

The background is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a city at night. The sky is a deep, textured blue with a bright, multi-pointed star in the upper right corner. The city below is rendered in dark, muted tones, with some buildings and foliage visible. The overall mood is mysterious and contemplative.

— JUDGMENT —
When Wrong Meets Right

SEASON'S MEETINGS: A SERIES FOR ADVENT

“People know what's going on with other people. So, we are wise if we live our lives as if there are no secrets. If we have nothing to hide, then there's nothing for people to discover, and we're clean. Living as if there is no such thing as a secret will keep you from all kinds of pain and suffering, and it will open the door for you to receive God's love more fully. Live as if there is nothing to hide and you will maintain innocence.”

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TED HAGGARD, *LETTERS FROM HOME*

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

¹³ Now all has been heard;

here is the conclusion of the matter:

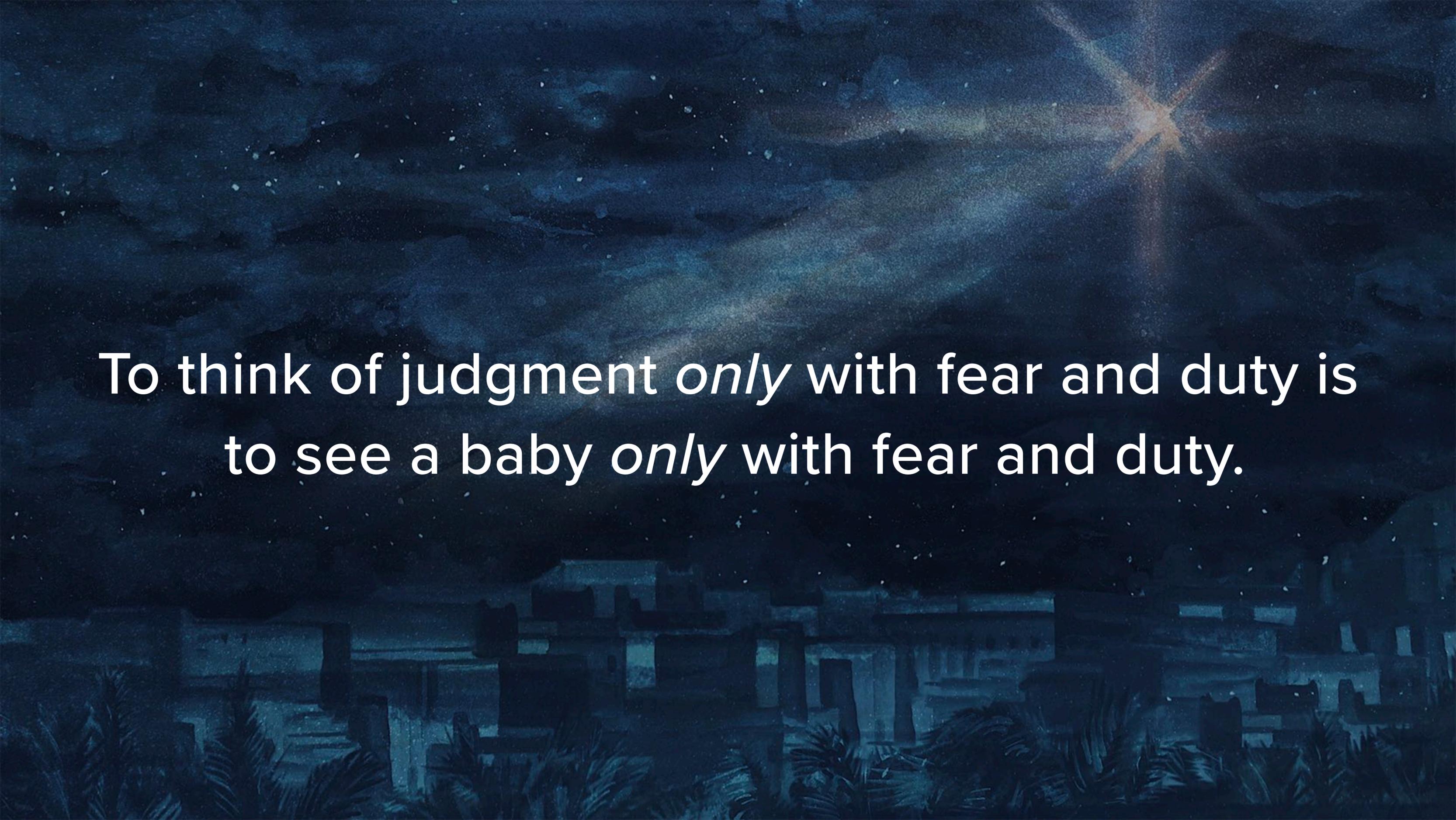
Fear God and keep his commandments,

for this is the duty of all mankind.

