

# ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



**A | D | V | A | N | C | E | D**  
**B | I | B | L | I | C | A | L      C | O | U | R | S | E**  
*Eternal Judgement*

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**I INTRODUCTION**

The doctrine of “*eternal judgement*” is the 6th and last of the six “*foundation*” doctrines of Hebrews 6:1-6. For the new believer it serves to give him insight regarding major events leading up to the final closing of world history and the ushering in of the New Heaven and the New Earth, referred to in Revelation 21.

HEBREWS 12:22-24

God the Father is presented in these verses as the supreme awe-inspiring “*Judge of all*.” He is the Sovereign Authority over all, heaven, earth, angels and men. He is the source of all justice and is absolutely righteous and just. (We have, however, also presented to us the “other side” of God in this passage – His “*Love*” in Jesus the Mediator, and the result – the “*Church*” the “*Redeemed*” and the forgiveness of God. These two aspects must always go together to form an understanding of our Creator).

PSALM 145:17

Not only is He the “*Judge of all*,” but God the Father is also absolutely “*Righteousness and Holy*,” and therefore is the Source from Whom all principles of justice and righteousness are drawn.

JOHN 5:22-30

Even though the Father is the supreme Judge of all, He has nevertheless committed “*all*” judgement to Jesus.

We also see in this passage that those who have Eternal Life will “*not come into Judgement*” but have already “*passed out of death into life!*” There is no evidence against them, all records are destroyed. God has forgotten their sins. (cf Isaiah 43:25 and this is too an ongoing process cf 1 John 1:9) It is also implied here that the “*judgement*” referred to is that which has to do with Eternal Life and Death, a matter already settled for the Redeemed.

## II THE FIRST JUDGEMENT – “THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST”

### 2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-10

There are three main judgement scenes presented in the New Testament. Each one is characterised by the kind of “*throne*” or “*seat*” upon which the Judge will sit. In this passage we have the first of the three, referred to as the “*Judgement Seat of Christ.*”

Even though the Redeemed do not have to be judged in terms of Eternal Life or Death, there is nevertheless a “*judgement*” for Christians. Paul is writing to Christians, and encourages them to please God, for “*we must all appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ.*” (cf Romans 14:10, 12) This judgement is different from that mentioned in John 5. In this case judgement is passed on our “*earthly life*” (“*deed in the body*”). Every act performed by the Redeemed, while here on earth falls into one or the other of two categories – either “*good or bad.*” There is no neutral category. Every act either brings glory to God being part of His Will, or is unacceptable to Him being part of rebellion.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11-15

Again a reference to the judging of the Redeemed. Notice: it is not the “*soul*” that is judged, but the work that is judged. Again the two categories – “*Gold, silver, precious stone*” and “*wood, hay and stubble.*” Note that it is “*quality*” that is emphasised here, not quantity. The “*testing,*” or “*judging*” will be by the “*fire*” of Jesus penetrating and consuming insight referred to as “*eyes as a flame of fire.*” (cf Revelation 1:14-15)

The purpose again of this judgement is for the giving of “*rewards*” verse 14, and not to determine the eternal destiny of the individual – “*he himself shall be saved*” verse 15. “*Loss*” will be experienced when we see the product of many years of hard work and sacrifice burned up, because it is not part of His will for us. Note the precious stones, gold and silver, will stand the test – and the burning up of the “*dead works*” cannot in any way detract from those jewels the Lord has produced through our lives. There will be many surprises on that day.

#### ◆ How will God judge?

Matthew 20:1-16, He will judge “*fairly*” – taking into consideration opportunities we are given, gifts and abilities bestowed upon us, the training we receive, and the revelation He gives us. God will not give us more or less than we are capable of using to the full. Each man and woman will receive a different amount according to his or her abilities, etc.

- We must be careful not to: -
  - wallow in past failures.
  - come into condemnation or feel inferior through comparing ourselves with others who have been given different abilities and opportunities.
- Philippians 3:13b & 14, “... *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*”
- Hebrews 4:12-13, He will judge the motives with which we serve. Everything is open to Him.
- John 14:21-24, He will judge us according to our obedience to His commands.
- 2 Peter 1:1-3, He will judge us according to the degree we have drawn from, and lived and served by, the resources He has provided for us – of power, the Divine nature and the promises (i.e. the Word of God).

◆ What will be the rewards?

There will be the general reward for every one of God’s servants who have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb.

