

1 Corinthians 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come. The imperative *me krinete* (μὴ κρίνετε, "do not judge") prohibits premature evaluation. *Pro kairou* (πρὸ καιροῦ, "before the time") refers to Christ's parousia (return), the appointed moment for final assessment. The command doesn't forbid all discernment (5:12; Matt 7:15-20) but warns against presumptuous verdict-rendering on servants accountable to another Master.

Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. Two future verbs emphasize eschatological certainty: *phōtisei* (φωτίσει, "will illuminate") exposes concealed deeds; *phanerōsei* (φανερώσει, "will reveal") unveils secret motives—*boulas tōn kardiōn* (βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν, "counsels/intentions of hearts"). Only then, when Christ's light penetrates all darkness, will true assessment be possible. **And then shall every man have praise of God**—*epainos* (ἔπαινος, "commendation") awaits the faithful, however obscure their service seemed to human observers.

Historical Context

Eschatological judgment was central to early Christian theology. Paul consistently points to the bema of Christ as the ultimate tribunal where hidden things are

revealed (Rom 2:16; 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10). The Corinthians' premature judgments reflect realized eschatology gone wrong—acting as if the kingdom had fully arrived (v. 8) when actually they still lived between Christ's advents, in the "already/not yet" tension of redemptive history.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What judgments have you made about others' ministries or motives that God might overturn at Christ's return?
2. How does the promise that God will reveal all hidden faithfulness encourage you when your service goes unnoticed or unappreciated?
3. In what areas are you living as if final judgment has already occurred, rather than waiting for Christ's authoritative verdict?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| ὥστε | μὴ | πρὸ | καιροῦ | τι | κρίνετε | ἕως | ἂν | ἔλθῃ |
| Therefore | nothing | before | the time | G5100 | judge | until | G302 | come |
| G5620 | G3361 | G4253 | G2540 | | G2919 | G2193 | | G2064 |
| ὁ | κύριος | ὃς | καὶ | φωτίσει | τὰ | κρυπτὰ | τοῦ | |
| G3588 | the Lord | who | and | will bring to light | G3588 | the hidden things | G3588 | |
| | G2962 | G3739 | G2532 | G5461 | | G2927 | | |
| σκότους | καὶ | φανερῶσει | τὰς | βουλὰς | τῶν | καρδιῶν· | | |
| of darkness | and | will make manifest | G3588 | the counsels | G3588 | of the hearts | | |
| G4655 | G2532 | G5319 | | G1012 | | G2588 | | |
| καὶ | τότε | ὁ | ἔπαινος | γενήσεται | ἐκάστῳ | ἀπὸ | τοῦ | |
| and | then | G3588 | praise | have | shall every man | of | G3588 | |
| G2532 | G5119 | | G1868 | G1096 | G1538 | G575 | | |
| θεοῦ | | | | | | | | |
| God | | | | | | | | |
| G2316 | | | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

James 5:7 (References Lord): Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (Judgment): 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.

1 Corinthians 3:13 (Parallel theme): Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

Hebrews 4:13 (Parallel theme): 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.

2 Corinthians 10:18 (References Lord): For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Romans 2:16 (Judgment): In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Romans 2:1 (Judgment): Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

Revelation 20:12 (Judgment): 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.

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

Romans 2:29 (Resurrection): But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.