¹⁴ For God will bring **every deed into judgment,**

including **every hidden thing,**

whether it is good or evil.

A dark, atmospheric night scene. The sky is a deep, textured blue with a prominent starburst in the upper right quadrant. Below the sky, a cityscape is visible, with buildings and structures silhouetted against the dark background. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

To think of judgment *only* with fear and duty is
to see a baby *only* with fear and duty.



God's Judgments:

1. The judgment of God through the created world.

Jeremiah 12

¹ You are always righteous, LORD,
when I bring a case before you.

Yet I would speak with you about your justice:

Why does the way of the wicked prosper?

Why do all the faithless live at ease?

² You have planted them, and they have taken root;
they grow and bear fruit.

You are always on their lips
but far from their hearts.

³ Yet you know me, LORD;
you see me and test my thoughts about you.

Drag them off like sheep to be butchered!

Set them apart for the day of slaughter!

⁴ How long will the land lie parched
and the grass in every field be withered?

Because those who live in it are wicked,
the animals and birds have perished.

Moreover, the people are saying,

“He will not see what happens to us.”

A dark, atmospheric night scene. The sky is a deep, textured blue with a prominent starburst or comet-like light source in the upper right quadrant, casting a soft glow. Below the sky, the silhouettes of a cityscape are visible, with buildings and palm trees. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

When we don't have right and fair judgment,
we will have wrong and unfair judgment.



God's Judgments:

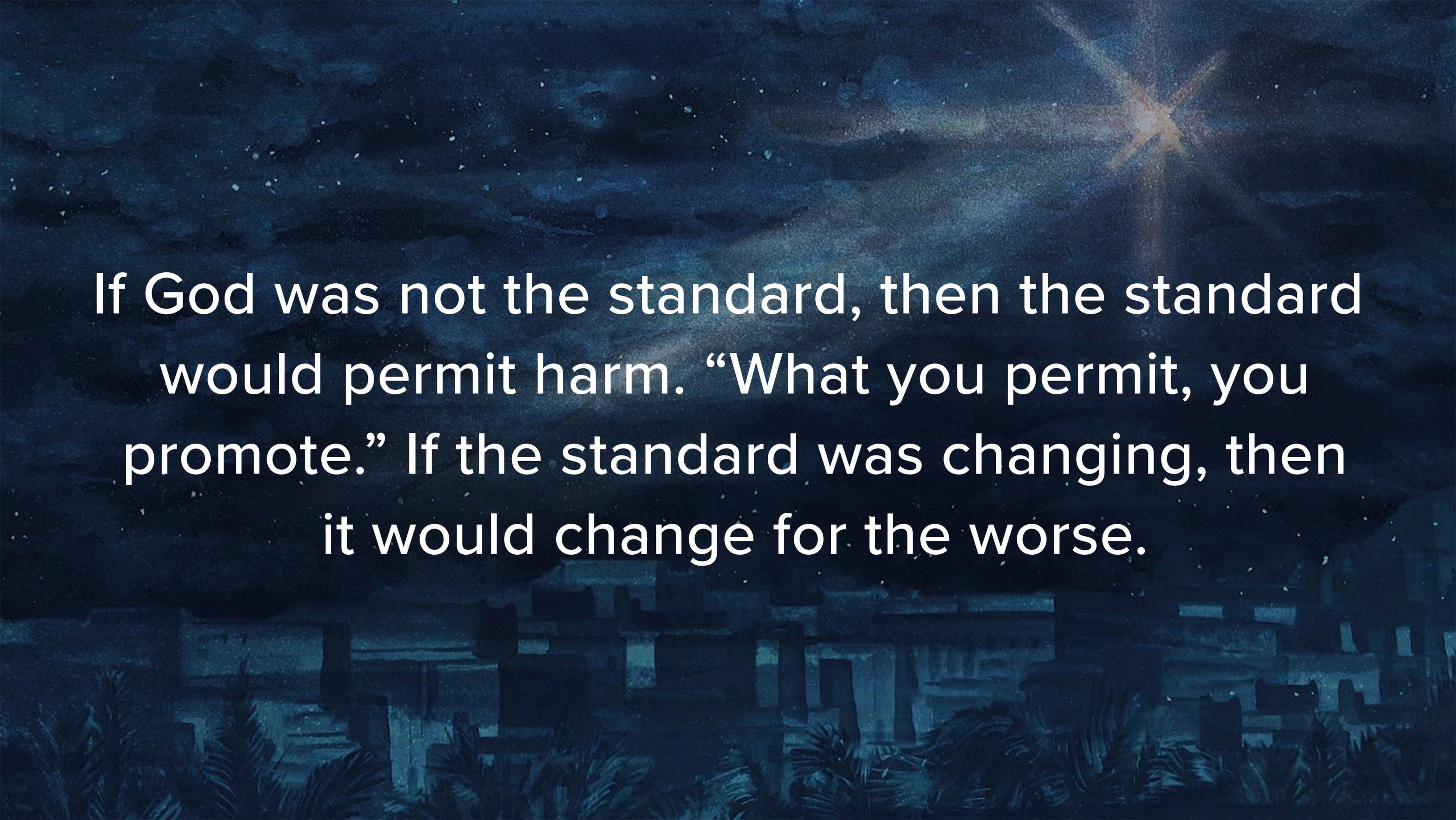
1. The judgment of God through the created world.
2. The intervening judgment of God in certain moments.

