

# Understanding the End Times

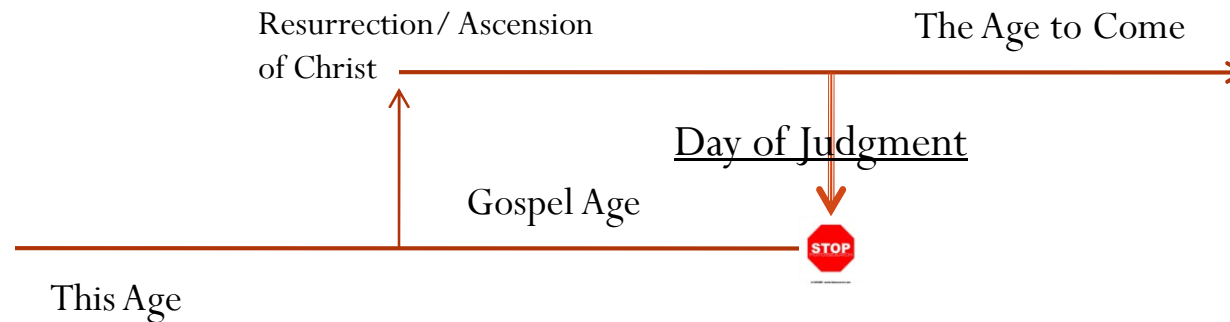
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**5. The Final Judgment, 4/15/09**

# The Day of Judgment



- 58 References in New Testament to the Day of Judgment
  - The Day of Judgment is a necessary and fundamental point of Christian teaching.
- The Day of Judgment is the dividing line between the two ages
  - Ends “This Age” with judgment.
  - Transitions “The Age to Come” from principal fulfillment to full realization.
- The Bible’s teaching of the Day of Judgment clarifies its scheme of history

## Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 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. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left” (Mt. 25:31-33).

- The *Timing* of the Day of Judgment: Return of Christ
  - “When the Son of Man comes in his glory..., then he will sit on his glorious throne” (v. 31).
- The *Issues* of the Day of Judgment: Eternal Life/Eternal Punishment
  - “these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Mt. 25:46).
- The *Scope* of the Day of Judgment: All Mankind, living and dead
  - “Before him will be gathered all the nations” (Mt. 25:32).
- Premillennialism? 1000 years between return of Christ and final judgment?

# Revelation 20:11-15

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 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. 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. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

- Timing: “*Then*” = After 1000 years, release of Satan, destruction of Satan
  - “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 (Rev. 20:10).
  - Thus the Day of Judgment, which follows the return of Christ, occurs after the Millennium, however we consider the latter.
- Issues: Eternal Punishment vs. Eternal Life
- Scope: “The dead, great and small”.
  - Two different resurrection peoples: According to John 5:28-29, some raised to “resurrection of life,” and others to “resurrection of judgment.”
  - Two different peoples on the last day. Believers are not resurrected to “death” or “judgment”. Rev. 20:12 refers to those to be condemned as “the dead.”
- Basis of Judgment:
  - The dead who are resurrected “to judgment” are condemned by their deeds: “The dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done” (Rev. 20:12).
  - Final judgment is not only for unbelief in Christ, but for sinful deeds.
  - Those resurrected to “life” are judged according to “the book of life”: “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).
  - The book of life is the book of the life of Christ: “the book of the life of the Lamb who was slain” (Rev. 13:8). So there are two different judgments for two different peoples. Those outside of Christ are condemned by their works. Those in Christ are justified by His works.

## Romans 2:5-16

“But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified” (Rom. 2:5-13).

- Romans 1:18-32, God's wrath on pagan sinners; 2:1-3:8, God's wrath on religious Jewish sinners; 3:9-20, None justified by works of law, since none are good and since all have sinned.
- *Issues*: Eternal Life (“glory, honor, immortality” – 2:7) and Eternal Punishment (“wrath and fury” – 2:8).
- *Scope*: “Each one” (v. 6), “every human being who does evil” (v. 9), “everyone who does good” (v. 10); “all who have sinned without the law . . . and all who have sinned under the law” (v. 12).
- *Timing*: Second Coming of Christ. Cf. Mt. 16:27, “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His father with His angels; and *will then recompense every man according to his deeds*.”
- *Basis of Judgment*: For those under the law, judgment is by works alone: “The doers of the law . . . will be justified” (2:13).
  - (Paul is making the point here of how one must be justified if one is appealing to the Law. He goes on in 3:9ff to show that no one is good and that “all have sinned” (3:23), so that sinners cannot hope for justification “by works of the law” (3:20) and must instead appeal to that righteousness which is through faith in Christ (3:22-26).

