

Outline Study Notes
on
Ultimate Issues
The Issue of Judgment and Reward



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Outline Studies on Ultimate Issues

The Issue of Judgment and Reward

Fact: God is holy, righteous. Just, and ‘all-good’ – His character is the definition of good.

Fact: Evil is any contradiction of God’s character, as such all evil must be judged, and will be judged.

Fact: Every individual will one day stand before his Creator and be judged → personal judgment is a sure and inescapable reality.

Ps. 96:10-13 “Say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns; ... He will judge the peoples with equity. “Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; ... for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with faithfulness.”

Eccl. 12:13-14 “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”

Acts 17:31 “[God] has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Rom. 3:5-6 “The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?”

Perspective: The specific administration of justice in view is the final and ultimate judgment that God will impose following the resurrection at the end of the present age.

Points to ponder:

- To speak of a final, ultimate judgment does not depreciate the administration of justice in the present era. However, neither does the administration of justice in the present age negate the fact of, and the need for, judgment in the age to come.
- There is a partial, incomplete judgment that occurs during the present age – God administers justice to both individuals and nations through particular acts of divine discipline or through general works of providence, but this is only partial justice. Acts of divine judgment in the present age are not necessarily complete in extent, nor are they expressed either uniformly or equitably in measure.
- God has entrusted judgment, in part, during this age to civil government. However, government-imposed justice is imperfect, inconsistent, and incomplete – and relevant principally to injustice perpetrated in interpersonal and civil affairs, and not specifically in regard to transgression of God’s law or “injury” to the Sovereign Creator (*i.e.*, injury to the sanctity of truth, injury to the sanctity of life, etc.).
- The Scripture contains clear and decisive statements declaring that a future judgment remains ... one wherein reward and punishment for every person will be justly established – there remains an individual, final judgment. [See the Scriptures printed above.]

The notes that follow are intended to provide a summary of what God has purposed to reveal concerning His commitment to judgment as well as some revealed particulars concerning the nature and terms of the future, final judgment ... that universal judgment which is unavoidably certain for every member of Adam’s race.

The certainty of judgment is evident in the fact that God has sworn an oath that He will judge.
 “Indeed, I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, as I live forever, if I sharpen My flashing sword,
 and My hand takes hold on justice, I will render vengeance on my adversaries,
 and I will repay those who hate Me.” *Deut. 32:40-41*

Proper Conceptions Concerning God and Judgment

- God, the Self-Existent, Eternal Creator is a Being of infinite excellency and greatness – majestic in holiness, infinite in wisdom, awesome in power; perfect in righteousness, unfailing in justice.
- It is reasonable to conclude that the infinitely-majestic Creator created all things and orders all creation for His own pleasure and for His own eternal praise and glory.
- It is reasonable to conclude that the Creator will always do what properly belongs to Him in His holy character and supreme sovereignty.
- It is proper that the Holy Creator will always work in His governance of creation so as to uphold the honor and majesty of His character and the righteous foundation of His rule.

“And in the greatness of Thine excellence
Thou dost overthrow those who rise up
against Thee; Thou dost send forth
Thy burning anger, and it consumes
them as chaff.” *Ex. 15:7*

“For the LORD your God is a consuming fire,
a jealous God.” *Deut. 4:24*

“Why should I pardon you? Your sons have
forsaken Me and sworn by those who are not
gods.” ... “Shall I not punish these people
for these things,” declares the LORD,
“and on a nation such as this shall
I not avenge Myself?” *Jer. 5:7-9*

“A jealous and avenging God is the LORD;
the LORD is avenging, a possessor of wrath.
... The LORD takes vengeance on His
adversaries, and He reserves wrath for
His enemies.” *Nah. 1:2-7*

“Who understands the power of Thine anger,
and Thy fury, according to the fear
that is due Thee?” *Ps. 90:11*