A dark, atmospheric night scene. The sky is a deep, textured blue with a prominent starburst in the upper right quadrant. Below the sky, the silhouette of a cityscape is visible, with various buildings and structures. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

Sometimes our
justice is *injustice disguised*.
At best, our judgment, our justice,
mixed and incomplete.

A dark, atmospheric night scene. The sky is a deep, textured blue with a prominent starburst light in the upper right quadrant, casting a soft glow. Below the sky, the silhouette of a cityscape is visible, with various buildings and structures. In the foreground, there are dark, leafy plants, possibly palm trees, adding to the nocturnal and somewhat mysterious feel of the image.

When the situations are particularly messy,
you need a better judge.

A dark, blue-toned night sky with a bright starburst in the upper right and a cityscape silhouette at the bottom.

If God was not the standard, then the standard would permit harm. “What you permit, you promote.” If the standard was changing, then it would change for the worse.

Psalm 96

- ¹ Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
- ² Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
- ³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
- ⁴ For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- ⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.

- 10 Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.”
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
- 12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
- 13 **Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.**



God's Judgments:

1. The judgment of God through the created world.
2. The intervening judgment of God in certain moments.
3. The final judgment of God by Jesus Christ.

John 5

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

Acts 17:29-31

²⁹ “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will ***judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed***. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

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The Good News is not that there will be judgment, but in *who is doing the judging.*

Psalm 98

⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;

⁹ let them sing before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

Matthew 25:31-32

³¹ “When the Son of Man **comes** in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will **sit** on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations **will be gathered** before him, and he will **separate** the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.



God's judgment does not make the best
of a bad situation.

God's judgment **turns** bad situations *good* and
makes wrong situations *right*.

