

**Title: Judgment**

Text: Matt. 3:10-12

Date: August 14, 2011

Place: Decatur Church of God

Theme: Packed Bags

**Matthew 3:10-12**

*The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

*11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*

*12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

Why should we have packed bags? We must be ready because we do not know when our Lord will come for us. He may come for us before the end of time, or the Parousia, or the Second Coming. Even though we share the joys of Paradise with Christ, at the Second Coming we will still come before God in what we call the judgment.

\* Anthony Hoekema in *The Bible and The Future* writes "There is, to be sure, a sense in which people are judged already in this present life, by the response they make to Christ.

**John 3:18**

*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

"But the Bible also teaches that there will be a final judgment at the end of history, in which all men will appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

\* According to Paul Froese and Christopher Bader authors of the book *America's Four Gods*, Americans differ widely from one another on two key areas of belief about God: (1) the level of God's engagement in our world, and (2) the extent of God's judgment of evildoers.

In other words, is God actively and meticulously engaged in what happens in your life and in your world? Or is he distant, remote, uncaring? And secondly, does God judge wrongdoers in this life? Does God express wrath toward people and nations in this age? Or is God only kind, forgiving, and helpful to people in need?

Based on those two differences, the authors say that Americans divide into four major understandings of God.

First is the *Authoritative God*. The Authoritative God is very involved in the world to help people and does judge evildoers in this life. Even so, he is loving, and is seen as a Father figure. The author's research shows that 31 percent of Americans have this understanding of God.

Second is the *Benevolent God*. The Benevolent God is very involved in this world to help people but does not feel anger toward evildoers and does not judge anyone. Twenty-four percent of Americans have this understanding of God.

Third is the *Critical God*. The Critical God does not involve himself in the affairs of this world or its people, but he does take careful note of how people live and will judge them in the afterlife, holding them to account for evils done. Sixteen percent of Americans have this understanding of God.

Fourth is the *Distant God*. The Distant God is more a cosmic force or Higher Power than a person. This God created everything but is no longer engaged with the world and does not judge its inhabitants. Twenty-four percent of Americans have this understanding of God.

Five percent of Americans are atheists.

Concerning agnostics, the authors write: "We find that when pressed, individuals who first describe themselves as 'agnostic' are actually believers in a Distant God. For the most part, agnosticism is a reaction to conventional images of God that strike the believer as mistaken."

I have shown that the judgment is a coming event.

## I. What is the necessity for this judgment?

- A. Some think that a final judgment for Christians is unnecessary.
- a. This would be true if the final judgment were to determine man's future destiny.
  - b. However, the final judgment of all who have lived or are still living on the earth will already have been determined.

### *John 10:27-28*

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.*

- B. What will be the purpose of the final judgment?
- a. The outstanding purpose will be to display the sovereignty of God and the glory of God in the revelation of the final destiny of each person.
  - b. The judgment will reveal...
    - i. The faith each one had or did not have
    - ii. The deeds bad and good each one did
    - iii. The life each one lived
  - c. A second purpose is to reveal the degree of reward or degree of punishment, which each one will receive.
  - d. A third purpose is to execute God's judgment on each person. God will now assign to each person the place where he will spend eternity.
- C. When will the judgment take place?
- a. At the end of this present age.

**2 Peter 3:7**

*By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

- b. Peter implies that the new heaven and new earth will come into existence after the judgment.
- c. The execution of the final destinies of men.

**Matthew 13:40-43**

*"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. <sup>42</sup>They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*

- d. The judgment will take place at the second coming of Christ.

**Matthew 25:31-32**

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

## **II. What does the book of Revelation have to say about the judgment?**

**Rev. 11:18**

*The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great--and for destroying those who destroy the earth."*

- D. The Bible makes it clear that the judgment will be universal in nature.
- E. In John's vision on the Day of Judgment the wicked are punished at the same time as the righteous are rewarded.

\* There are those that teach that the righteous will be judged 1,007 years before the wicked. Notice that the order in Rev. 11:18 has the wicked judged first. Or we could go back to Matt. 13:30 where he writes...

### **Matthew 13:30**

*Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.' "*

John later writes a more descriptive account...

### **Rev. 20:11-15**

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup>The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. <sup>14</sup>Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup>If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

- a. The Book of Life was the factor that determined whether or not one was cast into the lake of fire.
- b. This lake of fire is the second death, which has no power over those who had had a part in the first resurrection (those who had been saved).

- F. Notice the way judgment is spoken of in the scriptures.
- It never reads of “days of judgment”.
  - The scripture always calls it “the day of judgment,” or simply “that day”.
  - Christians are to be rewarded on “that day.”
  - The unsaved are to be punished on “that day.”

### ***Jude 1:6***

*And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.*

- Paul describes a single day of wrath...

### ***Romans 2:5***

*But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.*

\*William Cox writes, “Yes, both the righteous and the wicked are woven by Scripture into the portrait of the judgment scene. The righteous are pictured as joyous, owing to their standing in Christ. The wicked are pictured, always and without exception, as being fearful, bitter, and filled with awe at what they have rejected.”

## **III. What, finally, is the significance of the Day of Judgment?**

\* Four observations can be made:

- The history of the world is not an endless succession of meaningless cycles, but a movement toward a goal.
- The Day of Judgment will reveal finally that salvation and eternal blessings will depend on one’s relationship to Jesus Christ.

7

3. The inability of people to escape the Day of Judgment underscores one's accountability for his or her life, and declares the genuineness of the moral struggle in the life of every person.

4. The Day of Judgment means the final triumph of God and his redemptive work in history.

**Conclusion:** The Day of Judgment will reveal, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that in the end the will of God will be perfectly done.

**Where will you stand on that day?**