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols?”*** (Ezekiel 8:12a).

The main application from this is the necessity for us to be diligent to take every evil or sinful thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:3-6), but it also refers to the hidden motives, intentions, and desires of our heart. It is good for us to pray Psalm 139:23-24 so we will know the true condition of our hearts, what we are truly seeking, and what we would be doing if there were no consequences, restraints or expectations on us.

Ezekiel 9—The principle of not judging the righteous with the wicked

Ezekiel 9:1-11 NKJV

Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, “Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.” ² And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer’s inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

³ Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold [front door] of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer’s inkhorn at his side; ⁴ and the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”

⁵ To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the temple. ⁷ Then He said to them, “Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!” And they went out and killed in the city.

⁸ So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, “Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?”

⁹ Then He said to me, “The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!’ ¹⁰ And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head.”

¹¹ Just then, the man clothed with linen, who had the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, “I have done as You commanded me.”

1. The sealing of the righteous before Judgement begins (9:1–4)

Ezekiel 9:1-2 NKJV

Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, “Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.” ² And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer’s inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar:

v 1 “Let those who have charge over the city draw near:As the vision God gave to Ezekiel continues in chapter 9, God calls six men (most likely angels), who have charge over the city of Jerusalem.

“Those who had charge over the city were those whom God set to watch over the welfare of the city. They were not earthly agents, but heavenly. Angels are frequently called men because of their outward appearance.” (Feinberg)

It’s interesting that angels, both faithful and fallen, have responsibilities that relate to specific geographic locations. This is true of both faithful and fallen angelic beings. Here are some examples:

- “In Daniel’s day, a demonic spirit was assigned to Persia (Daniel 10:13; 10:20) and to Greece (Daniel 10:20)
- Daniel 12:1 says that Michael had some responsibility regarding Israel
- Satan himself was connected with the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14)
- Mark 5:10 indicates that demons wanted to stay in one place and not be sent to another by Jesus” (David Guzik)

v 1, 2 **Each with a deadly weapon in his hand... each with his battle-ax in his hand:** Each of the six angels was armed with a battle axe, meaning that they were there for judgement. This fits the theme of the vision—sin will eventually be judged.

v 2 **Came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north:** This gate was built by Jotham (2 Kings 15:35), called the upper Benjamin gate (Jeremiah 20:2) or the new gate (Jeremiah 26:10; 36:10). The gate was towards the north of the city, from which direction the Babylonian army would come, as well as where the worship of idols had taken place.

v 2 **One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer’s inkhorn at his side:** Among the six angels holding weapons, was another angel who was dressed differently and carried a **writer’s inkhorn at his side**, ready to write. “At his side was a *writing case* [inkhorn]: the word is peculiar to this chapter and may be a loan-word from Egyptian, where it refers to the scribe’s writing equipment, incorporating pen, ink-horn and wax writing-tablet.” (Taylor)

v 2 **They went in and stood beside the bronze altar:** The seven angels were now in position and ready for service. They were standing by the altar which represents judgement, specifically the judgement of sin. It was where the lamb (or goat or calf) was offered in the place of the worshipper because the sin of the worshiper had been symbolically transferred to the innocent or perfect lamb; therefore the lamb had to die. The worshipper would place his hand on the head of the lamb, confess his sins, and then sacrifice the animal as a sin offering—understanding that the penalty of sin was death, that he had sinned and therefore deserved to die, but the lamb was his symbolic substitute, dying in his place. By faith, he looked forward to the coming Saviour who would be the perfect Lamb of God that would literally take on the sins of all mankind and die in our place (our substitute). John the Baptist knew exactly who Jesus was:

John 1:29 NKJV

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Interestingly, the angels go right past the image of jealousy and the mourners for Tammuz, and stand near the sun-worshippers, but they were invisible to all except Ezekiel. It’s good to remember that there are angels around us all the time, but we don’t usually see them because they live in a different dimension to us, the spiritual realm.

