

THE PROMISE OF JUDGMENT¹

by James P. Dawson

Judgment in the Scripture takes on several aspects. In the Old Testament God brought judgment against the Israelites for disobedience and falling away from Him. When their sins became great, God would bring an oppressor against them and would only relieve their misery when they repented and returned to Him. There are several cases of individual judgment. David is a good example. The Israelites believed that in the end God would bring judgment against their enemies and He would vindicate them and become the vanguard of God. The New Testament teaches that judgment is an individual concern and is Christ centered. At the cross Christ took the judgment for our sins away, but we must accept His gift of salvation. The final judgment for the believers will be more of an awards ceremony instead of a condemnation, but the final judgment for the unbelievers will be an eternal condemnation. The gospels deal with judgment in different perspectives. MAT emphasizes the continuing judgment from the present into the future. MAR treats the judgment more as a future event and LUK places the judgment in the present to cause repentance and leading to salvation. John looks to the cross as the judgment and man must choose or reject the sacrifice of Jesus. John implies that the final judgment is the revelation of the choice that each individual has made. In the Old Testament all judgment was in the future, but in the New Testament we have both present and future judgment.

Paul believes and teaches the present and future judgment and that the believers are freed from the final condemnation of the Last Judgment because they are justified through their belief in Christ as their Savior. Jesus took the believers sins and unrighteousness to the cross and clothed the believers in His righteousness thus justifying their avoidance of the Last Judgment. **(1)**

The church cannot set itself beyond the judgment of God. It must decide for him or against him. All are participants in the Last Judgment. There are two paths, no middle ground and no spectators. The book of Revelation like the gospel of John is Christocentric. The judgments are preliminary and educative. They are brought against the unbelievers to show them that God is in charge and to bring them to repentance. The severities of the judgments increase bringing more emphasis on repentance until the final judgment decrees separation from God because of unbelief. We show this in the discussion of the Book of **Revelation**,

God has promised judgment for all, **(2)** but several Greek words, translated as judgment in the English Bible, have slightly different meanings. Criterion primarily is used to represent a "means of judging" or "criterion" or a "lawsuit." The term crisis actually means a separating or judging between, a decision judgment. Krima is an action meaning to judge, to determine. The context of the passages in Scripture must be considered in determining which definition applies. Most readers are familiar with **the Great White Throne of Judgment**, the final judgment.

1. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." **REV 20:11-15**
2. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throned was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto hi, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." **DAN 7:9**
3. "That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." Job. 21:30.
4. "But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment." **PSA 9:7**
5. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." **ECC 12:14**

This judgment is the last judgment, but there is also a judgment for the believers prior to this final event. We usually call it the Bema Seat or the judgment seat of Christ. **(3)** The Bema seat was an elevated seat above the rink or arena where a judge sat and made decisions concerning the games or activities being conducted. The judge in tennis holds a like position. The bema seat judgment does not determine judgment for the sins of an individual, but determines the rewards based on performance, how one ran the race. I think this takes place at the wedding feast, although there is not a Scripture reference for this belief, **See Chapter 28 in WHY BELIEVE?**

The Scriptures state that Christ will be the judge in both these events, and His judgment is just and perfect.

6. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall Live. For as the Fathers' hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute

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judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own will do nothing: as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." **JOH 5:22-30**

7. "For we are unto God a sweet savior of Christ, in them that are saved, And in them that perish: To the one we are the savior of death unto death; And to the other the savior of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" **2CO 2:15**.

All will be judged:

8. "For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways." John 34:11.
9. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn into death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?" Proverbs 24:11.
10. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man According to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." **JER 17:10**
11. "Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity; but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." **EZE 7:3-4**
12. "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:" **1PE 1:17**

Everything man has thought or done will be recalled and judged.

13. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." **MAT 12:36**
14. "Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and they which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, Which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." **LUK 12:3-5**
15. "For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad." **MAR 4:22**

The believer will not be judged for their sins because in God's eyes we are totally righteous because Christ took our unrighteousness and gave us His righteousness. We are totally pure because of our belief in Christ. Our judgment will be to determine what our rewards will be .

