



## "Court is now in session."

The gavel pounds as the jurors settle into their seats. A confident lawyer stands to deliver his opening statement. The defendant stares straight ahead, ignoring the accusing tone of the first witness.

Movies and television have made the scene familiar, but even if your experience is limited to watching trials on TV, the courtroom scene will someday become a reality for you.

### *We'll all have our day in court.*

Whether or not you have faced the court of law in your lifetime, there is one court where we will all be summoned. The Scripture says that God our Creator "hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom ... he hath raised ... from the dead" (*Acts 17:31*).

### *A trial date has been set.*

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (*Hebrews 9:27*). Since we don't know the exact day or time we will die, we must be ready to appear before the Supreme Court of the universe at any moment. What about you? Are you prepared? Amos 4:12 says, "Prepare to meet thy God."

### *The court's standard is righteousness.*

Since the Scripture is clear that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (*Romans 3:10*), how do you expect to receive a favorable verdict? The Bible says that every mouth will be stopped and all the world will become guilty before God (*Romans 3:19*).

### *The identity of the judge.*

The judge will be "that man whom God has raised from the dead." This refers to Jesus, God's only Son who came to earth, lived a righteous life, died on the cross for our sins, and was resurrected three days later.

### *How do you plead?*

In light of these facts, what must you do to receive a favorable verdict? You may think, "I will wait until my trial date and seek justice by pleading 'Not guilty.'" Unfortunately, justice can only result in your being found guilty for your crimes against God and sentenced to eternal punishment in Hell.

You have a second option. Turn yourself in before the trial date, plead "Guilty" as charged, and throw yourself on the mercy of the court. This is the only way to escape God's wrath. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (*Luke 13:3*). To repent means to make an about-face. You must stop trying to defend your rebellion against God and face the fact that you have lived selfishly.

In turning away from your old life, you must turn toward the Lord Jesus Christ (the judge) and trust Him to pardon you. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will ... abundantly pardon" (*Isaiah 55:7*).

### *Why not plead your case today?*

You can trust the Lord Jesus Christ today to pardon you. Does the following plea represent your desire?

*Lord Jesus, convinced of the seriousness of my sin and the punishment I deserve, I call upon you to pardon me. I turn from my old life and pledge to follow and serve You.*

-- R. Alan Streett