Ezekiel 9:3-4 NKJV

Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold [front door] of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer’s inkhorn at his side; ⁴ and the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”

v 4 **Go through the midst of the city ... put a mark on the foreheads:** “God commanded the one with the inkwell to **mark** the righteous men of the city. Ezekiel 9:6 shows this was a *protective* identification, to protect them in the coming invasion and also to protect them spiritually for the age to come. It shows that even when judgment comes upon an entire nation, God still knows how to mark and identify the righteous.” (David Guzik)

“There is a prophetic significance in the Hebrew word for the mark. It is the Hebrew letter T (Tau), which at that time was written as a cross. Without being superstitious we can rejoice in this anticipation of salvation through the death of Christ on the cross.” (Wright)

“This is in allusion to the ancient every-where-used custom of setting marks on servants and slaves, to distinguish them from others. It was also common for the worshippers of particular idols to have their idol’s *mark* upon their *foreheads, arms, &c.*” (Clarke)

This means that those who had identified themselves with their idols would have most likely had marks on their foreheads or arms to show their allegiance to those false gods. Now God puts His mark on those who belong to Him.

There are other examples of God marking people for their protection and to demonstrate His ownership of them:

- The blood on the doorposts of the Israelites’ houses on the night of the Passover (Exodus 12)
- The scarlet cord in Rahab’s window (Joshua 2:18–21; 6:22–25)
- Revelation 7:3 later describes God’s servants, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, being sealed on their foreheads
- All believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit and those alive at the time of the rapture will be taken away to spare them from the judgement to come on those who dwell on the earth during the Tribulation
- Jesus will write on us believes the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and His own new name as a reward and to show that we belong (Revelation 3:12)

Interestingly, Revelation 13:16 (and other passages) describe a later Satanic counterfeit of this mark, identifying allegiance to Satan and his false messiah. This is called the mark of the beast, and will be administered at the halfway point of the 7 year Tribulation.

“Are you a marked man or woman? Yes. You are either marked by compassion, saying, “Lord, I love You and I care about people” or you are marked for destruction, saying, “I don’t care about the Lord and I don’t care about people.” ... But, as believers, we are told in Ephesians 1:13 that we have been sealed or literally marked with the Holy Spirit.” (Jon Courson)

v 4 **Put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it:** Who were the ones who were marked out for protection? Those who genuinely loved God, and therefore genuinely hated sin. The closer we grow to God, the more like Him we become, then the more we love what God loves and hate what God hates. Those who genuinely love God will hate sin, they will mourn over it, both their own, and the sin around them. *How much we genuinely hate or loathe sin is a good measure of how much we actually love God.*

v 4 **The men who sigh:** “[Sigh] will resurface in 21:6–7, where the moaning will be a symptom of a broken heart and intense grief over impending doom. In 24:17 [sigh] describes the grief that Ezekiel expresses over the death of his wife. Here the scribe is to search for individuals who will display a similar emotion over all the abominations being perpetrated in Jerusalem.” (Block)

As the quote from Block points out, the word **sigh** signifies a very strong emotion. *Sin should break our hearts more and more as we draw nearer to God. We should be starting to understand how sin breaks God’s heart, because it should be breaking ours as well.* There was the remnant, living amongst the wicked, who loved God and therefore would be protected by God. God always knows those who are His and will do what is best for them.

“Let us mourn in time of sinning: so shall we be marked in times of punishing.” (Trapp)

“Amid scenes of judgment, whether in the Church or the world, there is always a remnant, upon whom is the mark; on Lot in Sodom; on Israel amid the plagues of Egypt; on Rahab in the fall of Jericho; on the 144,000 at the Great Tribulation. They are safe amid the fiery indignation which devours the adversaries.” (Meyer)

Application: God will not judge the righteous with the wicked

The fact that God will not judge the righteous with the wicked is so important to understand. Abraham understood, and he used this principle when interceding or pleading for the life of Lot and his family after God had told him that He was going to destroy Sodom and the surrounding towns. Listen carefully to Abraham’s godly logic:

Genesis 18:23-26 NKJV

And Abraham came near and said, “**Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?** ²⁴ Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? ²⁵ **Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**”

²⁶ So the Lord said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.”

Notice God’s response, He agrees with Abraham and says that He won’t destroy them if there is more than a certain number. Why? Because a just and righteous judge cannot and will not condemn the innocent. However, even when there are less than 10 (Abraham gets God down to 10 people), God still sends angels to Sodom to remove righteous Lot and his family before He destroys the place.

Genesis 19:15-17, 22 NKJV

When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶ **And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.** ¹⁷ So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.”

