

# THE POWER TO JUDGE

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*Author's Note: The following essays were based on dreams. Special thanks to Cheryl Preston for editing support.*

I stood in a winding stone corridor. At the end of the hall was an inviting bright light. Unclear as to where I was, I slowly and carefully headed in the direction of the glimmering brilliance, as if destiny itself was calling me onward.

Eventually, I reached an ornate golden archway. There was no door, just sheer fabric draped over the opening. I could faintly see into the next room, bustling with people. I felt drawn into the warmth and light it offered.

As I crossed through the threshold and pushed through into the light, the soft sheer fabric glided across my face and hands. The room was beautiful AND warm. Everything sparkled, not like diamonds or earthly treasures, but with light like thousands of stars had been used to erect the very walls of this enclosure. I realized I had crossed over into the next life and heaven was far more magnificent than anything I could have ever imagined!

In the distance, atop a short flight of stairs, I saw three large thrones. They were absolutely breathtaking! Every detail intricately crafted and covered completely in golden light. The back of the chairs consisted of two wings folding over each other, while the arms and feet looked like lion's paws. Seated in each was a divine being adorned in fine brightly colored robes. I knew at once it was my Heavenly Parents and my brother, Jesus Christ.

My gaze shifted and I realized I was not alone in this grand throne room. Around me were people I had known throughout my earthly life,

faces that brought me pain. The room was filled with those who had abused me, violated me, judged me, betrayed me, and beat down my soul. Desperation and tears these people brought rose within me. The warmth of the room began to fade.

Jesus stood up, tall and kingly. He called me by name and asked me to approach. "Welcome to the final judgement, my sister. Before you rest, you have a task to complete."

The crowd turned to look at him and parted to clear a pathway for me to walk towards my Savior. All eyes were on me as I moved forward. I took in every face I passed and the painful memories they had brought me.

I walked slowly up the stairs to the landing where my savior stood next to my divine mother and father. Jesus Christ turned me around and loudly exclaimed, "Behold! Before you are all the people who mis-used you in your earthly life. I give you the power to satisfy justice, to return to them what pain they caused you."

Wow! I felt confused and humbled by this gift. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and then looked out into the crowd before me. I would finally get the justice and validation I had so longed for on earth!

The first person in the room hesitantly approached me. She was a woman who had harshly judged me as a young mother, who had said cruel and untrue things to me and about me and left me in tears so many times. I knew exactly what I was going to give back to her. The closer I got to her, her personage became increasingly blurry. I hesitated. Eventually, she transformed completely before me. The woman I had originally seen was no longer standing before me. In her place stood a past version of myself.

I blinked in disbelief. But it was true! Before me was myself. And not just any version of myself, but a version that represented a time when I had unfairly judged another and said cruel things about her behind her back. Shame crept across me.

I soon noticed that the entire crowd had changed. No longer was the room filled with people who had hurt me. Instead, it was populated

with past versions of me. Each personage had one thing in common: each version represented a time in my earthly life when I let my weaknesses, insecurities, and fears get the best of me. I was embarrassed and guilty. I looked upon each face, and as I did, the features displayed both pain and guilt. They bowed their heads in shame before my gaze. It was a heartbreaking sight to behold.

I approached myself as a young woman. I was exhausted, filled with doubts and fears. I made mistakes. I lashed out at others. I judged harshly because I was insecure and jealous. I did not mean to cause so much pain. The young woman, now fully realizing what she had done, looked at me with guilt and shame.

I took her trembling hands in mine and looked deeply into that young face. I knew this woman was doing the best she could with the limited knowledge and tools she had at the time. I embraced the beautiful, broken woman before me. We both began to cry. When the tears subsided, I whispered gently in her ears, "I love you and I forgive you. May you finally find peace."

I moved throughout the room, personally reenacting this scene with each version of myself, feeling raw with the recollection of my life experiences. I looked into each woman's eyes and took the time to acknowledge fully what I had done, and to understand truly that moment in my life. Eventually, I made peace with each of them. And as I did, each woman disappeared within my embrace and softly faded away into the light of the room.

I finally reached the current version of myself, and in that moment, I recognized one final truth: I am who I am today because of the experiences of all those past versions of myself. Each played an important and vital role in my character development and refinement. Each version was necessary and helped me to grow. I could find the beauty in each face.

With tears flowing, I looked back at my divine brother and parents. They smiled with love and warmth. The glory of the room returned. Humbled, I proceeded to walk back up the steps to join them. Now, there was a throne for me.