

THE JUDGEMENT OF BELIEVERS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE JUDGEMENT OF UNBELIEVERS

INTRODUCTION

You might have thought that only *unbelievers* will be judged at the end of time. *The Great White Throne Judgment* which is *The Final Judgment*, is *the condemnation of the nonbeliever* who has rejected salvation in Christ and therefore driven forever from God's presence. The Bible however teaches that believers are also judged for the works they have done *after* their salvation. This is called the *Bema Seat Judgement* or the *Judgement Seat of Christ*.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is distinctly different from *The Great White Throne Judgment*. Believers will be judged for their works done **AFTER** their salvation, not **FOR** salvation. This will take place **AFTER** the Rapture of the Church. *The Final Judgment* of the wicked or *The Great White Throne Judgement* is much later. *Subsequent* to the Rapture of the Church and *after* a period of Great Tribulation, Jesus will return to earth. He will reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years, known as *The Millennial Reign of Christ*. At the end of that reign there will be a final rebellion at *Armageddon*. Then those who have rejected Christ will be judged and cast into the lake of fire with Satan and all the wicked angels,

Rev. 20:11-15

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. 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.*

THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

- **Believers Will Judged for Their Works**

When the Bible speaks of *The Judgement Seat of Christ* (also called *The Bema Seat*), it is not like a school or university test to see whether we pass or fail. That judgment has already taken place – Christ took the judgement/condemnation on the Cross when He paid for our sins. When a sinner turns to Christ in true repentance for his sins and trusts in the finished work of Christ on Calvary for full and free salvation, that judgement is completely over.

Jn. 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. *He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

2 Cor. 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The judgement of God's wrath and condemnation was taken on Himself by the Lord Jesus Christ when He willingly offered Himself up on behalf of the sinner. *Christ took the condemnation and paid the price* to save those who believe in Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ has nothing to do with our *salvation from sin*; that was settled in the death of Christ on our behalf. All our sins are forgiven, and there is now *no condemnation* for those who trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Rom. 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The Bema Seat Judgement is the Judgement, not for condemnation to hell. It is for rewards or the loss of rewards, for works done **AFTER** salvation. One important verse, often put on the back burner of Christian thinking is Eph. 2:10 which is closely related to the verses preceding it that teach salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ

alone.

Eph. 2:10

*For we are his **workmanship**, **created** in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared **beforehand**, **that we should walk in them**.*

There is much to be culled from this verse. *We are His **workmanship*** clearly indicates that God deliberately made us for usefulness and not as a decoration piece. That God formed us is repeated in the use of another specific word – **created** – in this verse. The purpose is stated in no uncertain terms. God created us **for good works**. This is why God regenerated us and put us **in Christ Jesus**. Notice that the verse carefully hammers the message of purpose with the required mandate that **we must do** the good works for which God created and saved us in Christ Jesus – **that we should walk in them**. Importantly, the text tells us that, just as much as our salvation was planned from before the foundation of the world, so also the good works God requires us to do were planned **beforehand**! With this clear we then must not be surprised but need to be expectantly busy doing the good works God foreordained for us to do. He will require an account of these good works.

- **Unbelievers Will be Judged Because They Rejected Christ**

We look now, in some detail, at the *Judgement of Unbelievers* which is known as *The Great White Throne Judgment*.

All those who have rejected Christ will be judged and condemned to eternal hell at the *Great White Throne Judgment*. They are raised from the dead for this final judgment (see Rev. 20:13 quoted in our INTRODUCTION above). AFTER the thousand years of Christ's peaceful reign on the earth Satan leads the rebellious world in a final war against Almighty God and are defeated. Satan, who is the devil, is thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and false prophet already are. They will be there forever and ever.

Rev. 20:7-10

*⁷And **when the thousand years are ended**, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and 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. ⁹And 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, 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.***

The rest of that passage of Rev. 20 records the fact that all **unbelievers** too will be thrown in that same lake of fire to be tormented there forever.

Matthew's Gospel also speaks of this Final Judgement of **unbelievers**. There seems to be some *distinct differences* in the Rev. 20:11-15 passage and the Mt. 25:31-46 passage in terms of the care provided or not provided to the least of Jesus' brethren. Some commentators think that the Matthew passage refers specifically and particularly to those who lived and either responded to Christ (and cared for Israel) or rejected Christ (and tormented Israel) during the 7-years of Great Tribulation. They place the *Judgement* taught in the Matthew passage AFTER the Tribulation and the *Judgement* taught in the Revelation passage AFTER the Millennial Reign of Christ. However, both Judgements lead to the lake of fire and eternal condemnation.

Mt. 25:31-46

*³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then **he will sit on his glorious throne**. ³²**Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.** ³³**And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.** ³⁴**Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.** ³⁵**For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.** ³⁷**Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹And when did we see***

you sick or in prison and visit you?'⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'⁴¹ "Then *he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'*⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?'⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'⁴⁶ And *these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*"

Believers may be greatly encouraged to know that they will be involved in some way in this Final Judgement of unbelievers, and even the wicked angels. That is the reason not to go to court against fellow believers because we should be competent to sort things justly with each other.

1 Cor. 6:1-3

¹When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? ²Or *do you not know that the saints will judge the world?* And *if the world is to be judged by you*, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³*Do you not know that we are to judge angels?* How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

THE BEAST, ANTI-CHRIST, SATAN AND HIS ANGELS

The lake of fire was specifically and especially prepared and meant for Satan and his angels who had rebelled and been thrown out of heaven. Sadly, those who reject Christ share place with these innately evil creatures.

Mt. 25:41

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, *into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Jude 1:6

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, *he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day ...*

The Anti-Christ and the Beast find mention in several eschatological and prophetic passages Old and New Testament Books of the Bible. It is not part of our study so I to get more extensive information of these terrible men and creatures. God powerfully and permanently defeats them and sends them to hell.

The most important take away I want to leave with you is this. Those who reject Christ and His free gift of eternal salvation will be condemned to eternal hell forever. This includes our closest loved ones and though we need to be concerned for all what shall it profit if we work for the salvation of all but have loved ones in our own families who we do not win to Christ

CONCLUSION

This being so it should motivate and spur us to live out and share the Gospel with our loved ones and all those we meet and interact with regularly.