²² **Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.**”

Verse 22 is so revealing, *“Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.”* God simply could not judge the wicked until all the righteous had been removed, even if it was only four people (Lot and his family). It was the same with the flood, God could not send the flood until all 8 righteous people had entered the only door and were safe inside the ark (a picture of our salvation).

Another comfort here for us is that Lot was not a strong believer yet God still rescued him. Lot had compromised badly with the world and had blown his witness (he had lost any influence or authority he might have had to lead people to the Lord—Lot’s son-in-laws thought he was joking when he warned them). However, God knew that Lot belonged to Him. He was a true believer (see 2 Peter 2:7), and was therefore saved by grace, as we all are. Don’t be fooled, none of us will get to Heaven because of our good works. It’s Christ’s merit or goodness that gets us there, not our own. Our own righteousness is as filthy rags (see Isaiah 64:6). We will be rewarded for our faithfulness to God once we are saved, but our salvation is a free gift (see Ephesians 2:8-9).

A good New Testament passage that sums up the fact that God is a good and just judge and therefore must deliver the righteous but condemn the wicked is:

2 Peter 2:4-9 NKJV

For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into [Tartarus], in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment. ⁵ And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God’s righteous judgment. **So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood.** ⁶ Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people. ⁷ **But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man** who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. ⁸ **Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day [Lot was someone who sighed and mourned over sin].** ⁹ So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment.

Application: Believers will not go through the Tribulation

Now we have established the biblical principle that God will not judge the righteous with the wicked, a very relevant and current application here is to consider the pre-tribulation rapture. Why am I so convinced that Jesus will come back at the rapture and take all the true believers with Him to Heaven *before* the Tribulation begins? Here is a big reason; *God will not judge the righteous with the wicked; it’s like throwing the innocent person in jail with the guilty person.* Consider the purpose of the seven year Tribulation—it’s for God to judge the wicked, those who dwell (make their home) on the earth—it’s for unbelievers only.

Revelation 3:10 NKJV

Because you have **kept [past tense]** My command to persevere, **I also will keep you from [Greek: *Ek*, out of] the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, **to test [try] those who dwell on the earth [unbelievers].**

Note: **Kept** My command to persevere is **past tense**. In this context, it's something that believers have done, not something that we still have to do. Believers persevere by God's strength, not their own. God is faithful to complete what He started, our sanctification, the process of us becoming like Jesus—Philippians 1:6. Also see 1 John 4:4—*You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world*, and 5:4-5—...*Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God*. Take comfort in the fact that every believer has already overcome the world because Jesus has already won the victory—death no longer has any hold over us and God's plan and will for our lives cannot be thwarted or stopped.

Did you notice God's promise to those who believe? God will keep us out of the **time** of the Tribulation. The opposite of this is Noah having to go through the flood, and Israel having to go through the Tribulation. However, in contrast, like Enoch was removed before God judged the world by a global flood (Genesis 5:24), and in a very similar way the church will be removed before the coming judgement that will come upon all those who dwell on the earth.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 NKJV

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, **that whether we wake or sleep**, we should live together with Him.

¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Notice the context here. 1 Thessalonians 4-5 is all about the rapture and Tribulation. There's no comfort in going through the Tribulation, but there is much comfort to be had in knowing that Christ is preparing a place for us in Heaven, and will soon come again and receive His bride (the church) unto Himself (John 14:1-4).

2. The destruction of the wicked (9:5-7)

Now the righteous are safe, it's time to judge the wicked.

Ezekiel 9:5-7 NKJV To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the temple. ⁷ Then He said to them, “Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!” And they went out and killed in the city.

v 5 **Go after him through the city and kill... but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark**: If you weren't marked, then you would be killed. Age, wealth, looks, position, and talent all meant nothing. 2 Chronicles 36:17 described the fulfilment of this: *Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand*.

v 6 **And begin at My sanctuary**: Why? Because to whom much is given, much is required (see Luke 12:48). With knowledge and privilege comes responsibility. The same is true for the church today.

1 Peter 4:17 NKJV

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

This is why these judging angels **began with the elders who were before the temple.**

“In the sanctuary God should have been most honoured, but there He was most dishonoured and provoked, and there His holiness would most fully and certainly be vindicated.” (Feinberg)

v 7 **Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain:** “In Ezekiel 6:4–5 and 6:13, God promised that He would defile and desecrate the pagan altars on the high places because of Israel’s idolatry. Here He promised the same desecration at His own house.” (David Guzik)

3. The proper motivation of Christ’s ambassadors—compassion (9:9-11)

Ezekiel 9:8-11 NKJV

So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, “Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?”