“O LORD, God of vengeance; God of avenging
acts, shine forth! Rise up, O Judge of the
earth; render recompense to the proud.”
Ps. 94:1-2

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation
of His throne. Fire goes before Him,
and burns up His adversaries round about.”
Ps. 97:2b-3

“Righteous art Thou, O LORD, and upright
are Thy judgments.” *Ps. 119:137*

“Say to those with anxious heart,
‘Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God
will come with vengeance;
but He will save you.’” *Isa. 35:4*

- ◆ It is proper that the Sovereign Creator should impose standards and establish laws which the creature must submit to in obedience and conform to in behavior, and to threaten sanctions that will be imposed when those standards and laws are transgressed.
- ◆ Transgression of the holy Creator’s standards and laws necessarily involves a cosmic injury to His majestic character, and comprises a grievous assault on and offense against His authority – for His is an infinite majesty and an absolute and supreme authority.
- ◆ It is proper that the Sovereign LawGiver and Creator should impose strict and severe sanctions with respect to the violation of His laws, precepts and statutes.
- ◆ It is proper that the Creator should hate transgression and express just recompense against every rebellion against and transgression of His righteous standards.
- ◆ It is proper that injury to His character and transgression of His authority should be righteously and justly vindicated – He is an infinitely righteous LawGiver and an infinitely just Judge.
- ◆ It is proper that God, the LawGiver and Judge, should deal with transgressors with utmost strictness, for His justice is an essential characteristic of His immutable holiness and His holy immutability.
- ◆ It is proper that the sanctions threatened in God’s law be fully and exactly executed – that is, that all sins be punished and that all sins receive the full penalty of the law violated.
- ◆ Sin is properly to be avenged by the holy Creator who created all things for His glory.
- ◆ Hatred of sin is a proper response of infinite holiness, and vengeance for sin is a proper and necessary aspect of God’s holiness.

- If sin should be properly hated by God in His righteousness, then logically it should be punished in His justice per the righteous sanctions He has threatened.
- If evil has been willed and perpetrated by the creature, then logically it should be justly reciprocated by the offended Holy One per the righteous sanctions He has threatened.
- ◆ God deals with a great strictness in His vengeance because He is so majestically holy ... and all sin is an assault against the honor of His majesty – it strikes at the honor of the infinitely majestic Sovereign (i.e., it greatly dishonors Him).
 - The creature's offense in any and all transgressions of the Creator's law and the dishonoring of His character is an infinite offense, because it is offense against the Person and rule of the infinitely Holy One. Therefore, judgment and punishment must necessarily be strict and severe, even in proper proportion to the offense – justice demands this.
- ◆ God deals with a great strictness in His vengeance because He is so righteously jealous of His glory ... and the Law is purposely made great and glorious because His glory must be respected, honored and magnified – this is the creature's most basic duty ... and God's most basic right.
 - The greatness and glory of Divine law include the good that the law requires, the evil it forbids, and the sanctions that it imposes. It forbids evil of all kinds and of all degrees, and it does so in all cases and at all times. It requires the judgment of eternal death for all moral evil of every kind and of every degree committed by any and every moral creature. This pertains to sins of commission (direct transgression), sins of omission (sins of neglect), and sins of ignorance (violation of available knowledge and of conscience). In short, the Law requires holiness in every action (i.e., comprehensive conformity to the stiff and straight standards of God and His righteousness), and all transgressions must properly receive recompense according to His strict and uncompromising judgment.
 - Even if the creature could live in perfect submission and conformity to God's law, such righteousness would still not accrue merit before God. Why? Because perfect righteousness is simply the creature's basic duty before His holy Creator – he has only done what is required.
- It is unreasonable and extremely unwise for the creature to think that the holy Sovereign and LawGiver would not administer justice with respect to His Law (statutes and precepts that He has articulated in His Word regarding His purpose for creation and regarding His governance of creation) and with respect to His character (His majestic holiness).
- If it is proper that the Sovereign Creator should establish laws that conform perfectly to His righteous character, then it is proper that such laws contain threatened punishment if they are transgressed.
- If it is proper that the laws the Sovereign Creator has established for the creature contain threatened punishment, then it is proper that every transgression of His laws (i.e., every offense against the infinitely holy Creator) be given the exact measure of punishment that has been threatened – this is only just ... and God is perfectly, eternally and immutably just.

