

The Final Judgment

Christian Belief 103-14

The great final judgment is fair and necessary.

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise to return, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to perish, so he is giving more time for everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9 NLT).

- Salvation is God's remedy for Adam's failure in the test of his freewill and the final judgment is for those who reject salvation. God is both righteousness and merciful. He gives grace to all so that they can be spared from the final judgment. Between birth and death one should come under God's grace so that the judgment will pass over him.
- The whole world is held accountable to God. At this final judgment, none can mock (see Romans 3:19b)! A great multitude in heaven will rejoice greatly when justice is eventually fulfilled (see Revelation 19:1-2a).

1. *Great white throne judgment*

All will stand before Christ to hear His proclamation of their eternal destiny.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who 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, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15 NKJV).

- 'Him' who sat on a 'great white throne' is Christ, whom God has given the right to judge (see John 5:26-27) both 'the living and the dead' (see 2 Timothy 4:1). Before Him, 'the earth and the heaven flees away' to be replaced by 'a new heaven and a new earth' (see Revelation 21:1).
- Both the believers who are dead and kept in Paradise (see Luke 23:43) and the unbelievers who are dead kept in Sheol (Heb.; See Psalm 18:5) or Hades (Gk.; See Luke 16:23) which is a place for their departed spirits, will be resurrected (see Acts 24:15b) to face this judgment of destiny.
- The 'dead' are unbelievers who are dead; for believers 'sleep' after their time on earth (see 1 Corinthians 15:51). 'Small and great' are unbelievers from all walks of life who are not registered in 'the Book of Life'. Each will deserve his own degree of punishment and to be 'judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books'.
- The 'sea', a place in the spiritual world with a transparent look which is a counter part to the 'sea of glass' before God's throne (see Revelation 4:6), will give up the 'dead', 'Death', and 'Hades' to be cast into the 'lake of fire' or *Gehena* (Gk.; Luke 12:23) which is the deepest division of hell, a tormenting place (see Luke 16:24) prepared for Satan, his demons, and people who choose to serve the devil. This is the 'second death'.

2. *'Bema' seat judgment for rewards*

This is a different judgment—to bestow various degrees of reward for believers.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat (Gk: *bematos*) of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV).

- The *bema* seat in Corinth was a large, richly-decorated rostrum, centrally located in the marketplace where rewards were given out—garlands, trophies, crowns, and other items—but no punishments.
- Believers should never fear of an eternal judgment because Christ was judged for our sins. By His death for us, He has forgiven 'all our sins'—of the past, present, and future (see Colossians 2:13b) and 'perfected us forever' (see Hebrews 10:14). He has 'justified' us (made us right), 'reconciled' us with God, and 'saved us from the wrath' of God's judgment (see Romans 5:9-10). All who 'believe in Him shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life' (see John 5:24).

- Living on this earth that is subjected to a system of rewarding good and punishing evil, we must keep 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (see Hebrews 12:2) whose blood 'cleanses us from all sin' to 'confess' our sins. Christ, our 'Advocate with the Father' will plead for us for forgiveness (see 1 John 1:7-9; 2:1). And 'we would not be judged' (see 1 Corinthians 11:31).
- A believer 'will appear before the judgment seat of Christ' in a glorious, immortal, and incorruptible body (see 1 Corinthians 15:51-54) to 'receive the things done' in his life and ministry. Reward is based on your own merit and is to be received personally and publicly (see Romans 14:12; 1 Corinthians 3:8).

A test of heavenly fire will evaluate our godly character and good works for rewards.

- This test of fire will take place on 'the day of the Lord' when 'the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat: both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up' (see 2 Peter 3:10).

a. Eternal reward for godly character

This test of fire purifies to retain what deserves a reward.

Therefore since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness (2 Peter 3:11 NKJV).

- 'Holy conduct and godliness' will survive the test. Walking in the Spirit to live your life bearing fruits of the Spirit (see also Galatians 5:16, 22-23) will pass the test and will entitle you to a reward.

Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Romans 2:7-9 NKJV).

- By 'doing good' and 'obeying the truth' you are 'seeking' for the eternal reward of 'glory, honor, immortality, and peace'.

b. Eternal reward for good works

This supernatural fire that can annihilate the entire sinful earth and all its sinful things will also purifies to retain your good works.

But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any other foundation than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Now anyone who builds on that foundation may use gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But there is going to come a time of testing at the judgment day to see what kind of work each builder has done. Everyone's work will be put through the fire to see whether or not it keeps its value. If the work survives the fire, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builders themselves will be saved, but like someone escaping through a wall of flames (1 Corinthians 3:10b-15 NLT).

- Ministry built on the foundation—Christ, and are driven by the motivations of 'faith, hope, and love' (see 1 Corinthians 13:13) are like pure gold and silver that survive the refiner's fire. Superficial gain is like the looking good 'jewels' and half-hearted attitude like 'wood, hay, or straw'. They will be burned up in the test.
- Rewards will be given to 'the work that survives the fire' to 'see whether or not it keeps its value'. Work that is burned up in the test is a 'great loss'. The person will still be 'saved' but 'like someone escaping through a wall of flames'.

c. Sharing of God's eternal glory

Sharing of the eternal glory of God is the greatest reward for our life.

And when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor (1 Peter 5:4 NLT).

- A 'never-ending share in His glory and honor' will be your reward after you have ministered lovingly, willingly, and eagerly.

Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who turn many to righteousness will shine like stars forever (Daniel 12:2-3 NLT).

- Those who 'turn many to righteousness' are considered 'wise' and will be given everlasting glory as their reward.

- Your eternal reward includes the crown of life (see Revelation 2:10), the crown of glory (see 1 Peter 5:2-4), the crown of rejoicing (see 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20), the crown of righteousness (see 2 Timothy 4:8), the imperishable crown (see 1 Corinthians 9:25), and the crown of gold (see Revelation 4:4).
- Another honor is that you will take part in judging the rebellious angels which are demons now and are kept for the final judgment (see 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).