

There is a widespread idea that the Bible teaches one great general judgment at which all people will stand before the judgment seat of God. Actually this is not taught in the Scripture. There are a few passages from which it might be easily but incorrectly inferred. There are many passages, however, which clearly teach something quite different.

It is true that God is going to judge all men for the deeds done in the flesh. This is something that all must face. Hebrews 9:27 says: "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." This does not say that all receive the judgment at the same time, but it does say that all are responsible for the deeds done while they are living upon this earth.

Actually there is a judgment that is taking place continually, as is clearly taught in John 3:18, which reads as follows:

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

This verse shows that judgment has already been pronounced against all who do not receive Christ as Saviour. We are implicated in the sin of Adam, since he was our federal head. In addition, every one of us has personally committed sin, and therefore deserves nothing good at the hand of God. Romans 3:23 says:

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

In this judgment, which is occurring all the time, there is also acquittal. All who from the heart accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord are immediately justified. "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). All who accept Christ as Saviour can know that He has paid the penalty due God's justice for their sins. When He was crucified He suffered in their place. "He that believeth on him is not condemned."