Perspectives Concerning God's Strict Judgment and His Salvation of Sinners

“... being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. ... that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” *Rom. 3:24-26*

“Therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ... But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, we shall be saved by His life.” *Rom. 5:1-10*

Those who, Of God's free grace, are admitted to see
 God and to enjoy the smiles of His face, and to be
 embraced in the arms of His love, when they behold His
 wonderful power, His great and dreadful majesty and
 justice on those who are objects of His wrath – how it
 will make them prize His love, and how it will
 double the sweetness of their joy.

Comparing His favor and His displeasure together in
 their minds will give them a more lively sense and
 strong impression of each.

Jonathan Edwards

“There is therefore now no condemnation
 for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life
 in Christ Jesus has set you free from
 the law of sin and death.”

Rom. 8:1-2

“And He did so in order that He might
 make known the riches of His glory upon
 vessels of mercy, which He prepared
 beforehand for glory.” *Rom. 9:23*

With regard to the sins of the elect in the sufferings of Christ, here the strictness of
 God appears much more remarkably. The infinite dignity of the Person of Christ,
 His nearness to the Father, and the Father's infinitely dear love for Him, did not
 restrain Him from fully executing the law. This appears more in the greatness of His
 sufferings. The inflexibleness of God's justice here (at Calvary) more abundantly
 appears. His immutability appears in His sticking close to the law.

The glory of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ is revealed in two respects.

First, it shows the glorious wisdom of it, that there should be a way contrived
 wherein God may deal with such exceeding strictness as Judge of the law, yet pardon
 all the sin and save the sinners.

What glorious wisdom, that there should be such a way contrived wherein
 God may be so strict in punishing all sin that ever may have been committed
 and yet deliver those who have committed the sin.

- That He may be thus strict in executing the threatening of the law and yet
 deliver those who have committed sin from all punishment.
- That He may be thus strict in executing the threatening of the law and yet
 set at liberty them who have broken the law.
- That God may save the sinner from all misery, yea, and bring them to
 greater happiness than if they had never sinned at all and yet manifest
 His strictness in punishing sin.

What a marvelous wisdom this discovers in Him who has contrived the way
 of salvation by Jesus Christ! How glorious is this wisdom! How much it is
 above the wisdom of men or angels.

Second, it shows the gloriousness of the grace of God in our redemption because it is
 such grace as doesn't interfere with the holiness and justice of God.

If the grace of God, such as is manifested in our redemption, consisted in
 forgiving sin in a way of absolute mercy, without any sins being punished at
 all, this would have been inconsistent with the strictness of God as
 LawGiver and Judge. Then the mercy of God would have been unbecoming
 the majesty of God and inconsistent with the holiness of God,
 and so would not have been a glorious mercy.

That mercy would not have been a glorious mercy that was not a holy mercy;
 it would have diminished the glory of God's majesty.

But now in this way, the salvation of the sinner is done in holy mercy.

The holiness of God most remarkably appears in giving Christ to die.

God's appointing Christ to die for sinners above all other means manifests
 the mercy of God. There is no other act that so magnifies

God's holiness and majesty.

Jonathan Edwards

The fact of a future judgment of all peoples of all ages is emphasized in Scripture by the repeated reference to judging “*the living and the dead*”.

This phrase includes every person who has ever lived, or will ever live.

“... the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of *the living and the dead*.” *Acts 10:42*

“... Christ Jesus, who is to judge *the living and the dead*,” *II Tim. 4:1*

“... but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge *the living and the dead*.” *I Pet. 4:5*

Comment: Every person has an innate sense that justice is deserved when conscience and law are violated, and that proper and proportionate justice ought to be served, and that justice will ultimately be served.

