

Foundations Course

11. ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

How it all works out- past, present and future.

Eternal judgement

- is a foundational truth *Hebrews 6:1-2*
- has eternal consequences

(Not all judgements are eternal. There are times when God “repents” of judgement if men change their ways. *Joel 2:12-14; Jonah 3:8-10*)

Bible scholars hold to various views about the nature and timing of God’s eternal judgements. Some hold to one general judgement at the culmination of history. Others teach various judgements which include the judgement of the righteous and the unrighteous, judgement of nations, of Israel, of angels, at various times in history.

We will look at three areas of judgement which affect believers (past, present, future).

The nature of God's judgements

They are:

- righteous *Psalm 96:13*
- impartial *Romans 2:11*
- true, just *Revelation 19:2*
- thorough *Matthew 12:36*
- on basis of Gospel *Romans 2:16 RSV, NASB*

The reason for God's judgements

- God is holy and cannot allow sin to go unchallenged. It would be against his nature and character.
- Without consequences good and evil are meaningless; there is no basis for morals.
- God requires justice, which is often incomplete in this life. All complaints of injustice will be silenced when God’s judgements are complete.
- The certainty of judgement creates the desire to get right with God and keep right with God.

“How can we possibly overlook the fact that the great and holy God of the universe will one day judge sin? If it were not true that God will judge sin, it would be a blot on the name of God. We could not talk about a holy God, a just God, a sovereign God, if he were to let sin go on unchecked indefinitely as he obviously seems to let it do for a time in this world. We may object that sometimes sin is punished in this world. Sin has its built-in, self destructing mechanisms. But to be honest we must admit that sometimes good people suffer also, and sometimes evildoers go free. Although the evildoer is sometimes punished, no one would seriously maintain that all evil is properly punished and all good properly rewarded in this world. So if there is not a final judgement in which the inequities of this life are made right, there is no righteousness in God. There is no ultimate justice anywhere.”

Foundations of the Christian Faith – J. M. Boice

Judgement past

At Calvary the sins of the world were judged by Christ's death and all who believe in Jesus know that they have passed from death to life. Christ was judged in their place. Those who reject this salvation must face the judgement for their sins at the final judgement and will pay the penalty themselves. *Revelation 20:11-15*

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 6:23

“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”
1 John 5:12

Romans 8:1-3 tells us that there is now no condemnation (judgement) for those who are in Christ, that we have been set free from the law of sin and death, and that God did this by sending his own son.

Romans 5:9 and *1 Thessalonians 5:9* both tell us that our destiny is not to experience the wrath of God, but that we shall be saved from it. See also *John 5:24*

The truth of so great a salvation, which we could not earn ourselves should keep us humble and thankful and lead to a greater depth of devotion.

Judgement present

Once we are sons and daughters of God we walk in another kind of judgement. This judgement has to do with the present life, our walk with God, our response to his Word, the development of fruits in our life.

We do this judging ourselves. *1 Corinthians 11:31; Philippians 2:12-13*

How do we judge ourselves?

1. Always with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.
"Search me, O God..." Psalm 139:23
 Not meant to be painful introspection, but a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit acting on our conscience.
"Anyone then, who know the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." James 4:17
2. Confessing and repenting of recognized sin. Anytime is a good time. *1 John 1:8-9*
 Communion is a good time to take stock and put things right. *1 Corinthians 11:28-31*
3. Our responses and choices in life made during times of pressure and difficulty often expose how well we are judging our lives. Buried faults and attitudes are more likely to come to the surface during times of pressure.

If we don't judge ourselves God will discipline us.

Hebrews 12:5-11 tells us that:

- God disciplines his sons/daughters
- God disciplines those whom he loves
- God's discipline proves that we are really part of his family.

God's discipline is motivated by love, not wrath and anger. *Revelation 3:19*
 Discipline has to do with training, not with punishment.

God's discipline is to build character, so that we can overcome and not be ashamed when we face him. *1 John 2:28*

How does God judge us now?

- By his word convicting us (Bible reading, teaching, preaching) *Hebrews 4:12*
- Loss of peace
- Correction by those in authority: parents, oversight, spouse, etc.
- Hardship and difficulties (Sometimes this comes from reaping what we sow, rather than sent direct from God, but he has placed laws in this world, which when broken yield certain results.)

Judgement future

The future judgement of believers is not a judgement for salvation, but a judgement for works.

Good works can never earn salvation, but once we become sons/daughters of God we are expected to do good works and to be faithful.

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

"For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

Only our works since becoming Christians are judged. Nothing comes before the foundation which is Christ. (*1 Corinthians 3:11*). Previous works count for nothing, they are as filthy rags. *Isaiah 64:6*

Some of the areas to be judged are:

- our stewardship of-time *Ephesians 5:16*
 - money *2 Corinthians 9:6-7*
 - God's gifts and graces *Luke 19:11-26*
- our witness for Christ *1 Thessalonians 2:19,20*
- relationships *Matthew 10:40-42*
- suffering for Christ *Matthew 5:11-12*
- personal discipline *1 Corinthians 9:24-27*
- overcoming temptation *James 1:12-13*
- personal fruitfulness *Galatians 5:22-23*
- exercise of authority *Hebrews 13:17*

Our works are tested as though they have been through fire and we reap either reward or loss of reward. *1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 9:24-27; 2 John 8*

We will be judged according to:

- motive *1 Corinthians 4:5*
- faithfulness *Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:45*
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Many of the rewards spoken of in the Bible are likened to crowns. Paul likened the Christian life to an athletic competition, where there is training and perseverance. He compared the Judgement Seat of Christ to the platform where Greek athletes were presented with the crown of laurel leaves when they won a race. They received a perishable crown, but we will receive everlasting crowns.
1 Corinthians 9:24-25

The elders wore crowns, which they presented to Jesus in worship. *Revelation 4:4,10*

Some of the types of crowns mentioned in Scripture:

- Crown of Life *Revelation 2:10*
 - for faithfulness
 - for resisting temptation
 - for enduring persecution
 - for suffering martyrdom
- Crown of rejoicing *1 Thessalonians 2:19*
 - for successful soul-winning
- Crown of righteousness *2 Timothy 4:7-8*
 - for faithfulness
 - for perseverance
 - for loving His appearing
- Crown of glory *1 Peter 5:1-4*
 - for faithful shepherding of the flock
- Imperishable Crown *1 Corinthians 9:25*
 - for running the race, with self-control

*Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

Charles Wesley, 1707-88
