

# The Final Judgment

SEEING THE GLORIOUS HOPE OF THE GOSPEL IN A STUDY OF LAST THINGS

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All people will stand before God to receive everlasting condemnation or reward according to what they did during their lives.

# What is the final judgment?

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- At the end of the present age, Christ will summon everyone to stand before him in judgment.
- In this judgment, Christ will call all people to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds.
- He will then pronounce a righteous judgment on each one.
- Every person will be assigned an eternal destiny—the righteous to eternal life and the wicked to eternal destruction.

Matthew 25:31-46 31 ¶ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ 41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ 45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

# The subjects of the final judgment

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John 5:28-29 28 Do not marvel at this, for **an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs** will hear his voice 29 and come out, **those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.**

Matthew 25: 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Revelation 20:12-15 12 And I saw **the dead, great and small**, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And **if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

# The timing of the final judgment

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John 5:28-29 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

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1 Corinthians 15:23-25 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

*The final judgment will follow immediately after the resurrection of the dead.*

# Why is the final judgment necessary?

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*The fate of the vast majority will have already been decided when they died.*

- to display the sovereignty, the justice, the mercy, and the glory of God

Revelation 19:1-3 1 ¶ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2 for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” 3 Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

- to reveal degree of reward or punishment
- to put the punishment into effect
  - *a publication, not an investigation*
  - *a vindication, not an examination*

# The identity of the judge

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John 5: 22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.

Acts 17:31 [God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

God will judge the world through Christ. Consider:

- Jesus is a man.
- Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life as a man.
- Jesus lived and died as a substitute for his people.
- Jesus is perfectly just and righteous in all his ways.
- Jesus has all authority.
- Jesus has perfect wisdom and knowledge.

# The content of the judgment

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2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Romans 2:9-11 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

Matthew 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.

*Where is the place of grace and forgiveness?*

Rev. 20:15 ("book of life") and Matt. 25:32-34 (sheep vs. goats and "blessed of My Father")

# The inevitable connection between faith and works

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Matthew 6:14-15 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 7:26-27 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Matthew 12:34-37 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

# Rewards are in proportion to faithfulness

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Matthew 5:11-12 11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The reward is organic—an increased capacity for pleasure in God.

Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

*Are we delighting in those things that will be part of our reward—prayer, worship, Sabbath-keeping?*

# The wicked will spend an eternity in hell

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## Matthew 25:

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

## Revelation 20:

10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

# The righteous will enjoy eternity with God

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## Revelation 21

1 ¶ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

## Revelation 7

9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

# Conclusion and preview

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- All people will be judged by Christ in the final judgment.
- The judgment will reveal two types of people, sheep and goats. The sheep will spend eternity with Christ, and the goats will spend an eternity in torment away from the Lord.
- Preview: What will the eternal state be like for God's people?