The exercise of God’s government in this age argues eloquently that God will one day execute complete and perfect justice ... universally and individually.

- **Evidence #1.** Historical examples of divine judgment recorded in Scripture. [see text box to the right]
 - These selective instances of partial judgment do not comprise ultimate justice – righteous and impartial and universal justice.
 - The Scriptures give instances of divine judgment where both the facts of judgment and the reason for judgment are delineated ... where both the “what” and the “why” of God’s acting in judgment are explained.
- **Evidence #2.** The existence and operation of both natural law and moral law.
 - Natural law is universal in its extent and is fixed and changeless in its operation.
 - Moral law is written on the conscience of every person – it is universal in extent (*i.e.*, every person is endowed with: a moral conscience; a desire for ethics in practice; a sense of guilt when conscience or ethics are violated; and an expectation that deserved justice ought to be, and ultimately will be, administered).
 - Law, by definition, contains sanctions – sanctions which are intended to be imposed by a just judge based on true violations of fixed law ... and so also with God’s sovereign governance of His creation.
 - ★ Natural law: violation of natural law has sure and inescapable consequences – even injury and death ... and thus operates universally.
 - ★ Moral law: violation of moral law has sure and inescapable consequences – even injury and death ... and thus operates universally, in like relation as natural law.
 - ★ Universal law implies the existence of a singular sovereign, even Judge of all the earth, who will implement universal justice.

Evidence #1 – specific examples

The fact that God judges universally is clear from these examples:

- The Curse
- The Flood
- Confusion of languages at Babel

The fact that God judges specific peoples or nations is clear from these examples:

- Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah
- The Babylonian Captivity
- The Destruction of Jerusalem (first by the Babylonians & later by the Romans in 70 AD)

The fact God judges individuals is clear from these examples:

- Cain (Gen. 4:1-16)
- Nadab & Abihu (Lev. 10:1-11)
- Uzziah (II Chron. 26)
- Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4)
- Belshazzar (Dan. 5)
- Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-6)
- Herod (Acts 12:21-23)

Specific examples of judgment in history emphasize that future, divine judgment will surely occur.

A recommended study is to explore God’s purpose for acting in judgment in specific instances recorded in Scripture (*i.e.*, to examine God’s own interpretation for His own actions).

It is worth noting that judgment and reward are emphasized at the end of both Testaments – the New as well as the Old.

- *Mal. 3:13 – 4:3*
- *Rev. 20:11-15; Rev. 22:12*

This fact punctuates the truth that God’s purpose and plan for the ages is to judge the present world.

Questions & Answers Relating to Judgment

Question #1. *How will God judge? That is, what judicial principles will He employ in His judging?*

Answer.

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| <p>1) righteously (w/o injustice):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on truth – on unimpeachable evidence; • based on fact – not on hearsay or appearance; • based on Law. | <p>2) impartially (w/o respect of persons):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • without prejudice or bias – not as man judges; • with consideration of “light”, “opportunity” and “responsibility”. | <p>3) equitably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with absolute fairness; • according to uniformity of principle. |
|--|--|---|

Gen. 18:25 “... Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly? (*i.e.*, do justice?)”

Duet. 32:13-14 “For I proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.”

Job 8:3 “Does God pervert justice or does the Almighty pervert what is right?”

Duet. 10:17 “For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe.”

Rom. 2:11 “For there is no partiality (no respect of persons) with God.”

Gal. 2:6 “God shows no partiality.”

Col. 3:25 “He who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.”

Question #2. *How will God judge? That is, what evidentiary input will form the basis for His judgment?*

Answer. On the basis of works – on the basis of individual action/performance ... an essential prerequisite for a righteous, impartial and equitable judgment.

