

THE COURTS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Trials, Judgment, Witnesses, Prosecution, Persecution, and the Final Accounting Before God

Abstract

Scripture reveals that judgment is not merely an earthly legal concept, but a heavenly reality. God is Judge of all the earth, Christ has been appointed Judge of the quick and the dead, Satan appears as an accuser, witnesses testify, books are opened, men give account, and every work is brought into judgment. The Bible also shows that earthly courts are meant to reflect heavenly justice, but they often become corrupted by false witnesses, partial judgment, persecution, and the misuse of lawful process. This article examines the biblical structure of courts in heaven and on earth, the relationship between earthly judgment and heavenly judgment, the meaning of giving account before God, and the difference between prosecution and persecution.

I. Foundational Truth: God Is the Supreme Judge

The highest court in Scripture is not on earth. It is in heaven. All earthly judgment is subordinate to God's judgment.

Genesis 18:25

“That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**”

Psalms 9:7-8

“But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.”

Psalms 50:6

“And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.”

Psalm 75:7

“But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”

Ecclesiastes 12:14

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Doctrinal Insight

The first principle of biblical judgment is that God is not merely a participant in judgment. He is the standard, source, throne, authority, and final court of appeal. Every earthly court is accountable to the heavenly court.

II. The Heavenly Court: Thrones, Books, Witnesses, and Judgment

Scripture gives several glimpses into the heavenly court. These passages show order, authority, testimony, accusation, records, and final rulings.

Daniel 7:9-10

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: **his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.** A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: **thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.**”

Daniel 7:22

“Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints of the most High;** and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

Daniel 7:26

“But **the judgment shall sit,** and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.”

Revelation 20:11-12

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, **from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away**; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and **the books were opened**: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and **the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**”

Revelation 20:13

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and **they were judged every man according to their works.**”

Revelation 20:15

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Doctrinal Insight

The heavenly court contains several clear features:

1. A throne of judgment.
2. A presiding Judge.
3. Heavenly attendants.
4. Opened books or records.
5. Individual accountability.
6. Judgment according to works.
7. Final enforcement of the verdict.

III. Satan as Accuser in the Court

The Bible reveals Satan not merely as a tempter, but also as an accuser. His accusations appear in courtroom settings.

Job 1:6-12

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, **From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, **a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and**

escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, **Doth Job fear God for nought?** Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? **thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.** But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and **he will curse thee to thy face.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; **only upon himself put not forth thine hand.** So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

Job 2:1-6

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them **to present himself before the LORD.** And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, **From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, **a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?** and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, **all that a man hath will he give for his life.** But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and **he will curse thee to thy face.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.”

Zechariah 3:1-5

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and **Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.** And the LORD said unto Satan, **The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan;** even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, **Take away the filthy garments from him.** And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, **and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.** And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, **and clothed him with garments.** And the angel of the LORD stood by.”

Revelation 12:10

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:** for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, **which accused them before our God day and night.”**

Doctrinal Insight

Satan’s courtroom role is that of accuser, resistor, and adversary. He seeks legal ground against God’s people. But the Lord rebukes him, cleanses His people, and removes iniquity through divine grace, mercy, and redemption.

IV. Christ as Judge, Advocate, and Mediator

The Lord Jesus Christ is not only Savior. He is also Judge, Advocate, Mediator, and High Priest.

John 5:22

“For the Father judgeth no man, but **hath committed all judgment unto the Son:**”

John 5:27

“And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, **because he is the Son of man.**”

Acts 10:42

“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that **it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.**”

Acts 17:31

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which **he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;** whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

2 Timothy 4:1

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, **who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;**”

1 John 2:1

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And **if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**”

1 Timothy 2:5

“For there is one God, and **one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**”

Hebrews 4:14-16

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God,** let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched

with the feeling of our infirmities; but was **in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin**. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Doctrinal Insight

Christ occupies multiple heavenly legal offices. He is Judge of all, Advocate for the believer, Mediator between God and man, and High Priest who gives access to the throne of grace.

V. Judgment Begins at the House of God

The passage in First Peter is central to the question of whether we are under judgment now.

1 Peter 4:5

“Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.”

1 Peter 4:17-19

“For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God**: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, **as unto a faithful Creator**.”

1 Peter 1:17

“And if ye call on the Father, **who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work**, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:”

Doctrinal Insight

First Peter teaches that judgment begins at the house of God. This does not mean believers are condemned with the world. It means God examines, purifies, chastens, proves, and separates His own first. The people of God are accountable before the final judgment of the ungodly.

VI. Every Man Shall Give Account

Scripture repeatedly teaches that every person will give account before God.

Romans 14:10-12

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for **we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ**. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, **every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God**. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, **whether it be good or bad**.”

