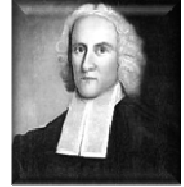


What Does that Fearful Word “Judgment” Really Mean?

Introduction

This word, “judgment,” has power to move congregations. In the early history of America, even before the Declaration of Independence in 1776, one of the most powerful preachers to touch our soil was Jonathan Edwards (October 5, 1703 – March 22, 1758). He helped shape the first great “spiritual awakening” in early America. A Congregationalist Protestant, he wrote and preached.



- Like John the Baptist, he gave the admonition: “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.”
- Of his many books, the most fearful and moving was: *“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”*
- God was ready to pour out His wrath. The message of “grace” was missing – “listen-up or else you will burn forever!”

Strong texts that many “judgment oriented” preachers used/use:

*“And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and **not that thy whole body should be cast into hell**” (Matthew 5:30).*

*“And **the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name**” (Revelation 14:11).*

*“And again they said, **Alleluia**. [the saints praising God] **And her smoke rose up for ever and ever**” (Revelation 19:3).*



We’re going to talk about these verses more at another time. BUT – remember what we said about “literalism.” These verses are “literalism traps” that Satan loves. Why? Because if we believe that God will burn the wicked forever, that means Satan’s right about a “hate-filled God.”

The word “judgment” has many important meanings in prophecy. Some:

1. God’s literal punishment of His people when in apostasy – like Israel’s wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

2. God's final punishment of this evil world along with the wicked, when everything is "burned up." This is often called an "**executive judgment.**"
3. When Satan is "bound" for 1000 years just before the earth is burned up.
4. God's "**decision process**" as to who will be lost and saved!



This latter is our focus in this important study. How does God decide who will spend eternity with Him and who will be lost? Can those decisions ever be reversed? When does all this occur? How can I know I will be saved? LET'S BEGIN:

First – The Bible Talks About a Record Book

Notice the many interesting messages related to it:

*"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [antichrist – beast], whose names are not written in the **book of life of the Lamb** slain from the foundation of the world"* (Revelation 13:8).

- Names of the saved are written in the "Book of Life of the Lamb."
- In God's foreknowledge, Christ was slain from the beginning of the world.

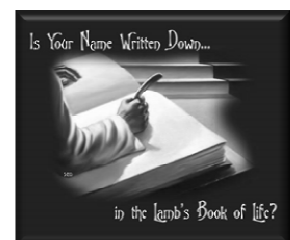
*"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**"* (Revelation 3:5).

- This is a very interesting verse!
- It appears that everyone's name is initially in that "Book of Life." Christ died for everyone – so everyone has an equal chance!
- But – if we are NOT an overcomer – the name will be removed.

*"And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will **I blot out of my book**"* (Exodus 32:33, Revelation 21:27).

- That confirms our observation.
- All names are in the Book of Life, Jesus died for all, even from the foundation of the world, BUT – they can be removed.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). That is eternal loss.



Notation: The *Book of Life* is likely the same as the *Book of Remembrance* of Malachi 3:16.

Does the Bible Tell Us About the “Process” of “Name Removal?”

It does. And that information should drive us to the foot of the Cross of Jesus. The outcome of this **judicial process** is related to eternity – it is a forever – it will never change! There is the theory that God will give mankind a second chance.

- But my Bible suggests that He is giving us thousands of chances right now.
 - *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (II Peter 3:9).
- Within that context, He set aside 6000 years for mankind’s redemption. BUT – as we have seen, God has a worldwide revival coming that will last three and a half years! That period will end the 6000-year probation.



Here is our first introduction of the judgment process:

*“While I was watching, thrones were set up, and **the Ancient of Days took his seat**. His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb's wool. His throne was ablaze with fire and its wheels were all aflame.*



*“A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence. Many thousands were ministering to him; Many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him. **The court convened and the books were opened**”* (Daniel 7:9-10 – NET).

An immediate reference that helps us **know** what is going on is **within this very chapter!**

- In the previous verse (vs 8), Daniel saw a vision of a terrible ten-horned beast. Among those horns was a *“little horn,”* which is the end-time antichrist. This is what he saw:

*“As I was contemplating the horns, another horn – a small one – came up between them.... This horn had eyes resembling **human eyes and a mouth speaking arrogant things**”* (Daniel 7:8 – NET).



- Then the result of the “judgement scene” noted above is given (vss 9-10). Here is the outcome:

“Then I kept on watching because of the arrogant words of the horn that was speaking. I was watching until the beast was killed and its body destroyed and thrown into the flaming fire” (Daniel 7:11 – NET).

That’s amazing information! Apostasy and wickedness are destroyed at the end. The antichrist example is used because in Revelation the whole wicked world follows that antichrist. God says:

“Don’t be discouraged. I’m watching it all. There will be a judgment, and wickedness will be destroyed!”

Are there any Other “Books” (scrolls) noted in the Bible?

There are. And one is associated with an amazing study related to the Seven Seals of Revelation.

That will be an exciting study in the near future. The setting? Immediately preceding end-time imagery, when the Seven Seals are broken, there is a throne room scene:

“Immediately I was in the Spirit, and a throne was standing in heaven with someone seated on it!” (Revelation 4:2 – NET).