Ps. 62:11-12 “One thing God has spoken; these two things I have heard: that power belongs to God; and loving kindness is Thine, O Lord, for Thou dost recompense a man according to his work.”

Prov. 24:12 “... And will He not render (*i.e.*, bring back) to man according to his work?”

Jer. 17:10 “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results (*lit.*, fruit) of his deeds.”

Matt. 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.”

Rom. 14:12 “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Rev. 2:23 “... and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and will give to each one of you according to your deeds.”

Logical Implications of a Judgment Based on Works:

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| <p>1) All judgment will be administered on an individual basis – it will be a judgment that is fully “personalized”.</p> | <p>2) There will be degrees of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • punishment in hell; • reward in heaven. |
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Comment: A just judgment (*i.e.*, a righteous, impartial and equitable judgment) that is executed on the basis of works requires an omniscient judge. His omniscient & infallible account of all works guarantees a consistently just judgment.

Matt. 11:20-24 “Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. ‘Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! ... it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. ... it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.’ ”

Comment: Judgment is always a determination of the future based on actions (deeds) performed in the past ... actions (deeds) for which one is called to give an account before the bar of judgment.

Stated another way, judgment always involves an examination of the past for the purpose of determining future destiny and future experience (either degrees of felicity or degrees of torment).

Comment: Since judgment is based on works ... and since everyone’s works differ in quantity and quality ... and since judgment is equitable and impartial ... it then necessarily follows that verdicts must differ in regard to both nature and degree.

Question #3. Who will serve as Judge for mankind?

Answer. The Lord Jesus Christ – the judgment of man will be by a man ... by the Son of Man.

John 5:22-23, 27 “For not even the Father judges anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. And He (the Father) gave Him (the Son) authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.”

Acts 10:42 “And He (the Father) ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.”

Acts 17:31 “... [God] has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Question #4. Where will man be judged? That is, before what judgment bar will an individual stand?

Answer. There are two judgment bars noted in Scripture, differing in occasion, type, and effect.

1) The Judgment Seat of Christ.

- ultimate destiny = heaven ... this is the fixed destiny of all who appear before this bar of judgment;
- a judgment for the granting of reward or for the loss of reward ... for the assigning of position and privilege.

2) The Great White Throne.

- ultimate destiny = hell ... this is the fixed destiny of all who appear before this bar of judgment;
- a judgment for determination of the degree and nature of punishment in hell.

Note: The context of these verses clearly shows that the pronoun “we” refers to saints – to regenerated and justified sinners.

Rom. 14:10-12 “... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God (Christ, *KJV*). ... So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

II Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Rev. 20:11-13 “And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small before the throne ... and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ... and they were judged, every one according to their deeds.”

Question #5. What determines which judgment bar one will stand before?

Answer. All judgment is based on works, and the particular judgment bar before which an individual will stand, and be judged, is determined by the presence or absence of one specific “work”.

John 6:27-29 “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, ...’
They said therefore to Him,
‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’
Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God (*i.e.*, this is the work that leads to and endures to eternal life), that you believe in Him (the Son) whom He (the Father) has sent.’ ”

This is the single “work” that distinguishes whether one will stand in judgment before the Great White Throne or at the Judgment Seat of Christ – the “work” of **believing**. Specifically, the single determining work is that of believing (intellectually accepting, willfully embracing and wholeheartedly trusting) that Jesus Christ is God’s one and only begotten Son, the one and only Savior for mankind ... the One who alone:

