



The Final Judgment

There will be a final judgment in which those who died without knowing Christ as Savior will be raised back to life to stand before God and judged.

If their name is not found written in the Book of Life, they will be forever separated from God's presence and thrown into a *lake of fire*, where they will suffer eternally with Satan, his angels, and the "beast" and the false prophet described in the Book of Revelation. Scripture calls this the *second death*.¹

In *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*, W.W. Menzies writes:

The Great White Throne Judgment makes a final disposition of the unsaved. The epoch between eternity past and eternity future, this brief interlude called time, is a period of probation.

¹ "The Final Judgment," The Assemblies of God, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths#15> (Accessed August 30, 2017).

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There is opportunity for choice in this fleeting season, but once a settled character has been achieved in this world, and one passes out into the world beyond, there is no more opportunity for change.

The decisions in this life are irreversible; they are utterly crucial, since the destiny of the individual is for eternity. No, the Scriptures do not teach the annihilation of the wicked, nor a mindless state of Nirvana, as the Buddhists teach, nor the opportunity for a second chance after death.

This is why it is urgent that our lives be geared to the strategic, utterly important task of evangelism, of being ambassadors for Christ, seeking to win men and women to Him. Witnessing is the chief task of the Christian.

Those we meet day by day are never-dying souls who have an eternal destiny at stake. And apart from the salvation provided in Jesus Christ, there is no hope for the unregenerate.²

² Menzies, W. W. (1993). [Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective](#). (S. M. Horton, Ed.) (pp. 250–251). Springfield, MO: Logion Press.

COMMENT: This doctrine is the one which unbelievers reject most often and most vigorously. Why? Because no one enjoys facing the painful consequences of their actions, so we humans often choose to completely reject that a Godly standard even exists.

But we can choose to accept God's standard, even though we may, at times, not understand it. As a demonstration of love, God has built into the human experience the freedom and agency for the individual to **choose**.

“While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions.”

- Stephen R. Covey

Some, however, are slow to learn those lessons. Many, it seems, must “learn the hard way” through suffering the consequences of their actions.

An illustration: Little Emily, the minister's daughter, ran into the house crying as though her heart would break.

"What's wrong, dear?" asked her father.

"My dolly, my dolly! Billy broke it!" she sobbed.

"How did he break it, Emily?" her father asked.

She replied, "I hit him over the head with it."

What do you suppose the father's judgement regarding that situation was?

The Bible is very clear on this matter...there will BE a FINAL JUDGMENT

Some people want to WISH IT AWAY. Some choose to ignore it. Let's look at the biblical teaching surrounding the Final Judgment.

The starting point for the Bible's FINAL JUDGMENT is at the END of the Millennium.

Here is the setup/timeline:

1. For seven years the world will experience the horror of satanic dominion: war, pestilence, persecution and unabated demonic aggression.

2. The Lord will return with His saints and conquer the Anti-Christ and Satan in the Battle of Armageddon. Then Satan will be **bound and cast** into the bottomless pit.
3. The Lord will set up His Kingdom and rule for 1,one thousand years bringing, prosperity and peace. (see *What We Believe*, lesson 14).

At that time, there will be a judgment of the **nations**, where peoples and nations will be judged and either honored or punished based on their collective actions, practices, and attitudes toward God and His chosen people over the centuries.

4. After the Millennium, **Satan** will be released and allowed to lead some people in rebellion against the God.
5. Satan will be defeated and all those who chose allegiance to him will be defeated.

Revelation 20:7–9 (ESV) ⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

6. Then, the dead will be resurrected and their works will be judged in what we call the Great White Throne Judgment.

- a. The unbelieving, wicked, unrighteous, unrepentant, etc. will be raised from the dead to stand before God.

John 5:28–29 (ESV) ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Isaiah 26:19–21 (ESV) ¹⁹ Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and

sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. ²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. ²¹ For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it and will no longer cover its slain.

Daniel 12:2 (ESV) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

b. Every person receives a final judgment from God

Revelation 20:11–13 (ESV) ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

- c. Satan and all those who rejected Christ and whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the **Lake of Fire.**

Revelation 20:14–15 (ESV) ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Matthew 25:46 (ESV) And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- d. Finally, the anti-Christ, the false prophet, Satan, and every demonic being who have tormented mankind will be destroyed once and for all.

2 Thessalonians 2:8–9 (ESV) ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,

Revelation 19:20 (ESV) And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had

received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

Revelation 20:10 (ESV) and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

A look at the “Lake of Fire”

Mark 9:43–48 (ESV) ⁴³ And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’

Isaiah 66:24 (ESV) “And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

Who will be cast into the Lake of Fire?

Revelation 21:8 (ESV) But as for the **cowardly**, the **faithless**, the **detestable**, as for **murderers**, the **sexually immoral**, **sorcerers**, **idolaters**, and all **liars**, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

- 1. The cowardly:** that is, those who did not decide to follow Christ.
- 2. The faithless:** those who did not believe in His existence, Lordship, or in His Messiah, Jesus.

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

3. Murderers: Those who take life and those who SUPPORT the unjust and willful taking of a life (i.e. abortion, government-sanctioned or culturally approved murder of others for ungodly reasons).

4. The detestable: The King James Version (KJV) uses the word abomination...which is used primarily in two types of cases:
1) anybody who desecrates what is holy, or 2) those who practice homosexuality in any of its forms.

