

1 Peter 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Peter warns of coming judgment. "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (hoi apodōsousin logon tō hetoimōs echonti krinai zōntas kai nekrous). Those mocking Christians will "give account" (apodōsousin logon)—answer to God for their lives. God "is ready to judge" (hetoimōs echonti krinai)—prepared, about to judge. "Quick and dead" (zōntas kai nekrous)—living and dead, all humanity. This sobering truth: mockers face judgment before impartial God who evaluates all. Their current ridicule won't exempt them from divine accountability. This assures persecuted believers: apparent triumph of wicked is temporary; God will judge justly.

Historical Context

Early Christians facing mockery, persecution, martyrdom needed assurance that justice would prevail. Peter promises: those currently oppressing believers will answer to God. This echoes apostolic teaching throughout New Testament—universal judgment coming (Acts 17:31, Romans 2:16, 2 Timothy 4:1). The phrase "ready to judge" indicates imminence—judgment could come anytime through death or Christ's return. Early church's eschatological urgency stemmed from believing Christ's return imminent. This motivated evangelism (warn mockers of coming judgment) and endurance (vindication approaching). Modern application: unbelievers' mockery doesn't invalidate Christianity; they'll face judgment proving God's reality.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does knowing mockers will 'give account' to God affect your response to their ridicule?
2. What should the reality of coming universal judgment motivate in your life—fear, urgency, boldness?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	ἀποδώσουσιν	λόγον	τῷ	ἐτοίμως	ἔχοντι	κρίναι
Who	shall give	account	G3588	ready	to him that is	to judge
G3739	G591	G3056		G2093	G2192	G2919

ζῶντας	καὶ	νεκρούς
the quick	and	the dead
G2198	G2532	G3498

Additional Cross-References

James 5:9 (Judgment): Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Acts 10:42 (Judgment): 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.

2 Timothy 4:1 (Judgment): 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;

Acts 17:31 (Judgment): 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.

Matthew 12:36 (Judgment): But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Psalms 1:6 (Parallel theme): For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

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.

Luke 16:2 (Parallel theme): And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Ezekiel 18:30 (Judgment): Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.