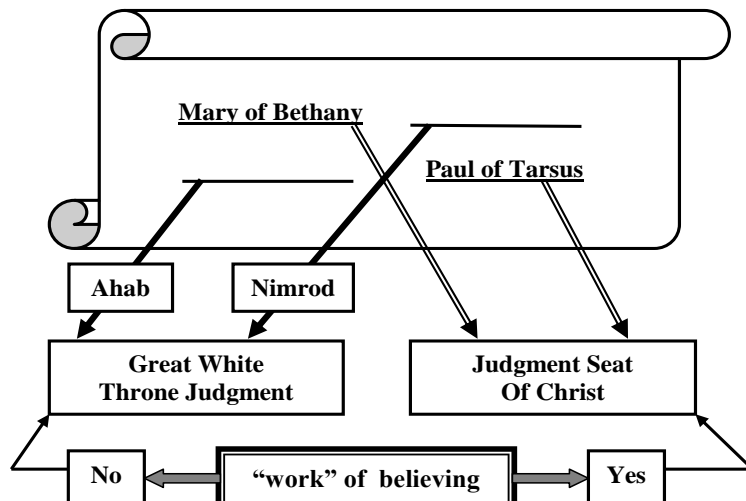
- lived a perfectly righteous life in His humanity;
- propitiated the wrath of God toward man’s sin through His death;
- made atonement for man’s sin through His shed blood;
- conquered sin, death and the grave through His glorious resurrection from the dead;
- ascended to the right hand of the Father where He holds a perpetual priesthood;
- is coming again to judge the living and the dead (per Apostles’ Creed).

Note: John 5:29 speaks of a “resurrection of life” and a “resurrection of judgment”. Hearing and believing the Gospel is the pivotal step that determines which resurrection, and therefore which judgment, applies to a particular person.

John 5:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes in Him who sent Me, has eternal life (as a real, abiding, personal possession), and does not come into judgment (*i.e.*, at the Great White Throne), but has passed out of death (*i.e.*, out of the second death) into life (*i.e.*, eternal life).”

Rev. 20:12,14 “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the [Great White] 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 death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”

BOOK (SCROLL) OF LIFE



Rev. 3:5 “He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”

The “*I will not*” is an absolute guarantee. Here is assurance of eternal security in Christ.

Rev. 20:15 “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Consider the following Scriptures that speak further concerning the “*Book of Life*”..

Ex. 32:33 “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.’ ”

Ps. 9:5 “Thou hast rebuked the nations; Thou hast destroyed the wicked; Thou hast blotted out their name forever and ever.”

Ps. 69:28 “May they (*i.e.*, the wicked) be blotted out of the book of life, and may they not be recorded with the righteous.”

Note: To have one’s name appear in the *Book of Life* is to be accounted righteous.

Rev. 13:8 “And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (*i.e.*, the beast = Antichrist), everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.” (NASB)

[“... everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (KJV)]

Rev. 17:8 “... And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, ...” (KJV)

Comment: The Scriptures reveal that all saints, all persons who will be welcomed into God’s glorious kingdom, have been chosen “from before the foundation of the world” (*Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9*). We see that there are names written in “the book of life from the foundation of the world”, and there are names that are excluded. Those whose names are written in this book will have their names confessed before the Father (*Rev. 3:5*) – a confession that pertains exclusively to those whom Christ redeemed, called, justified and reconciled to the Father.

All those whose names appear in the Book of Life (*i.e.*, the same group of individuals who are in possession of this single, efficacious “work of believing” ... being born of the Spirit) will appear for judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

All others (*i.e.*, all who have not engaged this “work of believing”, and whose names therefore do not appear in the Book of Life) are destined to appear at the Great White Throne for final judgment.

- ★ Some general, summary points worth noting – points every person should ponder seriously.
 - There is but one way to be born:
 - born in sin ... born with a nature inherited from Adam, under the same sentence of death.
 - There are two ways to die:
 - one can die in his sins (without personal exercise of the “work” of believing in the Son);
 - one can die in faith (with personal exercise of the “work” of believing in the Son).
 - There are two destinies after death – after separation of the soul/spirit from the body:
 - soul/spirit goes to Hades (destiny of those who die in their sins);
 - soul/spirit goes to be “at home with the Lord”, “where He is” (the destiny of those who die in faith).
 - There are two resurrections – two reunifications of the soul/spirit with an immortal body:
 - a resurrection of judgment (the resurrection of those whose soul/spirits are in Hades);
 - a resurrection of life (the resurrection of those whose soul/spirits are “with the Lord”).
 - There are two judgment bars – immediate destinies after resurrection:
 - the Great White Throne judgment (judgment bar for those who lack the “work” of believing);
 - the Judgment Seat of Christ (judgment bar for those who possess the “work” of believing).
 - There are two eternal destinies – destinies after appearance at respective judgment bars:
 - hell (destiny of all who appear before the Great White Throne to be judged for their works);
 - heaven (destiny of all who appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be judged for their works).