9 Then He said to me, “The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!’ 10 And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, but I will recompense their deeds on their own head.”

11 Just then, the man clothed with linen, who had the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, “I have done as You commanded me.”

Application: We must love those we are warning or we will not be effective

v 8 **I fell on my face and cried out:** Here we see why God could use Ezekiel; he had a soft heart and really cared for the people he was reaching out to and warning. Ezekiel was similar to Jeremiah who was known as the weeping prophet, who was strong on the outside but broken on the inside.

“Though Ezekiel had many times announced such a severe judgment, when he actually saw it carried out in his vision, it made him completely undone.” (David Guzik)

“For all Ezekiel’s outward appearance of severity, beneath the hard shell there was a heart that felt deeply for and with his people. He did not relish the message of judgment that he had to give, still less the reality that followed when the message was rejected.” (Taylor)

Remember the visions where God told Ezekiel and John to eat a scroll (see Ezekiel 3:3, 3:14-15 and Revelation 10:9-10; God’s message was sweet to his mouth (the righteous would be saved), but bitter to his stomach as he had to share about the judgement coming to the wicked. The same will be true for us if we share God’s heart—we will rejoice in our salvation, but mourn over the judgement of the wicked.

Jesus also cried over Jerusalem when He pronounced judgement over it.

Matthew 23:31-39 NKJV

“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. ³³ Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? ³⁴ Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

Luke 19:41-46 NKJV

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

⁴⁵ Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘*My house is a house of prayer,*’ but you have made it a ‘*den of thieves.*’ ”

Notice here that Jesus didn’t enjoy judging the people of His day—their coming judgement actually caused Him to weep. Also notice that He started at the temple. As a church, we must remain pure. *If we judge ourselves, we need not be judged by God.*

Ezekiel’s question (v 8)

v 8 **“Ah, Lord God! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?”**: Can you picture Ezekiel simply begging God (**Ah, Lord God!**), to not destroy the **remnant** as He poured out His **fury on Jerusalem**. Like a true man of God, he was faithful to intercede to the very end for his people, the ones he loved and wanted to come to God.

God’s answer (9–10)

v 9 **The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great**: God here reminds Ezekiel that His exceedingly great judgement is fair because their sin was also **exceedingly great**.

v 9 **The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see**: The leaders of the city said this earlier in Ezekiel’s vision (Ezekiel 8:12). Again, the people were refusing to accept responsibility for their sin and were blaming God for their current circumstances. In response God says, **“My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity.”**

“Since the righteous are marked, the fate of the wicked is sealed. For them there is no hope of escape.” (Block)

The angel with the inkhorn reports back to God

Ezekiel 9:11 NKJV

Just then, the man clothed with linen, who had the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, “I have done as You commanded me.”

v 11 **I have done as You commanded me:** This was “an encouragement to Ezekiel that all Judah had not strayed from God, the man with the writing kit reported, ‘I have done as you commanded.’ In other words, the righteous ones had been marked.” (Alexander)

Ezekiel could take comfort that his work was not all in vain; some people had listened and were spared the coming judgement.

Application: Serving with humility and submission

v 11 **Reported back:** This shows that angels are diligent and accountable in their service to God. This also shows their humble and submissive attitude to God.

“Angels and men must all give account of their conduct to God; for although he is every where, and his eye sees all things, yet they must personally account for all that they have done.” (Clarke)

The same is true for us—we should be serving with a humble and submissive heart. Jesus makes this clear in:

Luke 17:7-10 NLT paraphrase

“When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, ‘Come in and eat with me’? ⁸ No, he says, ‘Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.’ ⁹ And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not. ¹⁰ **In the same way, when you obey Me you should say, ‘We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.’”**

v 11 **I have done as You commanded me:** This is what we all want to be able to say at the end of our lives. Jesus leads by example with His perfect obedience and submission to the Father.

John 17:4 NKJV

I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Paul could also say that he finished well. Notice his motivation—his reward based on his desire to please God, and his love for Jesus and longing to be with Him and found faithful when He returns at the rapture. May we live with the same motivation and goal. May we look forward to hearing Jesus say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

2 Timothy 4:7-8 NKJV

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.