Example: Belshazzar in Daniel 5

Example: The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis

5. Sexual Sins: fornication (any sexual contact outside of marriage), adultery, pornographic indulgence, etc.

6. Sorcerers: This means anyone voluntarily and eagerly opening up to the demonic world by engaging in occult practices, witchcraft, divination, speaking to the dead, telling fortunes, etc.

7. Worship False Gods: anyone who subscribes to faith systems or beliefs substituting the One True God in any way via idols, spirits, or other “gods.”

It also includes those who willfully choose religions that **reject Jesus** as the Messiah and the only Way by which people can be saved.

8. Liars: those who practice **deception** for personal gain

A Look at Hell

You cannot address the biblical principle of the final judgement without addressing the truth about hell.

Example: the judgement of a judge and/or jury in a court of law is not actual, real, or meaningful without a prison or punishment waiting for those found to be guilty.

1. The word *hell* comes from the word *gehenna* and refers to a place of eternal torment and punishment

- a. Matthew 25:41 says it was originally prepared for the devil and his demon followers.
- b. However, hell is also reserved for the ungodly (see **Mark 9:43, 48**) those who do not accept Christ's forgiveness and give their hearts to Him.

- c. The term for hell should not be confused with the Greek, *hades*, or Hebrew, *sheol*, which is the general place of the dead and temporary punishment prior to final judgment for the unrighteous (see **Luke 16:19-31**).
- d. The word for hell originated with the name of a valley on the southern perimeter of Jerusalem: the Valley of Hinnon (Hebrews *ge'hinnom*). The valley served as the city's garbage dump and was strongly associated with smoldering fire.
- e. Because some people in the Old Testament had sacrificed their children there to the false god, Molech, King Josiah declared it to be unclean.
- f. Jesus used it as a name for the place of eternal punishment, and He makes it a name equal with the final judgment of "the lake of fire" (see **Revelation 20:11-15**).
- g. The Bible says that one's existence does not end at physical death. It continues forever, either in the presence of God or in a place of eternal punishment.

Comment: Note the following about the condition of those who are spiritually lost and bound for hell:

2. Jesus taught about a place of eternal punishment for those who reject God and are condemned to spend eternity separated from Him

(see Matthew 5:22, 29-30; Matthew 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 10:15; 12:5).

- a. This place is characterized by the terrifying reality of continuous punishment.
- b. It is described as:
 - i. a "fire that never goes out" (Mark 9:43)
 - ii. "eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41)
 - iii. a place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:42, 50)
 - iv. total captivity and darkness (Matthew 22:13)

v. torment, agony and separation from heaven (Luke 16:23).

3. The teaching of the New Testament books on hell are the same.

The early church pioneers and NT writers speak of a coming judgment by which God will take **vengeance** on those who reject and disobey His message (**2 Thessalonians 1:5-9**). They also wrote about hell as a place for:

- a. separation from the presence of the lord (2Th 1:9)
- b. the destruction of God's enemies (Philippians 3:18-19; see also Romans 9:22; Galatians 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 10:27; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:7; Revelation 14:10; 19:20; 20:10, 14).

4. The Bible teaches that judgment on the wicked is **certain**. Hell is associated with rejection, condemnation, suffering and separation from God forever.

This doctrine is hard for some to accept, even Christians, and we all have questions about it. Yet, God's Word is the **final authority** on these matters. We must trust God's justice.

5. We must always keep in mind that God sent his Son to die so that no one would perish spiritually and be lost forever (John 3:16).

Comment: Atheists frequently ask:

“How can a loving God send people to Hell just for not believing in Him?”

6. It is not God's **desire** to send anyone to hell (2 Peter 3:9). Those who enter hell do so of their own choosing by resisting the opportunity for salvation provided by God (Romans 1:16-2:10).

The fact and reality of hell should cause all of God's people to hate sin intensely, to work continually for the salvation of people who do not yet know Christ and to warn everyone of God's future judgment on those who reject and rebel against Him.

Statement to think on: *The problem is that at the core of “unbelief” is rebellion; and God can NOT allow rebellion to exist in His Kingdom.*

The Point? If there is no final judgment, then there is no justice for those who have suffered because of sin. For example:

- the holocaust
- the great purges of Stalin and Mao
- those who suffer because of other's greed

7. What about those who've never heard the gospel?

If we take the entire counsel of God's Word, then we can surmise the following:

- a. There is enough evidence of God's existence and presence in **creation** to testify on His behalf that we ALL have SOME measure of **responsibility** toward Him.
- b. God **owes** nothing to any man or woman. So, ultimately, any judgment He makes is just because HE IS CREATOR.
- c. However, God is also a God of Mercy and His Word teaches that He will judge each person according to their **knowledge**. How that actually shakes out is left to God, who will judge.
- d. But for those of us in the family of God, the Bible also teaches, "to whom much is given, much is **required**."

We have no excuse!

GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What happens to the unrepentant and/or unbelieving person at death?
2. How do you know heaven is real?
3. Who is judged at the final judgement? What happens next?
4. Who is judged at the Great White Throne judgment? What happens next?
5. Why does God reveal the coming judgments to the world in Scripture?

6. In your words, why do you think many people vigorously resist the truth that God is the ultimate and final judge of all humankind?

7. Take a moment to practice this conversation with another believer. One of you pretend to be the Christian witness who explains the truths about God as the final Judge, and how a person can escape eternity in hell through Jesus.

The other person pretends to be the skeptic or the unbeliever who resists the truth. How do you reply?

Next, switch places and have the conversation from the other perspective.

Conclude the exercise by praying for Jesus to reveal Himself to unbelieving people in your community so they can come to repentance.