

Week 24 – Resurrection, Judgment, and Eternity

Resurrection, Judgment and Eternity

Whether it occurs before a millennium, after a millennium or whenever, one thing is certain: Jesus Christ is returning in glory! It is also certain that all the dead will be resurrected – those who are in Christ will rise to eternal fellowship with Him and one another, and those who are not will arise to eternal condemnation:

“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28-29)

Additional Scriptures for Study: Matthew 28:5-6; Acts 2:24-36, 3:15, 26, 4:10, 5:30-32, 10:40-41, 13:30-31

Judgment unto Eternal Life or Eternal Damnation

Scripture teaches us that when Jesus comes in glory, He will judge all mankind.

“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which was in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which was in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.” Revelation 20:12-13

There are two types of eternal judgment that Scripture mentions – the judgment of the saints. It is important that we understand the difference between these two. Sinners are those who refuse the knowledge of Jesus and the gospel, and saints (Greek, *agioi*, meaning “holy ones”) are God’s own children called to Himself. The Bible teaches that each person is either one or the other, colloquially said, “you’re either a saint or you ain’t.”

The parable of the wheat and tares teaches us that saints and sinners will march through history together, intermingled in societies, churches, and even families. God, Himself will do the final sorting out, after the resurrection. Premature efforts to ethically cleanse a given society do more harm than good. Although we must part company with professing Christians who persist in visible sin, God reserves final judgment to Himself.

Judgment of Sinners

One of the more difficult doctrines for many people to accept is the doctrine of hell and damnation of those who do not know God.

“...when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

Although some deny or denounce God’s wrath as unnecessary, we must base our conclusions about eternity on God’s Word and not our own emotions or sympathies. Out of our emotions, we may ask, “How can a loving God send people to hell?” But out of our understanding of God’s Word, it is more biblical to ask, “How can a holy God let any sinner into heaven?” Scripture clearly reveals God’s judgments as pure, holy and just.

Additional Scriptures for Study: Matthew 10:15; Luke 12:2-5; Acts 10:42, 7:31; Romans 2:5-6; 2 Peter 2:3-22

Scripture describes this final judgment as a public judgment (Luke 12:5). On that day, God will gather to Himself the righteous, but the wicked will be removed. God will judge the earth, not because He hates sinners, but in order to preserve the earth for His righteousness. God never intended for His earth to be occupied by ungodly, wicked men, nor will He allow sin to prevail in the earth forever. In one future day, God’s forbearance will become His holy anger and He will eternally judge the sinners of the earth.

The Bible says that all the secrets will be revealed and that which is hidden will be made manifest on the Judgment Day. The wicked will not be able to stand before the holiness of God and will beg for the mountains and rocks to fall upon them as they see Christ in all of His glory (Revelation 6:14-17). Then they will remember every occurrence of their rejection of the gospel. They will realize that this is righteous justice because of their failure to repent and receive the mercy of God as revealed through Jesus. In the end, all who do not know God or obey the gospel will depart from the presence of the Lord and be assigned the most dreadful existence of an eternity in hell, separated from God.

The great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote:

“Sinners cannot live in heaven. They would be out of their element. Sooner could a fish live upon a tree than the wicked in Paradise. Heaven would be an intolerable hell to an impenitent man, even if he could be allowed to enter; but such a privilege shall never be granted to the man who perseveres in his iniquities. May God grant that we may have a name and a place in his courts above!” (Exposition of Psalm 1)

Review

1. At the resurrection, who will be resurrected?
2. Name the two types of judgments mentioned in scriptures.
3. How can a loving God send people to hell?