Question #6. How will unbelievers (the natural man) be judged?

Answer. By the testimony of law & conscience, plus a record of all works.

Rom. 2:12 “For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;”

Rom. 3:19-20a “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight;”

Rom. 2:14-16 “For when the Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things in the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

The universal witness of conscience in every individual will be active, bearing witness, and indicting.

Note: The natural man is already declared guilty and without excuse because he has suppressed the ample evidence of God as Creator and LawGiver – and the only One worthy of man’s worship. (*cf., Rom. 1:20 & 2:1*)

Rev. 20:12 “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”

II Thess. 8-9 “... dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

[The Gospel is the sole basis for salvation.]
(See *Acts 4:12; I Cor. 15:1-2*)

Question #7. How will Christians (the regenerated man) be judged?

Answer. By a “fire test” of works ... a quality test of the nature of each person’s works; not only the “what” of one’s works, but also the “how” and the “why” the works were performed.

I Cor. 3:11-15 “... But let each man be careful how he builds upon it (*i.e.*, upon the foundation). For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show (declare) it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work (*lit.*, of what sort each man’s work is).

If any man’s work which he has built upon it (*i.e.*, upon the foundation = Jesus Christ) remains, he shall receive a reward (*Gr., misthos*).

If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.”

Comment: The phrase “saved, yet so as through fire” seems to refer to the “fire test” of a person’s works, and the phrase “but he himself shall be saved” to the reality of possessing the “all-determining work” of believing in the Son whom the Father has sent. The phrase “he shall suffer loss” refers particularly and only to loss of reward for a person who yet has cause to rejoice fully in the gift of salvation based solely on possession of the “work” of believing in the Son.

“... but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”
I Cor. 4:5

Note: The “fire test” will expose what is authentically holy and truly praiseworthy according to God’s personal value system, and this test will thus form a just basis for His judgment of a redeemed and justified sinner’s “works done in the body”.

Choices made during life on earth will directly influence the quality of life in eternity. Belief determines judgment bar and ultimate destiny, but works will have a direct bearing on one’s relational experience in eternity.

Judgment Comparisons

wood, hay, straw *vs.* gold, silver, precious stones (*I Cor. 3:11-15*)
worthless *vs.* valuable
deeds of the flesh *vs.* deeds of the Spirit (*Rom. 8:1-14*)
fruit of sin nature *vs.* fruit of indwelling Spirit (*Gal. 5:16-26*)

Note the repeated word “shall” → there is a guaranteed certainty that pertains to the reward, loss & salvation described in these statements!

Comment: The judgment of a Christian is a test (a revealing) of the true nature and essential quality of the ‘works’ performed in one’s faith walk and in one’s obedience to the Gospel while living in the physical body. The purpose is to determine if a reward will be granted plus the nature of the reward that will be granted. The judgment reward has everything to do with future position, privilege, responsibility and experience ... but not with eternal destination.

Comments:

- The value of the foundation calls for careful and quality building (*i.e.*, faith works).
- The excellence of the foundation calls for excellence in building materials (*i.e.*, excellent works).
- Fire gives the thought of a purification test – a searching of the true nature.
- Quality (sort) is emphasized, not quantity.

