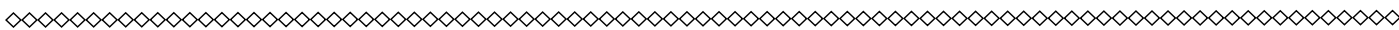




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Sermon Brief
Text: Rev. 20:7-15
Title: Judgment Day Is Coming
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Seeking to faith-
fully proclaim
the whole coun-
cil of God in
scripture!



INTRODUCTION

The eternal destinies of Heaven and Hell that we have examined the past two Sundays are determined by God on the Day of Judgment. This event comes as a part of the end time series of actions that will bring human history to an end, and will usher in the eternal order of things. This day will be the most awesome day of human history with an unbelievable amount of fear and anxiety paralyzing folks as they come before Almighty God to be sentenced to their eternal destiny.

As is true with the biblical picture of both Heaven and Hell the final judgment of humanity is presented in the pages of the New Testament from a variety of angles with different aspects emphasized. The resulting picture is that of a kaleidoscope with many facets shining through.

One of the key biblical texts comes in Rev. 20:7-15, and pictures the final judgment in terms of God sitting on a 'great white throne' from which all are judged:

7 When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, in order to gather them for battle; they are as numerous as the sands of the sea. 9 They marched up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from heaven and consumed them. 10 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.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.¹

The picture painted by the apostle John here of **that day is awesome**. All of the powers opposing God, both human and supernatural, are thrown into the lake of fire as the sentence for their rebellion. Earlier in his revelation, John painted a picture of human fear of that approaching day (Rev. 6:12-17):

12 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. 14 The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

¹GNT: 20.7 Καὶ ὅταν τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη, λυθήσεται ὁ Σατανᾶς ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς αὐτοῦ 20.8 καὶ ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν ταῖς τέσσαρσιν γωνίαις τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γὼγ καὶ Μαγὼγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον, ὧν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης. 20.9 καὶ ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐκύκλευσαν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἡγαπημένην, καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς. 20.10 καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός καὶ θείου ὅπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

20.11 Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἐφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς. 20.12 καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκρούς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικρούς, ἐστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου. καὶ βιβλία ἠνοιχθησαν, καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. 20.13 καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκρούς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκρούς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. 20.14 καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δευτέρος ἐστίν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. 20.15 καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός.

The wicked of this world will be overwhelmed by fear and terror when the day of judgment arrives. They will have a clear sense of their impending doom. The prospects of eternal damnation will strike sheer terror in them.

What will this day of final judgment be like?

Interestingly, the writers of the New Testament touch on many, many aspects of this day. And in order to create a clearer understanding, they borrow language and images from the Old Testament. In particular two images are prominent: the Day of the Lord and the Wrath of God. In the proclamation of the prophets from the time of Amos in the eighth century onward these two images were central to the pronouncement of God's impending judgment upon the people of Israel. For Amos and Hosea, the Day of the Lord projected the coming of God's wrath upon the northern kingdom as God's punishment of the people for their rebellion against Him. And this was realized in 722 BCE when the Assyrians overran the northern kingdom and completely destroyed it. The Israelites of the northern kingdom never again functioned as a nation. The outpouring of God's wrath upon them was total and permanent. Beginning with Isaiah and Micah almost half a century later, these prophets and many others over the next century plus used the same terminology of the Day of the Lord and the Wrath of God to warn the Israelites of the southern kingdom of Judah of the impending destruction of this kingdom along with Jerusalem. And their warnings came to pass in the invasion of the Babylonians beginning in 604 BCE and was completed in 582 BCE with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. A remnant of survivors were carried to Babylon as slaves. From this heritage the New Testament writers came to understand that now the Day of the Lord² and the Wrath of God³ would apply to the course of events at the close of human history in connection with the Second Coming of Christ to this earth. Thus many of the details from the Old Testament prophets are picked up and re-applied to this future event. But in the deeper understanding of what would happen at the end of time, many more aspects are presented in addition to these core concepts.

How can we grasp the significance of final judgment?

I want to paint a broad picture of four foundational concepts related to the final judgment of humanity by God. To be clear, this is summary in nature and touches on the high points. A detailed study would require much greater time than is possible in a single sermon. The four concepts are these: 1. Judgment will come; 2. All will be judged; 3. Judgment will be thorough; 4. Christ will be the judge.

BODY

I. Judgment will come.

We live in a day when the idea of a final judgment by God is unpopular and unacceptable to a large number of people. Our morally rotten world that seeks pleasure above everything else is unwilling to face up to its own sickness morally and spiritually. When the idea of God comes up on conversation, the picture painted is mostly of a phantasy deity of who a benevolent old 'grandfather' somewhere up there in the sky who tolerates and overlooks our rottenness because after all, isn't he a god of love?