Matthew 12:36-37

“But I say unto you, that **every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment**. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Hebrews 4:12-13

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, **piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit**, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but **all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do**.”

Hebrews 9:27

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”

Doctrinal Insight

The heavenly record is complete. God judges outward conduct, inward motives, words, works, secrets, and faithfulness. Earthly courts can only judge visible evidence. God judges the whole man.

VII. Earthly Courts Were Designed to Reflect God's Justice

God established lawful judgment on earth through judges, officers, witnesses, due process, and impartial judgment.

Exodus 18:21-22

“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people **able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness;** and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that **every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge:** so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.”

Deuteronomy 16:18-20

“Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **throughout thy tribes:** and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, **neither take a gift:** for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, **that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**”

Deuteronomy 17:8-11

“If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, **between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke,** being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, **and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:** And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; **and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee:** According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, **thou shalt do:** thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left.”

Deuteronomy 19:15

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, **in any sin that he sinneth:** at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

Deuteronomy 19:16-19

“If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, **before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;** And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, **if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his**

brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: **so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.**”

Proverbs 18:17

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”

Doctrinal Insight

Earthly courts are supposed to operate according to God’s principles:

1. Judges must fear God.
2. Judges must love truth.
3. Judges must hate covetousness.
4. Judgment must be impartial.
5. Bribes corrupt judgment.
6. Two or three witnesses establish a matter.
7. False witnesses must be exposed.
8. Difficult cases require lawful appeal.
9. Judgment must be diligent, not superficial.

VIII. Corrupted Earthly Courts and False Judgment

The Bible also shows that earthly courts can become instruments of injustice.

Isaiah 5:20-23

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; **that put darkness for light, and light for darkness;** that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and **take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!**”

Isaiah 10:1-2

“Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; To turn aside the needy from judgment, and **to take away the right from the poor of my people,** that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!”

Amos 5:10-12

“They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and **they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.** Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: **ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them;** ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: **they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.**”

Micah 3:9-11

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, **that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.** They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: **yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.**”

Matthew 23:23

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and **have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:** these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Doctrinal Insight

A court can have the appearance of legality while violating the justice of God. When judgment is perverted, the court itself comes under judgment.

IX. The Trial of Christ: Earthly Court Corruption Against the Innocent

The trial of Jesus Christ is the supreme example of earthly legal process being used unrighteously against perfect innocence.

Matthew 26:59-60

“Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, **sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;** But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. **At the last came two false witnesses,**”

Mark 14:55-56

“And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; **and found none.** For many bare false witness against him, but **their witness agreed not together.**”

Luke 23:13-15

“And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, **I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:** No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, **nothing worthy of death is done unto him.**”

John 19:4

“Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, **I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.**”

Doctrinal Insight

The trial of Christ shows how prosecution can become persecution when legal structures are used to destroy the righteous. False accusation, political pressure, mob influence, and corrupt leadership turned judgment into murder.

X. Prosecution and Persecution: Are They the Same?

Prosecution and persecution are related, but they are not exactly the same.

Prosecution

Prosecution is the bringing of a charge, accusation, or legal action against someone. In a righteous system, prosecution should seek truth, justice, evidence, and lawful judgment.

Persecution

Persecution is unjust suffering inflicted because of righteousness, truth, faithfulness, obedience to God, or identity with Christ.

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: **for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and **shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: **for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**”

John 15:18-20

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but **because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.** Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. **If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;** if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

2 Timothy 3:12

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

1 Peter 3:14-17

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and **be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you** with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, **they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.** For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”

1 Peter 4:14-16

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; **for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:** on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, **or as a busybody in other men's matters.** Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; **but let him glorify God on this behalf.**”

Rightly Dividing the Distinction

Prosecution is not automatically persecution. Lawful prosecution punishes actual wrongdoing. Persecution falsely treats righteousness as wrongdoing.

The distinction is this:

- If a man suffers because he has done evil, that is lawful judgment.

- If a man suffers because he belongs to Christ and speaks truth, that is persecution.
 - If a court uses legal process to punish righteousness, prosecution has become persecution.
 - If false witnesses, political pressure, hatred, or corrupt rulers drive the case, the earthly court may be condemning itself before the heavenly court.
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XI. Earthly Judgment and Heavenly Judgment: Bodily, Civil, Spiritual, and Eternal

Earthly courts judge outward acts according to earthly evidence. Heavenly judgment reaches the whole person.

1 Samuel 16:7

“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; **because I have refused him:** for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; **for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.**”

1 Corinthians 4:5

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, **who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts:** and then shall every man have praise of God.”

Matthew 10:28

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: **but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**”

Luke 12:4-5

“And I say unto you my friends, **Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.** But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: **Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.**”

Doctrinal Insight

Earthly courts may judge the body, property, liberty, reputation, or civil standing. God judges the soul, spirit, heart, motives, words, works, and eternal destiny. Earthly courts are temporary. God's court is final.