Two Greek words are used for ‘reward’ in the New Testament:

- *misthos* = wages, reimbursement for service (for a work done);
- *apodidomai* = to give back in return; to return as a recompense.
[‘*apo*’ = back, return; ‘*didomai*’ = to give, to grant]
(*apodidomai* = reimbursement in full measure)

Note: No texts in Scripture contain more astounding statements pertaining to rewards relative to life after death than those by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels.

Matt. 5:12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward (*apodidomai*) in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Rev. 22:12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward (*misthos*) is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

Matt. 6:1-6 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward (*misthos*) with your Father who is in heaven. When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward (*misthos*) in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay (*apodidomai*) you.”
And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward (*misthos*) in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay (*apodidomai*) you.

Mk. 9:41 “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward (*apodidomai*)”

John 4:35-36 “Do not say, ‘There are yet 4 months, and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages (*misthos*), and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.”

II John 8 “Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward (*misthos*).”

Rev. 11:17-18 “We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, ... because Thou has taken they great power and hast begun to reign. And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give reward (*misthos*) to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, ...”

Points of note:

- reward (payment, recompense) will be made;
- reward will occur in the after-life (*i.e.*, at the resurrection);
- the reward received will be a blessing – a divine favor that brings true joy and deep satisfaction;
- the generosity of the Master in the granting of reward will magnify Him as a most glorious Master.

“Is it not lawful for Me to do what I wish with what is my own?
Or is your eye envious because I am generous?” *Matt. 20:15*

Parable of the Invited Guests

Lk. 14:7-15: (vs. 13-14) “But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay (*antapodidomi*) you; for you will be repaid (*antapodidomi*) at the resurrection of the righteous.”

antapodidomi = to give back as an equivalent; recompense

Comment: In the Parable of the Minas in *Luke 19:11-27* the reward for diligent, faithful service is stated as “authority” – a position of responsibility and privilege under the “nobleman” who owns the kingdom. The honor of a servant is to serve under the authority of, and for the honor of, the Master.

vs.26. “I tell you, that to everyone that has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”

See *Rev. 2:26* & *Rev. 3:21*. Also, *Matt. 19:27 – 20:16*.

Comment: The widely referenced reward for the righteous, particularly that reward granted to church-age saints, has particular relevance to service under the sovereign rulership of the glorified Christ during the Millennial Kingdom age. The honor of a servant-steward is to hold and exercise authority – most especially, an authority received from and exercised under the Master-King ... plus to experience the confidence and trust of the Master-King.

Rev. 5:10 “And Thou hast made [those whom Thou didst purchase for God with Thy blood] to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they *will reign upon the earth.*”

Rev. 20:6 “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and *will reign with Him for 1000 years.*”

Rev. 22:3-5 “... and His bond-servants shall serve Him ... and they *shall reign forever and ever.*”

Note: One of the outcomes of the proceedings at the Judgment Seat of Christ is the assignment of duty-privilege to be experienced by resurrected saints during the Millennial Age.

Heb 6:10 “For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.”

Heb. 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that **He is a rewarder** of those who seek Him.”

Note: God is a “rewarder” → He is the “*misthos-apodidomai*” Creator ... the “reimbursing, recompensing, rewarding” Sovereign who both pays wages to His elect bond-slave stewards and faithfully & generously gives back in return for service rendered in His name and for His glory.

Essential Points to Note:

Choices made in this life here on earth will have a direct bearing on our future lives in eternity.

- Belief (faith) determines judgment bar and ultimate destiny.
 - Salvation is the free gift of God, and should never be confused with receipt of rewards.
- Behavior (deeds) determines quality of experience in eternity ... a fact that pertains both to the righteous (regenerated man) and to the unrighteous (natural man).
 - There will be distinctions of reward in heaven and of judgment in hell that is justly based on one’s works, life priorities, etc. while living in the body in the present age.

An Overview of the Age – From Creation to Consummation

A Chronological Ordering of the Various Resurrections and Judgments