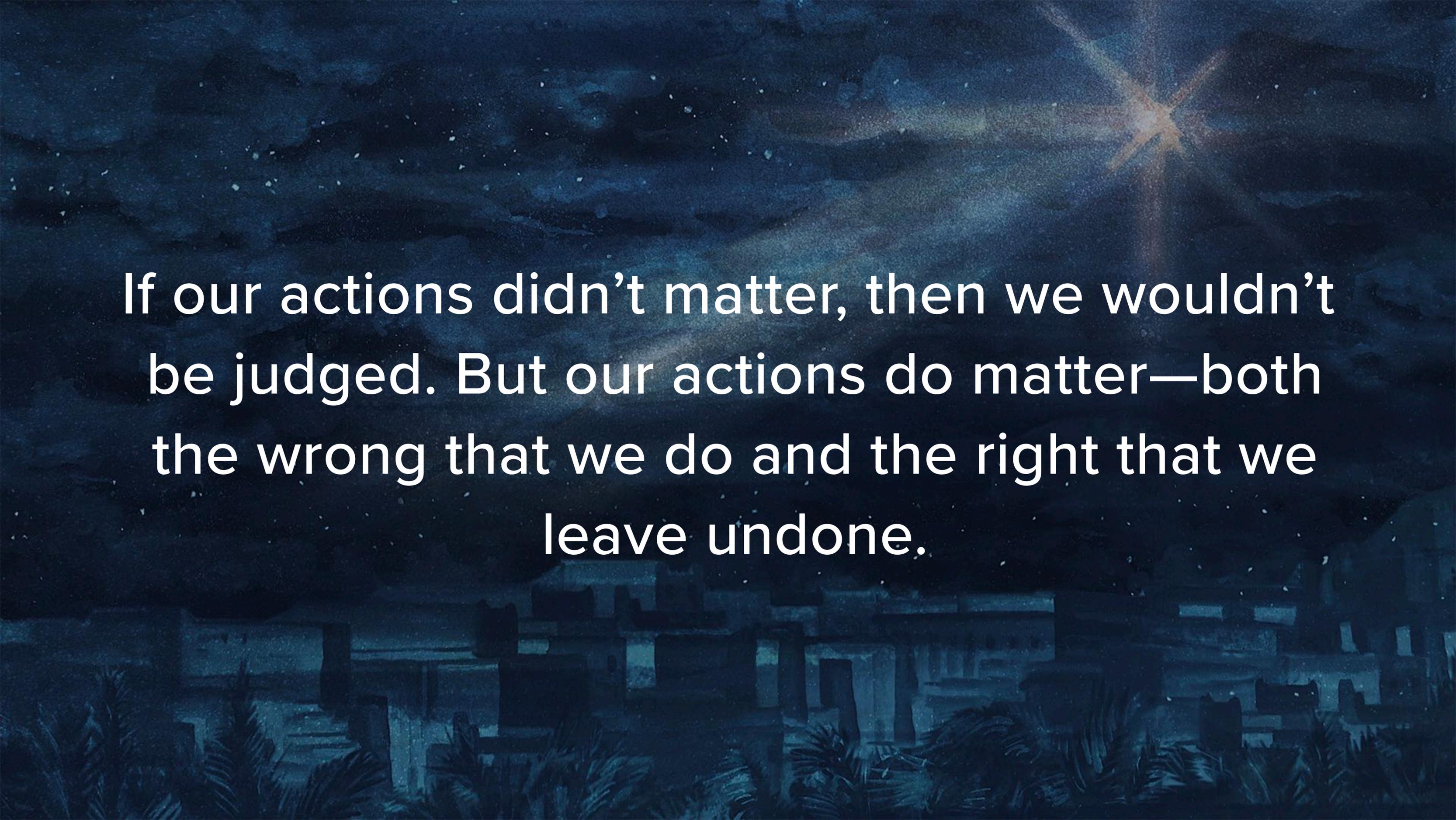


To judge is to discriminate or to separate:

1. Separation of those are against God and Christ from those who are with God in Christ.
2. Separation of our sin from the righteousness of Christ in us.

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Judgment means that your actions matter.

A dark, atmospheric night scene. The sky is a deep, dark blue with a prominent starburst in the upper right quadrant, casting a soft glow. Below the sky, the silhouettes of a cityscape are visible, with some buildings and palm trees. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

If our actions didn't matter, then we wouldn't be judged. But our actions do matter—both the wrong that we do and the right that we leave undone.

**“Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong,
but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice
in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the
world. We will commit sins while we are here, for
this life is not a place where justice resides.
We, however, says Peter (2. Peter 3:13) are looking
forward to a new heaven and a new earth where
justice will reign.”**

MARTIN LUTHER TO PHILIP MELANCTHON

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That God will ultimately judge gives me **conviction** to do right *and* **humility** because sometimes I have been wrong.

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Judgment is about healing.

The **pain** of exposure is the **path** of healing.

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Judgment is about transformation.
God's judgment reveals *who we are* so that
God may make us *who He wants us to be.*

“Our lives are not transparent to ourselves. We cannot easily tell where the bad ends and the good begins. So it is a comfort to know that one day someone else will come and lovingly separate the good from the bad in our lives.”