Such a false idea of God amounts to spiritual suicide for millions of people in our world. The God of Abraham is a God who holds people strictly accountable for their actions. Final judgment is a natural implication of the holiness and righteousness of Almighty God. God could not be God and tolerate the moral rottenness of sinful humanity. From the earliest times of the Old Testament, the picture of God as pure holiness is clear, and with it came the understanding that impurity absolutely cannot stand in the presence of a holy God. The Israelite people discovered this through the revelation that God provided through Moses and the prophets. They also discovered it out of their experience with the punishments of God poured out on them and on others during the Exodus. The destruction of both the northern and southern kingdoms toward the end of the Old Testament era was proclaimed by the prophets as the wrath of God upon the Israelites for their rebellion

²Expression, often in the context of future events, which refers to the time when God will intervene decisively for judgment and/or salvation. Various formulated as the "day of the Lord" (Amos 5:18), the "day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Col 1:8 ; cf. 2 Col 1:14), the "day of God" (2 Peter 3:12 ; Rev 16:14), or "the last day(s)," the expression highlights the unmistakable appearance of God. God will make visible his rule of righteousness by calling for an accounting by the nations as well as individuals, dispensing punishment for some and ushering in salvation for others." ["Day of the Lord, God, Christ, the," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online]

³"The wrath of God that the New Testament speaks of is to be expressed in judgments on a wicked, rebellious covenant people (Matt 3:7 ; Luke 3:7), and upon those who refuse to believe in and accept Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world (John 3:36). Paul repeatedly warns about the wrath of God (Rom 1:18 ; 2:5), from which people are to be saved (Rom 5:9). All people are under wrath (Eph 2:3), and the only way to escape this wrath, which is sure to be in full and fierce force in the judgment day, is to believe in Jesus Christ who bore the curse of the covenant and endured the wrath of God when he was crucified. This same Christ will execute divine wrath and vengeance to its fullest degree in judgment day (Rev 6:16-17)." ["Wrath of God," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online]

against Him and His demands upon their lives. Then Jesus and the apostles at the beginning of Christianity continue this emphasis, and actually heighten the emphasis upon it.

Scorn at the idea.

But many people in the first Christian century reflect much of the modern attitude of skepticism about the final judgment of God. Peter speaks of this in 2 Peter 3:3-9.

2 Peter 3:3-9.

3 First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!" 5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless. 8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

Peter reminds us clearly that the delay of the Day of the Lord doesn't represent failure to carry out His promises. Not at all! Just the opposite, the delay is an expression of the patience of God in order to give more the opportunity to come to God in repentance from their sinfulness. But make no mistake! The delay of the coming of that day doesn't signal that it won't happen. It will take place without any question. And it will happen in God's own timing, not when we want it to.

For people to scorn or disbelieve will not alter the reality of the coming final judgment at all. Our God is in control and will set the agenda by His plan irregardless of human reaction.

Judgment of all humanity:

The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that absolutely all of humanity will stand before Almighty God in final judgment. No exceptions! No loopholes! Everyone of us here today will stand before God to be judged and sentenced. Here the words of Jesus and the apostles!

Jude 14,15.

14 It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Jude even quotes an apocryphal document source to underscore the judgment of God upon the wicked.

Rom. 2:4-6.

3 Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will repay according to each one's deeds: 7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

Paul responds to Jewish religious elitism by reminding his Jewish readers that they will come under the scrutiny of God just the same as their Gentile neighbors. Their rebellion against God in rejecting Christ only 'piles up' the wrath of God to be unleashed upon them at the day of judgment.

Matt. 25:31-32.

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and

the goats at the left.

Jesus made it clear that He will play a central role in the final judgment of all humanity. That day will be a separating out of the good from the evil.

Acts 17:30-31.

30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Paul didn't hesitate to proclaim the coming judgment of God upon all people through Jesus Christ. The proof of this future judgment is the resurrection of Christ. This message he gave to the Greek philosophers at the Areopagus in Athens Greece (17:22).

II. All Will Be Judged.

Without question the judgment of God will cover everyone and everything. This means that believers will stand before God in judgment. All of the created order will also come under divine judgment and purging. And especially all those in wickedness and sin will face the wrath of God upon their rebellious lives.

Judgment related to Second Coming.

Jude 14-15

14 It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Jude links the coming judgment to the second coming of Christ. When Christ returns final judgment will follow.

Major question: one general judgment, or judgment with phases.