XII. The Saints Shall Also Judge

Scripture teaches not only that God judges His people, but that the saints will participate in judgment under Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3

“Do ye not know that **the saints shall judge the world?** and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that **we shall judge angels?** how much more things that pertain to this life?”

Revelation 2:26-27

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, **to him will I give power over the nations:** And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; **as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:** even as I received of my Father.”

Revelation 20:4

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and **judgment was given unto them:** and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, **and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;** and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Doctrinal Insight

The righteous are not merely defendants in God's court. Through Christ, the faithful are trained, tested, purified, and prepared to judge righteously with Him.

XIII. Witnesses: The Legal Foundation of Testimony

The Bible's courtroom structure repeatedly depends upon witnesses.

Deuteronomy 19:15

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, **in any sin that he sinneth**: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”

Matthew 18:16

“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, **that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.**”

2 Corinthians 13:1

“This is the third time I am coming to you. **In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.**”

1 Timothy 5:19

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but **before two or three witnesses.**”

Revelation 11:3

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and **they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**”

Doctrinal Insight

God does not establish judgment through rumor, suspicion, accusation, or emotion. He establishes matters through lawful witness. This reveals why false witness is so serious: it corrupts the legal foundation of judgment.

XIV. False Accusation and False Witness

False accusation is one of Satan’s primary tools, and false witness is directly forbidden by God.

Exodus 20:16

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

Proverbs 6:16-19

“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

Proverbs 19:5

“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.”

Proverbs 19:9

“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.”

Revelation 21:8

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, **and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Doctrinal Insight

False witness is not merely a social sin. It is a legal and spiritual crime. It attempts to weaponize judgment against the innocent, and therefore places the false witness under God’s judgment.

XV. The Believer’s Present Trial

The believer’s life includes testing, proving, chastening, suffering, accusation, and refinement.

James 1:2-4

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that **the trying of your faith worketh patience**. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

1 Peter 1:6-7

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, **ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations**: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, **though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**”

Hebrews 12:6-8

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and **scourgeth every son whom he receiveth**. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; **for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?** But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

1 Corinthians 11:31-32

“For if we would judge ourselves, **we should not be judged**. But when we are judged, **we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.**”

Doctrinal Insight

There is a difference between condemnation and correction. The believer’s present trial is not for destruction, but for purification, correction, and preparation. Judgment begins at the house of God because God purifies His own before judging the world.

XVI. Practical Application: How Should We Live If We Are Before the Court of Heaven?

If Scripture is true, then every person is already living before the eyes of God. The question is not whether God sees. The question is whether we are walking in truth before Him.

Micah 6:8

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and **what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?**”

2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. **Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?**”

1 John 1:8-9

“If we say that we have no sin, **we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us**. If we confess our sins, **he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**”

Psalm 139:23-24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: **try me, and know my thoughts:** And see if there be any wicked way in me, and **lead me in the way everlasting.**”

Practical Principles

1. Confess sin quickly.
 2. Refuse false witness.
 3. Walk in truth.
 4. Judge yourself before God.
 5. Do not fear unjust earthly persecution.
 6. Appeal to Christ as Advocate and Mediator.
 7. Remember that every word and work is recorded before God.
 8. Trust that the Judge of all the earth shall do right.
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XVII. Summary and Conclusion

The Bible clearly reveals both earthly and heavenly courts. Earthly courts are meant to administer justice in time. Heavenly court administers perfect justice in eternity. Earthly courts judge outward matters. God judges the heart. Earthly courts require witnesses. God has perfect record. Earthly courts can be corrupted. God’s throne cannot be corrupted.

Judgment begins at the house of God. Every person will give account. Christ is Judge of the quick and the dead. Satan is the accuser. Christ is the Advocate. False witnesses will not escape. Persecution occurs when the righteous are falsely accused, hated, punished, or prosecuted because of truth and faithfulness to God.

Therefore, prosecution is not always persecution. Prosecution becomes persecution when lawful process is corrupted to punish righteousness, silence truth, or destroy the innocent. This is exactly what happened to the prophets, to the apostles, and most perfectly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The believer must therefore live with sobriety, courage, repentance, and confidence. We are seen by God. We are accountable to God. But if we are in Christ, we are also represented by the only righteous Advocate, Mediator, High Priest, and Judge.

Romans 8:33-34

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? **It is God that justifieth.** Who is he that condemneth? **It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,** who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Revelation 22:12

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Final Doctrinal Statement

The courts of heaven are real. The records are real. The accuser is real. The judgment is real. But the Advocate is also real. The believer's hope is not that there will be no judgment, but that in judgment we are found in Christ, cleansed by His blood, corrected by His Word, and prepared to reign with Him in righteousness.