16. "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." Proverbs 11:31.
17. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." **MAT 5:12**
18. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." **MAT 6:2**

The wicked will receive their just deserts.

19. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall regard every man according to his works." **MAT 16:27**
20. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." **1TH 1:7**
21. "Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands Shall be given him?" **ISA 3:11**
22. "And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:" **ISA 5:15**

God has promised that Christ shall come to rescue the believers & then to judge the earth & those who dwell there.

23. "Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth." **1CH 16:33**
24. "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." **ECC 3:17**
25. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay Recompense." **ISA 59:18**
26. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." **JOH 12:48**

When does the judgment occur? It would appear that there are THREE DISTINCT PERIODS OF JUDGMENT when Christ returns at the end times.

- 1) The Bema Seat of Christ. **(4)**
2) The judgment of the nations. **(5)**
3) The Great White Throne of Judgment. **(6)**

The Judgment Seat of Christ

The time between the Antichrist's signing of the Covenant (7) and Christ's standing on Zion (8) is the Great Tribulation against the Jews, Daniel's Seventieth Week. We discuss in detail the series of events during this time in **Chapter 28 in WHY BELIEVE?, and Great Tribulation**. The two major events concerning judgments during this time are the Bema Seat of Christ (9) and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (10) Joseph H. Thayer (11) describes the Bema Seat as: . . . a raised place mounted by steps; a platform, tribune; used of the official seat of a judge, **Acts 18:12,16** . . . of the judgment seat of Christ, **ROM 14:10** . . . of the structure, resembling a throne, which Herod built in the theatre at Caesarea, and from which he used to view the games and make speeches to the people . . .

It was a raised platform or seat from which the judge presided over the events and prescribed his judgments or rewards to those under consideration. It is similar to the judges' seat in tennis matches. From this Bema Seat of Christ, He dispenses His judgments and rewards. (12) I think this occurs at the wedding feast, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, that must take place during this time frame, since when Christ returns the marriage supper will have occurred. (13) We will receive our crowns and rewards during the same time and only the Church and Tribulation Saints will be at the Marriage Supper, we are the Bride. We will never be subject to any further judgment.

The second judgment will be the judgment of the survivors of the tribulation, both Gentiles and Jews. (14) The believers will go into the millennial Kingdom in the flesh, (15) and the unbelievers are condemned to await the Great White Throne of judgment. Those whom they martyred for their belief in Christ during the tribulation are brought back to life and reign with Christ during the Millennial Kingdom. (16) During the Millennial Kingdom Christ will rule with a rod of iron (17) and sinners and sinful nations will be judged quickly. (18)

The final judgment, the Great White Throne of Judgment (19) will occur at the end of the Millennial Kingdom and all unbelievers from all ages will be subject to this final judgment, (20) including the fallen angels. (21) All of these judgments are by Christ, because the Father has given all judgment to the Son. (22) If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, the final judgments hold no peril for you only joy, love and crowns.

Cited References

- (1) **ROM 3:25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God:
- (2) **Jude 14-15** And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.
- (3) **ROM 4:10** How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.
2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
- (4) **John 12:48** He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.
ACT 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.
2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
ROM 4:10 How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.
- (5) **REV 19:15** And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
- (6) **REV 20:11-15** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.
- (7) **DAN 9:27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.
- (8) **REV 14:1** And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.
- (9) **2CO 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.
ROM 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- (10) **REV 19:7-9** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
- (11) **Joseph H. Thayer**, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 101, 362.
- (12) **LUK 14:14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.
- (13) **REV 19:8-9** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
- (14) **EZE 20:34-38** And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.
- (15) **MAT 25:31-46** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.
- (16) **REV 20:4-6** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his MAR upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.
- (17) **REV 2:27** And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
REV 12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.
REV 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
- (18) **ISA 65:20** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.
- (19) **REV 20:11-15** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.
- (20) **MAR 4:22** For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.
JOB 21:30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.
- (21) **2PE 2:4** For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgment;
JUD 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.
- (22) **JOH 5:22** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.