One of the questions raised by a careful study of the New Testament scriptures about final judgment is how will it take place? As a single day event? Or as a series of events, all labeled judgment? The Gospels and the General Letters will emphasize final judgment as one general judgment of all humanity. But the Book of Revelation and the letters of Paul will see final judgment as a series of judgments in phases. These two pictures aren't necessary contradicting one another, but instead the gospel writers and the apostles connected to the General Letters chose to stress the broader concept of final judgment under a single label. Paul, however, touches on various aspects of final judgment as it applies to the saved, to creation, and to the lost. The language of the New Testament at this point isn't intended to give us some kind of 'road map' or 'chronology' of end time events. Modern western tendencies has been inclined to construct such a road map, but such has no real basis in scripture. And often these projections distort the concept as set forth in scripture.

Phases of Judgment:

1. Of the saved.

Clearly all believers in Christ will come before final judgment. 2 Corinthians and Romans, for example, make this point very plain.

2 Cor. 5:9-11

9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Unquestionably Paul is speaking to believers here with the 'us' reference. Every one of us today as Christians will stand before God for an intense scrutiny of our lives as believers in Jesus Christ. Not a single one of us will escape this encounter with God. Here Paul signals that believers will be either blessed for a life of faithful service. Or else they will be punished by God for a life of shallow service that has little or no validity. Paul doesn't define the details of the "recompense" but he doesn't need to do so. The reality of this coming day of judgment should motivate all to get their act together in genuine service to God through Christ. Failure to do so could very well signal the absence of saving faith to begin with. At best, a superficial commitment will be exposed on that day in the most humiliating manner imaginable to such a person.

Rom. 14:10-12

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

Paul makes the point abundantly clear to the Romans with his declaration, “we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.” “We all” is emphatic and focuses particular attention on believers and their appearance before God in final judgment.

1 Cor. 3:11-15

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — 13 the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. 14 If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians he spells out some of the particulars in the judgment of believers. This will not be a judgment to determine whether we spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. Instead, it will be to scrutinize our faithfulness in serving Christ as a believer. And the examination will be intense. Paul speaks of it as a judgment by fire; notice verse 13. Some will suffer deep embarrassment and humiliation on that day because a life of supposed service to Christ crumbles to ashes under God’s testing. Their religious works haven’t been done correctly, and the phoniness and shallowness of their service will be publicly exposed for all to see. They will just barely make it into Heaven, and with a record of a wasted life of opportunities to have served Christ faithfully and genuinely before undergoing this test.

2. Of creation.

One of the more interesting aspects of final judgment is that which is applied to creation itself. Two scripture passages specifically indicate that the created world will undergo divine judgment as well. Both Peter and Paul make this claim. The precise nature of this is not made clear, but some understanding of the broad strokes of final judgment are set forth. Note the declarations of Peter, and then of Paul.

2 Pet. 3:10-13

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. 11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Clearly Peter asserts the control of God over creation. In the corruption of the world by human sinfulness divine judgment upon the created world will mean that “the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed”; “the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire”; “we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.”⁴ What does this mean? No one can say precisely. Clearly the world that God created has been severely corrupted by human sinfulness and will undergo a severe purging and purification process to eliminate all vestiges of sin and corruption. This follows on the first destruction of the world by the flood during Noah’s time. Out of this final destruction will emerge ‘new heavens and a new earth’ that will be free from corruption by unredeemed humanity. This will be a part of the eternal order to things.⁵ The outcome of this purging will be a new creation where righteousness will exist without the pres-

⁴Cf. also Rev. 21:1 (NRSV): “1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”

⁵“καινοὺς δὲ οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ προσδοκῶμεν, “but according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth.” The hope for a new heaven and a new earth is based on Isa 65:17; 66:22, which must be the “promise” to which this v refers, and is found throughout Jewish apocalyptic (*Jub.* 1:29; *1 Enoch* 45:4–5; 72:1; 91:16; *Sib. Or.* 5:212; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 32:6; 44:12; 57:2; 4 Ezra 7:75; *Bib. Ant.* 3:10; Pseudo-Sophocles, *ap. Clem. Alex.*, *Strom.* 5.14.122.1; *Apoc. El.* 3:98) and was taken up in early Christianity (Matt 19:28; Rom 8:21; Rev 21:1). The cosmic dissolution described in vv 10, 12, was a return to the primeval chaos, as in the Flood (3:6), so that a new creation may emerge (cf. 4 Ezra 7:30–31). Such passages emphasize the radical discontinuity between the old and the new, but it is nevertheless clear that they intend to describe a renewal, not an abolition, of creation (cf. *1 Enoch*

ence of sin and corruption.

Rom. 8:19-22

19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now;

The apostle Paul affirms a similar objective of God in purging the created order of all corruption and sinful impact. In personifying creation Paul speaks of it as groaning like an expectant mother giving birth, as it looks forward to the day of the redemption of the children of God.

