There are three phases of judgment in civil courts. I call them the ABC Courts. First is the examination of the evidence, second is the announcement of the verdict, and the third and final phase is the execution of the sentence of the accused.

In like manner, in the heavenly tribunal, God's judgement is conducted in three phases. The first is the investigative judgement (Dan. 7:9, 13; Mal. 3:1-4); the second is the judgement of the wicked, Satan and his angels (1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 20:12; Dan. 7:22); and the third and final one is the executive judgement, which involves the execution of the punishment or reward and the eradication of sin from the earth, making it new (Rev. 20:12-14). Now, let us examine each one of these three phases of the heavenly tribunals in detail.

THE A COURT

The investigative judgement (A Court) is the first court session, which Apostle Peter was shown to be exclusively for the church of God. "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?" (1 Peter 4:17).

Because not all who claim to be Christians are true to their claims and will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21), during the investigative judgement the case of every church member is examined to establish the genuineness and truth of his/her claim to be a Christian, and thus a follower of Christ. The parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), the good and the bad fish (Matt. 13:47-50), and the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24-30) all point to the existence of bad and good Christians in the church.

As in these parables, during this court session the true and the false are at last separated forever. Again, as in the parable of the wheat and tares, the wheat is put in the heavenly garner and the tares are destroyed by fire. So shall it be that true Christians, those who are counted worthy to have their names returned in the book of life, will have eternal life, while those who were mere professors will be destroyed by fire at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

> *"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* **(Eccl. 12:14).**

> *"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."* **(Dan. 7:9).**

First, thrones were cast in heaven, not on earth (Rev. 4:2); second, God the Father took the seat (Dan. 7:9); third, Jesus Christ came to the Father and took His seat (Dan. 7:13); fourth, millions of angels took their seats (Dan. 7:10); fifth, the four and twenty elders also took their seats (Rev. 4:4); sixth, the four beasts also took their seats (Rev. 4:6); and seventh, the judgement was set and the books were opened (Dan. 7:10). Also read *Great Controversy*, page 479.1.

Those who attend this judgement are (a) the Ancient of days, (b) Jesus Christ, (c) the four beasts, (d) the twenty-four elders, (e) the angels, and (f) the four beasts. When all these converged in the Most Holy Place in heaven, judgement began.

> *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him."* **(Dan. 7:13).**

> *"The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."* **(GC, p. 479.3).**

> *"Daniel was shown this judgement to commence after the expiration of the prophetic period of 2300 days. 'And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed' (Dan. 8:14). As foretold in the Scriptures, the ministration of Christ in the most holy place began at the termination of the prophetic days in 1844. To this time apply the words of the Revelator, 'The temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament' [Revelation 11:19]."* **(4SP, p. 273.2).**

> *"In the typical service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin-offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the day of atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period."* **(GC, p. 480.1).**

> *"In the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God … The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment."* **(The Faith I Live By, p. 210.2).**

THE B COURT

The B Court comes after the A Court. The A Court is the judgement exclusively reserved for the church; the B Court is the judgement exclusively reserved for the wicked. "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?" (1 Cor. 6:2). Also read Daniel 7:22.

Together with Christ, the saints will judge the wicked during the thousand years. It is this judgement that John was shown, and of which Daniel also spoke (Dan. 7:22):

> *"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."* **(Rev. 20:4).**

> *"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection, the judgment of the wicked takes place … At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God … It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, 'the saints shall judge the world' (1 Corinthians 6:2). In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death."* **(GC88, p. 660.3).**

The B Court takes place during the thousand years, which commences at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 20:1; 10:1), when Christ shall detain Satan and his angels (Rev. 20:1, 2; Jude 1:6).

The duration of this detention is said to be 1000 years (Rev. 20:2). During these 1000 years the wicked remain dead, as they were destroyed by the brightness of Jesus Christ at His second coming (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 20:5; Isa. 24:1-4). In this state they remain during the 1000 years. But the righteous, those who come up in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) at Christ's second coming, together with those who will be translated without tasting death (1 Cor. 15:52-54), shall meet Christ in the air and commence the journey to heaven (1 Thess. 4:16-17), where they will, together with Christ, sit to judge the wicked (1 Cor. 6:2).

But the righteous must themselves first undergo the scrutiny of the investigative judgement before they are privileged to be judges. These were judged in the investigative judgement and, having been found worthy, they became judges in the B Court. King David was shown the judgement of the wicked (Ps. 149:7-9), and so was Daniel (Dan. 7:18, 22).

It is at this time that the saints will possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:18), after being translated and taken to heaven (Rev. 3:21). The sitting in judgement comes only after they overcame, were redeemed, translated and taken to heaven to possess the kingdom. It is this judgement of which John speaks (Rev. 20:4).

THE C COURT

> *"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?" (1 Peter 4:17). 'The judgment of the wicked, for the determination of the measure of their punishment, will take place during the one-thousand-year period between the first and second resurrections (Rev. 20:4; Psalms 149:4-9). The first resurrection at the second coming of Christ embraces only the righteous dead. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period."* **(GC, p. 480).**

This is the last session of God's judgement. It involves the execution, implementation, effecting, or carrying out of the decisions that were taken in the A and B Courts. This execution takes place after one thousand years. While the venue for the A and B Courts is in heaven, the venue of the C Court is on earth. After 1000 years Christ comes in His glory with all His angels (Matt. 25:31), including the redeemed who reigned with Him for 1000 years. Then shall Satan and his angels be loosed and the wicked resurrected (Rev. 20:7). All nations shall be gathered before God (Matt. 25:32). This gathering takes place after New Jerusalem has descended from heaven (Rev. 21:1-2). Then the C Court shall sit, and it is here where God shall set the sheep (the righteous) on His right hand and the goats (the wicked) on His left (Matt. 25:33).

Then shall Satan, his angels, and the wicked wage the war of Gog and Magog against Christ and the redeemed (Rev. 20:8), but fire comes down from heaven and destroys them all (Rev. 20:9). It is here where we find the fulfilment of the words of Malachi, of burning the root and the branch (Mal. 4:1). Then the righteous shall inherit the kingdom and the earth made new (Matt. 25:34), but God will commit the wicked to the final destruction by fire (Matt. 25:41).

A PROPHETIC STUDY

Judged in Absentia

The three phases of God's judgement — the A, B & C Courts of the heavenly tribunal

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."

1 Peter 4:17

THE LOUD CRY HERALD MINISTRY

Box 315, Katima Mulilo, Namibia, 9000

www.theloudcryherald.com

josh@theloudcryherald.com