- Luke 12:32, we will inherit the “*Kingdom*” in all its fullness.
- Revelation 2:7, we will eat of the Tree of Life.
- Revelation 2:11, we will be untouched by the “*Second Death.*”
- Revelation 2:17, we will receive “*Hidden Manna,*” a “*New Name on a White Stone.*”
- Revelation 2:26-28, we will receive the Authority and Responsibility to “*rule other Nations*” and also the “*Morning Star.*” (cf Revelation 3:21 & 20:6)
- Revelation 3:4-5, we will become “*Pillars*” in the Temple of God; God will not “*go out*” from it anymore, and we will have the Names of God, the New Jerusalem and Jesus’ New Name written on us.
- Revelation 21:4, tears, death, mourning, crying and pain will be gone.
- Revelation 22:3-4, we shall see His face and serve Him.
- 1 Corinthians 13:12, we shall know things fully and understand the “*reasons why.*”
- Ephesians 5:27, we shall be holy and blameless.

The Word does not tell us much about specific rewards that individuals will receive for the various degrees of faithfulness they have exercised here on earth. However, judging by what we know of the love, and resourcefulness of our Lord, we can anticipate that they will be wonderful, exciting and beyond anything we can imagine. Here are some of them mentioned for us: -

- James 1:12a, “*Crown of Life*” for enduring temptation

- 2 Timothy 4:8a, “*Crown of Righteousness*” for those who love His appearing.
- 1 Peter 5:1-4a, “*Crown of Glory*” for all shepherds that have tended His flock.

Furthermore we know that responsibilities and privileges of reigning and serving in Eternity will be linked to the degree of faithfulness to God’s will in this life. We will deal with this more fully in the Second Judgement.

### **III THE SECOND JUDGEMENT – “THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY”**

#### MATTHEW 25:31-46

The second and third “judgements” presented to us in the Scriptures are distinctly different from the first. In these two judgements men are not judged for the purpose of receiving rewards, but regarding their “*eternal destiny.*”

**In this passage we note the following: -**

- ◆ The Judge sits on the “*Throne of His Glory*” or “*His Glorious Throne.*” (Matthew 25:31)
- ◆ The historical point at which this judgement takes place is when “*the Son of Man comes in His Glory.*” (Matthew 25:31)
- ◆ It is “all” the “*Nations*” who are gathered before Him. The Greek word in this instance is “*ethne*” and can be translated “*gentiles*” or “*non Jews.*” There are those who believe that this distinction is important and that the Jews will in fact have been judged and purified by the persecutions and hardships of the tribulation (the methods God used in Old Testament times to judge His people as a nation.) This view is linked with Ezekiel 20:37-38 & Zechariah 12:9-10 & 13:8-9.
- ◆ The word “*nations*” implies that those judged will be people alive on earth at the time of the Lord’s coming, in contrast to the third judgement when it is specifically stated that the “*dead*” are judged.
- ◆ There will be “*born again*” believers amongst these referred to as “*sheep*” – who are invited to “*inherit the Kingdom.*” This whole scene is clearly a different one from that described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, where our Lord is not regarded as coming to earth but only as far as the “*air*”, and the “*clouds*” verse 17 and where no earthly judgement is mentioned for those believers, a fact supported by John 5:24.
- ◆ Those who fail to meet the Judge’s requirements are referred to as “*goats*” and are cast into the “*Eternal fire*” prepared for the “*devil and his angels,*” also referred to as “*Eternal punishment.*” (Matthew 25:41 & 46)

#### **IV THE THIRD JUDGEMENT – “THE GREAT WHITE THRONE”**

##### REVELATION 20:11-15

This judgement, like the previous two is characterised by the type of throne on which the Judge is seated.

##### **We note the following characteristics: -**

- ◆ It appears to be the last of the three judgements in time, as it is listed as the last great historical event before heaven and earth pass away. (Revelation 21:1)
- ◆ It is primarily preoccupied with the “*dead*,” in contrast to the (living) Nations, as in the second judgement, and the believers, from both dead and living, in the first judgement.
- ◆ The dead are judged from the “*books*” which are a record of their “*deeds*” but the final criteria is whether or not their names are written in the “*Book of Life*.”
- ◆ As in the second judgement, the sentences will have to do with the Eternal destiny of individuals, and the one sentence mentioned here, is that of being cast into the “*Lake of fire*.” It is also referred to as the Second Death.

The matter of assembling all the “last events” of History mentioned in the prophecies of the Bible into a chronological sequence is extremely difficult and complicated. The Bible does not give us such a clear sequence. Many great minds and men of God have written books, and drawn charts in an attempt to solve the problem. There are a number of different theories and views regarding “*last things*.” One must adopt a correct attitude to this subject, or else much confusion, argument and even division will result amongst the Lord’s people. Here are certain suggestions, which will help us: -

- ◆ Whatever view you may hold, do not become dogmatic about its accuracy; no one really knows all the details.
- ◆ Don’t get frustrated if you cannot put it all together, because –
  - the main message of the Second Coming is not so much how it all fits together, but rather be ready – it can take place at any time.
  - the best approach is to become familiar with all the main events clearly prophesied in the Word of God. Then we can amuse ourselves with putting them together like a child would his “building blocks.”

# THE THREE JUDGEMENTS