## 2 Peter 3:3-13

“But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:7-13).

- *Timing: Return of Christ*
  - “Promise”: “Where is the promise of His coming?” v. 4; “according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (v. 13). Judgment aligned with cosmic resurrection, which is joined with return of Christ (Rom. 8:19-23; 1 Cor. 15:51-53).
  - Peter divides history into three eras, separated by two judgments: Pre-Flood (Flood) Present Age (Fire Judgment) Eternal Age.
  - Peter accords with amillennial view vs. postmillennialism: in this present age, we await the return of Christ, after which is the “new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells” – we do not triumph in this age, but we hope for the age to come. Righteousness will dwell in the “new heavens and new earth,” not this one.
  - Peter is opposed to the premillennial view, since “the day of the Lord will come like a thief,” i.e. return of Christ, and immediately the cosmos is purged by fire. Peter emphasizes the swiftness and suddenness of God’s judgment. This is not over a thousand years, but “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (v. 8). The Day of the Lord, like Noah’s flood, is a sudden, cataclysmic event.
- *Scope: Absolutely Universal/ Cosmic. “Heaven and earth.”*
- *Issues: Eternal Blessedness vs. Eternal Destruction (v. 7, 9).*

## Day of Judgment: Summary and Wrap-Up

- The Day of Judgment is great dividing line between this age and the age to come.
- Timing: The Day of Judgment occurs immediately upon the return of Christ.
  - No 1000 year period after Christ's return & before judgment
  - New heavens and new earth are after, not before, return of Christ and judgment.
  - This favors the amillennial view.
- Issues: The Day of Judgment results either in eternal life & blessedness or eternal punishment and destruction.
- Scope: The Day of Judgment involves all mankind, even all heaven and all earth.

# Future Judgment of Believers?

Does this mean that believer's still await their final judgment/justification?

1. The Bible says that “we all” must stand before Christ’s judgment seat.
  - 2 Cor. 5:9-10, “We make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”
  - Rom. 2:6, “He will render to each one according to his works.”
2. Faith in Christ receives immediate and final justification.
  - John 5:24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”
3. Believers are resurrected into glory *prior to* the final judgment.
  - 1 Cor. 15:51-52, “We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”
  - 1 Thess. 4:17, “We [believers] who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”
4. The final judgment involves a gracious accounting of our lives before the Lord – a rewarding, which crowns we lay back at Christ’s feet (Rev. 4:10).
  - Mt. 25:21, “Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master.”
  - Mt. 25:35-40, “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, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me... As you did to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”



# Future Judgment of Believers?

5. There is no condemnation – no embarrassing, no shaming, no chastising, and no punishing – of those who are saved by “the book of the life of the Lamb” (Rev. 13:8), our sins, faults, and failures having been previously judged and washed clean at the cross.
6. Compare Gen. 18:13-15 with Heb. 11:11. Sarah is praised in the NT for what she is mainly criticized for in OT. Her life in the NT is washed clean by the blood of Christ. Instead of judgment, she receives praise for the least of her good works, washed clean of faults and sin.

## Conclusion:

1. Believers in Christ have nothing to fear in the future judgment. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ” (Rom. 8:1). Our sins were judged in the past – at the cross of Christ – and therefore there is no judgment in the future for our sins.
2. Believers are *not* justified in the end by our works, but are justified by the works of Christ recorded in the book of His life (Rev. 13:8; 20:15).
3. Believers will present their lives to Christ in his return. But this is a judgment of praise, according to grace. There is no biblical evidence of any chastisement, but only reward for the least of good works to Christ.
4. Christians are to look forward to the day of judgment, which is our day of vindication and the day of our installation into the full privileges of the sons of God in glory
5. Christians are to be motivated in good works by the knowledge of our future accounting with Christ and his praise. “We make it our aim to please Him” (2 Cor. 5:9).