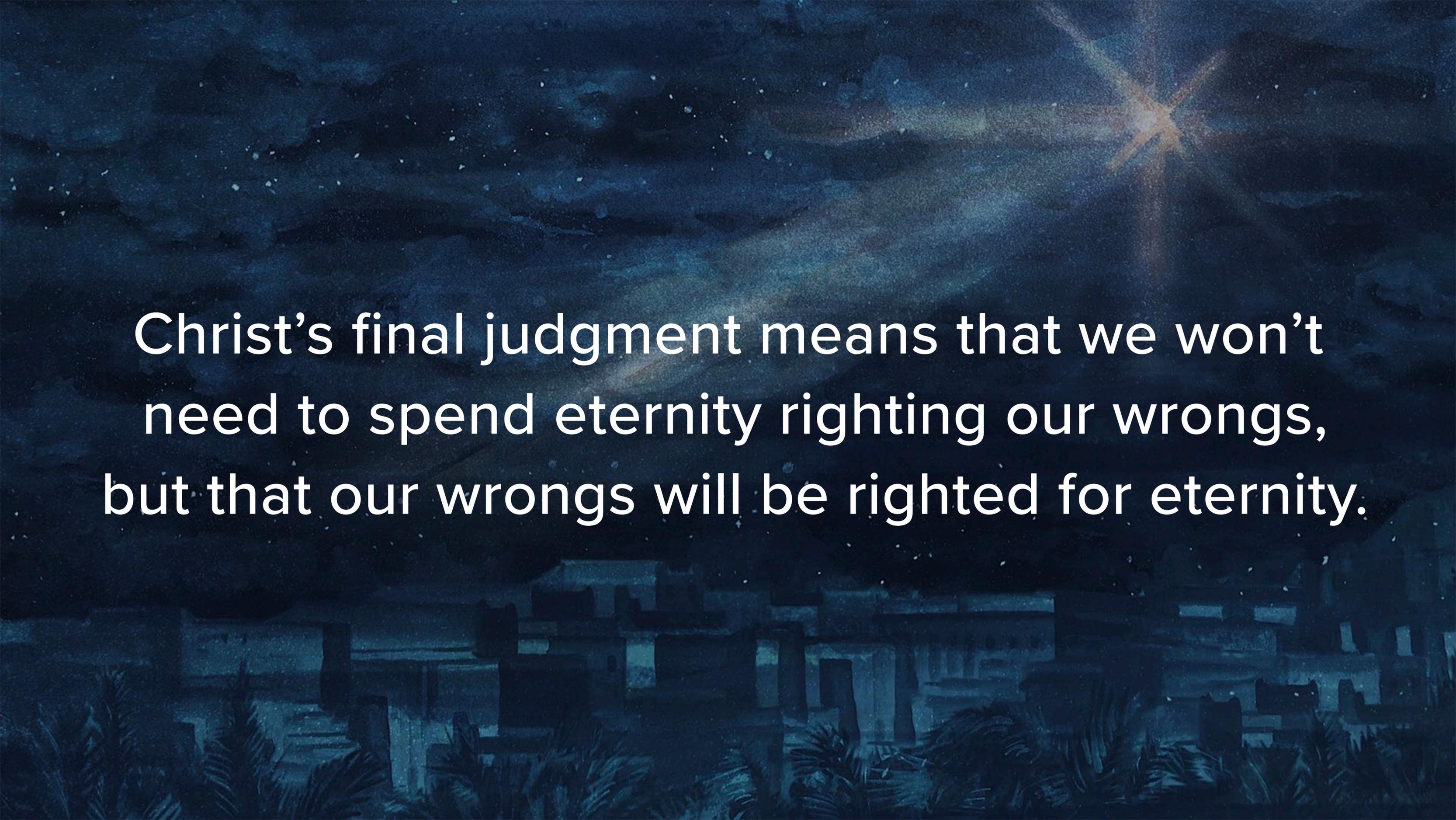
BEN MYERS

The background is a dark, atmospheric night scene. In the upper right, a bright starburst of light, possibly a comet or a bright star, illuminates the dark blue and black sky. Below the sky, a city skyline is visible, with various buildings and structures silhouetted against the dark background. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

The judgment of God has started
and it will be completed.

Revelation 20

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.

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Christ's final judgment means that we won't need to spend eternity righting our wrongs, but that our wrongs will be righted for eternity.

2 Peter 3

¹ Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ² I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, “**Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?** Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, **being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends:
With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a
thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not
slow in keeping his promise, as some understand
slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not
wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come
to repentance.

¹⁰ But the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will **be laid bare**.

“In this final court, sin is understood in its essence simply as unresponsiveness to God’s saving activity.”

TOM ODEN, *LIFE IN THE SPIRIT*



Every time you ***turn to God*** and away from sin,
every time you ***tune into God*** (repentance),
you are ***participate*** in the judgment of God.

A dark, atmospheric night scene. The sky is a deep, dark blue with a prominent starburst light in the upper right quadrant, casting a soft glow. The foreground is filled with the silhouettes of palm trees and other tropical vegetation, creating a sense of depth and mystery. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

To confess our sin is to *anticipate* the final
judgment of God.