

Refs

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Sporting events of almost all kinds depend upon the undependable—referees. Despite formal training and constant reviews, referees demonstrate their humanity regularly; they err.

During a Premier League soccer match, during the last minute of the match, Tottenham Hotspur's Pedro Mendes kicked a long-range shot that hovered around the goal line. Neither the referee nor the linesman saw the incident clearly, and no goal was awarded. The game ended 0-0. Much to the dismay of the officials, television slow-motion replays clearly showed the ball crossing the line.

Adding insult to injury, Specsavers, a British optician, followed up the controversy by launching a national campaign offering all referees a free eye exam.

Sadly, free eye exams are not likely to solve the problem. Some leagues have turned to instant replay, but instant replay drags games, and its results are not always conclusive. Here on this earth, there will always be some margin of error; there will always be error.

Herein lies a major difference between this life and eternity. Paul wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Those who referee, pass judgment, on this earth are fallible. In eternity, we will stand before a perfect judge. Solomon said, "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

We will stand before a perfect judge, and we will be judged according to a perfect law. James refers to the gospel as the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). This law is perfect, establishing a perfect standard of conduct. Moreover, the gospel provides something the old law did not: forgiveness. Paul speaks of Jesus, saying, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

We will stand before the Perfect Judge and be judged according to the perfect law, but because Jesus died for us, we will not be required to be perfect. We must be washed, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and continue in the faith (Colossians 1:23). Justified, we may enjoy an eternity in heaven.