

THE PRISONER

BY TIM CZAPIEWSKI



The Prisoner was led into the courtroom. As he entered, a crowd of onlookers burst into an uproar due to their displeasure with him.

The presiding Judge pounded his gavel and raised his voice saying, "ORDER, ORDER! in this courtroom!" The crowd fell silent and all that could be heard within the hall was the sound of the prisoner's short footsteps and the noisy shackles that bound his feet.

The Guard led the prisoner to his place in the front of the courtroom. "You may be seated." said the judge. The prisoner defiantly answered back in a gravelly voice, saying, "I'll sit down when I'm good and ready!"

This outburst was not surprising for this cold prisoner had displayed such behavior all through the trial. Yet patiently, the Judge waited until the prisoner seated himself. The prisoner was a rugged looking individual; he looked more like an animal than a man. His hair and beard was long, dark, and matted; in fact, his hair was so long that you could hardly see his eyes.

All evidence pointed to the prisoner as being guilty of his crimes and now, the final Day of Judgment had come. "Have you anything to say for yourself before you receive your decree of punishment?" The Prisoner seemed to be in his own world as the Judge was speaking, it was evident to all that he was purposely ignoring the words of the Judge. Once again the Judge tried to get his attention, and the prisoner became more determined to resist.

"Guards!" the Judge ordered, "stand this prisoner on his feet, pull back the hair from his eyes for I want to see and speak to him face to face and see him eye to eye. As the guard approached, the prisoner firmly resisted. Confusion filled the courtroom while several guards approached and wrestled the prisoner to the floor. When the prisoner was finally secure; the guards slowly brought the prisoner back to his feet and pulled his hair back out of his eyes as the Judge requested.

For the first time throughout the proceedings, a change came over the prisoner. He body trembled in fear as he came up from the floor. At first he was facing the crowd, then slowly he turned towards the Judge. The entire courtroom was silent as they looked upon the scene as

the Judge's face turned pale. A tear formed in his eye and slowly flowed down the side of his face as he softly whispered two words. But those words he uttered were unable to be understood by the onlookers in the courtroom.

Everyone in the courtroom sat at the edged of their seats while trying to comprehend what the Judge had just spoken. Moments of silence had passed by and then the Judge began to weep uncontrollably. Now all in the courtroom heard him as he cried out "MY SON!" The judge was facing the object of his own creation. It was his runaway son, his own defiant child. No one in the history of this courtroom had ever witnessed a meeting like this. Now every spectator within the courtroom waited to see and see what would happen next in this strange turn of events.

"My Son," said the Judge, "For these many years I tearfully searched for you, hoping for your safe return. Yet you resisted my concern for your care and persisted in going your own way, bringing dishonor to my name. What can I possibly do to help you now? Tell me, my son, What can you honestly say about the deeds you have done?"

Then, in a brief moment of reflection, the prisoner proudly gave his reply to the inquiring judge, "I admit to you and all assembled here, that if I could break free from these shackles and chains, and escape from this courtroom, I would go out and do it all over again. I find great pleasure in listening to the screams of those whose I am about to destroy. I love the exhilaration of hearing my victims beg and plead for me to spare their lives."

The horrified Judge reeled back in his seat and bravely fought back his tears in order to deliver the sentence. Everyone wondered what punishment he would pronounce on the prisoner now that he realized that the offender was his own child." My son, your deeds only create heartache for others. It is evident to me that you will never change your life. You are a danger to world which I have sworn to protect; You are a selfish and rebellious child." And then with a look of great sorrow and with tears in his voice, the Judge sadly uttered the following proclamation before every witness in that courtroom, "I hereby sentenced you to death."

Dear reader; take account of your life. For one day, you shall stand face-to-face and eye-to-eye with the Almighty Judge. What a sad day it will be for the universal courtroom to witness. A Heavenly Father who has loved us with an everlasting love will be forced to deliver His final judgment upon all whose hearts are hard and set to go their own way. **"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live" (Ezekiel 18:23)** And what manner of judgment will He pass on those who refuse to walk in the ways of everlasting righteousness?

Would eternal imprisonment and unending torture in a fiery pit be a fitting punishment for those whom he loves? The modern world has traditionally viewed God this way for centuries, yet the Bible does not indicate this. **"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up...they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 4:1-3).**

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God separated himself from mankind, not because of hatred and disgust, but because of his love and protection. His immediate presence would cause destruction to any sinful creature who could venture to look upon him. Once Moses made a request of God saying **"Please let me see your glorious presence," The LORD replied...You may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live" (Exodus 33:20).**

In that final day of Judgment, God, who for thousands of years **"made darkness his secret place"** will reveal himself to every man woman and child who has ever lived throughout the history of this world. Those who take pleasure in sin will be eternally destroyed by a radiance unequalled by the brightest star in the universe; for sin cannot exist in his immediate presence.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face-to-face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). God has hidden himself from us so that we can see our true selves through the circumstances of daily life. He orders these events to occur to reveal to us the true condition of our hearts. Thankfully, He has given us a period of probation so that we can remedy the defects that make us unfit for heaven. **"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" (Psalms 139:23-24).**

My Friend, if you have been wayward, turn back and do the right thing. If you have wandered away from your Heavenly Father and gone your own way, seek him out.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

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