Regardless of the possible cosmological implications of these verses, what is clear in these texts is that God will prepare a place for His people to dwell with Him eternally in complete freedom from the influence of corruption and sin.

3. Of evil.

Most always the concept of last judgment focuses on the wicked and God's banishing of them into eternal damnation in Hell. The New Testament is very clear that two groups of individuals will spend eternity in unending torments: the devil and his angels, and those who have rejected Jesus Christ as their Savior. Judgment day will mean the divine sentencing of these into eternal punishment and suffering.

Rev. 20:7-15

Satan destroyed into Hell, vv. 9-10

9 They marched up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from heaven and consumed them. 10 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.

John's picture of Hell in our text clearly asserts that the devil and his host will spend eternity in the lake of fire called Hell. And they, along with the others occupying that place, will experience unending torments for all eternity.

Unbelievers stand in judgment, vv. 11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The second group of individuals to suffer final judgment banishment to Hell will be all people whose name is not found in the 'book of life.' Their life will be thoroughly examined and according to the way they have lived, their fate will be one of the varying degrees of torments in eternal damnation.

Judged according to their relationship to Christ.

Mat. 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' 23 Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'

54:4-5; Rom 8:21).

ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ, "in which righteousness is at home." "Righteousness" is personified, as in Isa 32:16 (LXX: δικαιοσύνη ἐν τῷ Καρμὴλῳ κατοικήσει, "righteousness will dwell in Carmel"). The only feature of the new world which the writer considers relevant is that it will be a world in which God's will will be done. In this he is in the mainstream of Jewish and Christian eschatology. For the righteousness of the new age, cf. Isa 9:7; 11:4-5; *Pss. Sol.* 17:40; *1 Enoch* 5:8-9; 10:16, 20-21; 91:17; *2 Enoch* 65:8; 4 Ezra 7:114; Rom 14:17." [Richard J. Bauckham, vol. 50, *Word Biblical Commentary : 2 Peter, Jude*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 326.]

Jesus makes it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that entering in the Kingdom of Heaven, i.e., Heaven, will be predicated upon “doing the will of my Father in heaven.” This divine will has been spelled out in detail through the Sermon on the Mount, and is based upon a life of obedience growing out of commitment to Jesus as Savior and Lord. Doing religious deeds themselves is worthless. Only genuine commitment to Christ exemplified in a pattern of obedient discipleship will enable one to make it into Heaven on the day of final Judgment.

Rev. 21:8

8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

Who are those without faith in Jesus. Revelation 21:8 provides a partial insight with the basic declaration that the wicked are those who will spend eternity in Hell.

III. Judgment will be thorough.

By what principles will God judge humanity on that day? The New Testament sets forth at least foundational principles that will be used to judge all of us, whether believers or unbelievers. All these underscore the unimaginable thoroughness of Judgment Day. Absolutely nothing will escape God’s notice; absolutely nothing will not be exposed openly before God and all the hosts of Heaven in that judgment.

1. According to what each had done.

How we have lived our lives in relationship to God will be foundational. Both Paul and Jesus make this point very clear.

Rom. 2:6, 11

6 For he will repay according to each one’s deeds: 7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

Mat. 16:27

27 For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.

Living a life in obedience to God through commitment to Jesus Christ is critical. Apart from this one has absolutely no hope of eternal life with God what so ever.

2. Deals with one’s secrets.

Rom. 2:16

16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

That day will expose all the secrets of humanity. The things people have hidden from others in this world will be exposed openly for what they are -- a sham and a fraud. In this world we can’t always see who people really are. But on that day the true nature and character of every person will come to light and become know to all. No one will be able to hide anything on that day.

3. Every idle word.

Matt. 12:36

36 I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

The thoroughness of God’s judgment will extend down to every empty, worthless word that we have ever spoken through our entire life time.

4. Measured by the standard of Christ.

Rom. 2:16

16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret

thoughts of all.

Paul makes the point clear that the standard by which we will be measured is the perfect life of Jesus Christ. He has shown all humanity how to truly live before God.

We must never overlook the reality of how exacting God's judgment of our lives will be. To do so is to set up a personal disaster on that day.

IV. Christ will be the judge.

John 5:22

22 The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son,

The Bible makes it clear that God is in control of that Day, but the person we will face as our Judge on that day is Jesus. He came to save us in the first coming. In His second coming He comes as Judge and will determine our eternal destiny.

CONCLUSION

Judgment Day! This will be the most significant day of human history. We will discover on that day our eternal destiny. We will undergo the most total scrutiny of our life imaginable. For many it will be a day of horrible fear and anxiety. No one will want to go through it; but no one will be able to escape it.

Are you ready for judgment day? There's only one way to get ready. Give your life to Jesus and begin a life long pattern of obedient service to Him. Without making such a commitment, your destiny that day will be sealed forever in eternal damnation.