

Judgment - In This Life And The Next

Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-13 ©

With Pastor Joseph Rodrigues

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

This study of 'eternal judgment' is corollary to the study on the 'resurrection of the dead'.

According to God's sovereign plan, it is a natural consequence of the reason for the resurrection. No one will escape it.

The study explores:

- the nature of judgment in general,
- some examples of god's judgment in history, and
- the judgment that will have eternal ramifications (the essential doctrine referred to in Hebrews)

This sobering study should condition a proper heart response to God.

This is the sixth and last of the elementary or foundational doctrines referred to in Hebrews 6:1-3.

It is vitally important that we understand the teaching of Scripture that *no one* will escape God's judgment. This is especially so for the times in which we live, in which we hear a gospel preached which is "what itching ears want to hear". The nature of god's judgment and how it will be brought to bear upon *every human being* is the subject of this teaching.

Keep in mind that we are looking at ETERNAL judgment - that is, the judgment results in a FINAL and permanent (everlasting and irrevocable) state of existence.

WHAT IS GOD'S 'JUDGMENT'?

A good way to describe 'judgment' is to see it as a *sentence* or *final decision* which is arrived at based on God's estimate or opinion about us. It will necessarily take into account our behaviour (our *response* and *attitude* to God's will) whilst in this life, as we shall shortly see. We cannot question God's 'right' to judge, because he is our *creator* and he has a plan for each of us!

The purpose of judgment is twofold:

- 1) To **punish** or **reward** (yes, there is a positive side to judgment! This is what encourages us)
- 2) to determine **destinies**

When Christians misunderstand the teaching about eternal judgment, it can lead them into erroneous behaviour that has eternal ramifications. The whole point of the teaching of Jesus 'to lay up treasures in heaven' rather than on earth is directed towards this concept of accountability to God.

TYPES OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

It is important to understand the difference between the two types of judgments below:

1. **Judgments in history** (temporal judgments). This is seen through punishment or blessing on individuals, communities and on succeeding generations. It relates to things that happen in this life on earth, relating therefore to **time**. It is especially significant in the following areas:

- Idolatry (**Ex. 20:4-6**)
- Iniquity (**Jer. 32:18**)
- Righteousness (**Ps. 32**)

There are god's Judgments in history which have already transpired

There are God's Judgments in history that are yet to take place.

2. **Judgments in eternity**: this is seen through the responsibility that each individual has to answer for his own life. The most significant passage in scripture that bears upon this truth is **Ezekiel 18:1-4, 20**.

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS (we will examine these closely at another time)

Already Executed:

- On community's *en masse* -The flood; the confusion of languages (Babel); Sodom etc.
- On individuals – King David, Annanias and Sapphira, on Christ at Calvary (substitutionary)

On generations - Adamic race

Yet to take place:

Judgments on the earth/humans in existence in the last days (Jesus' accounts/revelation, ET al)

Judgment of the Jews (eternal ramifications)

Judgment of the gentile nations (eternal ramifications)

Judgments of fallen angels (eternal ramifications)

PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S ETERNAL JUDGMENT (ROM. 2: 1-16)

Five Principles:

According to truth, (see verse 2).

According to deeds (see verse 6); Also 1Pe. 1:17 and Rev. 20. **THINK ABOUT THIS!**

According to the extent of light that we have had (verse 12) see also **Matt 11: 20-24**

According to our secret thoughts and motives (verse 16)

Disregarding our own sense of importance (verse 11). Note: "no respect of persons"!

THE PROCESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

A. Christian judgment- before the judgment seat of Christ

Rom. 14:10-12 - each to give account for himself (dangerous to condemn fellow believers)

2 Corinthians 5: 10 - receive judgment in the body for things done in the body (i.e., this life)

1 Pe. 1:17; impartial judgment; 1 Pe. 4:17- better to judge ourselves now!

At the outset, it is important to understand that this judgment is *not unto condemnation!* Scriptures that bear this out are **John 3: 18; John 5:24; and ROM. 8:1. (The criterion however is not whether one has the label of 'Christian', but whether one has **really entered** into salvation!)**

To bring every individual to account for the things done in the body.

To separate the *good* things from the *bad* things. In this context, there will be no neutrality!

This separation is primarily for assessment of our service (**1 Cor.3: 11-15**).

Primary purpose is to test the "good" deeds by fire; the criterion is quality, not quantity!

Good deeds will stand the test by fire if they meet the following criteria:

Right motive: for god's glory (**1 Cor. 10:31**)

Obedience: according to god's word (**Matt 7:21-27**)

Done in the power of the Holy Spirit (**ROM. 15:18-19**)

In the light of what we have just seen from scripture, think about the things we do "for God". Will we pass the test?

NOTE: The N.T. gives us some patterns and their application to Christians at this judgment:

The talents (**Matt. 25:14-30**) - all who **did nothing** were **totally rejected** (received no approbation).

The minas (**Luke 19:11-27**) - not to use is to lose! (Think about this; it has immediate ramifications). Losing the ability to produce means you will have no fruit to show at the judgment.

In this connection note that there is also the teaching that **not to do good when one can**, is SIN (**James 4:17**. Sin of Omission.). If it is not dealt with, it will require accounting!

B. A National judgment. There Are Two Aspects Of Judgment Which Are *National* In Character (we will deal with them when we examine views of the sequence of events at Christ's Second Coming).

1. Israel will be judged during 'the great tribulation' (basis prophetic word **Ezekiel 20:34-38**; see also Romans re: judgment)

2. The Gentile nations will be judged before Christ's millennial throne **Matt 25:31, 32**

C. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

At this judgment, all the remaining dead will be judged (**REV: 20:11-15**)

Important points:

Every life is recorded in a book!
Mercy is available only for those enrolled in the Book of Life
The basis of this judgment is
Rom. 2:6-10 - judged according to what we have done in the body
Matt.12: 41-42 - judged for spiritual adultery

HOW CAN WE APPLY THESE TEACHINGS ABOUT JUDGMENT?

- 1) A principle is clearly set out in **1Cor.11: 31-32**. The principle, simply stated, is that we examine ourselves *in this life*. The consequences of so doing have ramifications that are both temporal and eternal.
- 2) It is important to remember too that there is much that God has not disclosed about the future. What we do know are just some simple *facts* as to the certainty of certain things happening (e.g., we *will* be resurrected; we *will* be judged etc). These facts in themselves are sufficient to condition our heart response to God. We should not become obsessed with wanting to know every detail. There are many aspects of God's workings that we cannot fully understand; the extent to which God *has given* us to knowledge and understanding is sufficient to keep us balanced and focused in our Christian walk.

Conclusion