- This is John speaking; he was taken to heaven, into the throne room.
- The “*someone*” who was seated on the throne was the “*Ancient of Days*” – God the Father.
- “**Sitting**” on a throne is “judgment” imagery.

God is once again making judicial decisions. BUT – is this the same judgment work that we saw in Daniel 7? No!

God is now putting together the “Book of Death” (a descriptive name) of **why** He didn’t choose the wicked! Jesus takes that scroll in Revelation 5 and begins to break each Seal in chapter 6.



This part of the story is too detailed to go into now. For our teaching purposes, this simple outline:

- The final “act” in the great plan of redemption shows that God permits Himself to be on trial.
- This scroll will be studied by the saints who are saved. If they agree with His verdicts, God’s character, His government and His love will be vindicated.
- This process is found in several places – but here are two:

- **“The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small – and for destroying those who destroy the earth”** (Revelation 11:18 – NIV).
- **“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge** (Revelation 20:4 – NIV).

We must recall: *“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?”* (I Corinthians 6:2). ***This is that time!***

We now know that God will be reviewing the Book of Life and removing names if they haven’t been overcomers.

We now know that God will permit us to review a Book of Death explaining why he removed those names and couldn’t save them!

BUT – you say: “I want to know more about the “process” – where the decisions for eternity are made! So does your teacher. Let’s see what we can discover!



Revelation 10 is a vital chapter for God’s last-day people. It tells us what we need to do and know to be God’s last-day evangelists.

The setting: An Angel (Jesus) comes down to help take charge of the final work. He gives to John the unsealed book of Daniel, and he eats it. That means John “digested” it – understands its messages. They are part of the knowledge base we are to know before we spread the final gospel message.

Daniel 12 (which we’ve already studied) is part of that unsealed portion! Jesus tells John that *time is not going to be delayed any longer* (Revelation 10:6). **That’s a signal from God – we must be ready!**

The next scene is one of judgment – John now speaks:

“Then a measuring rod like a staff was given to me, and I was told, ‘Get up and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the ones who worship there’” (Revelation 11:1– NET).



This **rod** was known to be approximately ten feet long. It represents a **“standard”** that God has. John’s being asked to do this is symbolic to teach us that at the judgment, when those books are opened and the names are reviewed, it is done by a standard.

What might that standard be?



“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

“Now by this we know that we have come to know God: if we keep his commandments. (1 John 2:3 – NET).

“In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands” (1 John 5:3 – NIV).

“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12).

John was to measure three things:

1. The **temple** – the church
2. The **altar** – where the priest/ministers/elders lead out in the worship experience
3. The **worshippers** – the living congregation

This reminds us of a text in Peter:

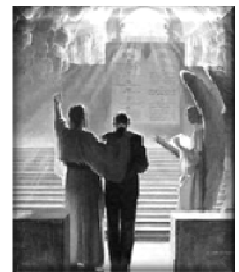
“For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17 – NIV).



This does **not** refer to floods, fire, earthquakes, asteroids, famine or even medical issues!

It refers to the **time** when God makes the decisions as to who will live with Him throughout eternity – who is “safe to save!”

- Many Christians today believe that they will not be subject to a judgment because they **believe** in Christ.
- Nearly all the places in the New Testament using the word “**believe**” refer to the Greek word *pisteuo*. That is a verb and means that **we are actively pleasing God. We are obeying Him!**
- In fact, Paul said: **“For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat”** (Romans 14:10 – NIV).



How then do we keep our names in the Book of Life?

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:9).

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

What does obeying Him really mean?

You are so thankful for His saving grace, you seek to please Him all the time!



There's more to the story in Revelation 11! ***There's an amazing sequence:***

1. Preparation to witness (Revelation 10).
2. Judgment of the living worshipers (Revelation 11:1) – which we just reviewed.
3. Beginning of the last timing prophecies (Revelation 11:2-3):
 - 42 months persecution
 - 1260 days of witnessing
4. Second Coming (Revelation 11:12)

Graphically (Revelation 10–11 (cf. Daniel 8, 11-12):



Where are we? ●

What does this all mean?

Before the last three and a half years of earth's history begins, the judgment will be underway.

Here is a breathtaking Bible text. It is part of the final message we will be giving:

*“He said in a loud voice, ***Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come.*** Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7 NIV).*



- How will we know when that hour has come?

- That three and a half years in which we will witness ***begins*** with the abomination that Christ said would lead to desolation!
- That was part of our Daniel study.

When we see that a ***law*** is passed, requiring that ***we worship on Sunday*** – and especially, that we dishonor Saturday (God’s Sabbath) – ***that*** is the ***“abomination”*** that signals unequivocally that the judgment is underway.

A Judgment Parable

*“Then he said to his servants, ‘**The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy**’”* (Matthew 22:8 – NKJV). Some decision has already been made.

“Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding” (Matthew 22:9 – NKJV). This is the final gospel call.

“So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.” (Matthew 22:10 – NKJV). Clearly, the “bad” were converted!

“But when the king came in to look over [inspect] the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes” (Matthew 22:11 – NAS). A final review – a final “measuring” – a judgment!

Wedding clothes – righteousness of Christ – the spotless robe made white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14).

What happened to the man without a wedding garment?

“Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (Matthew 22:13 – NKJV).

“For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14 – NKJV).

- “Chosen,” again, reveals that the selection process has been completed!
- The end result is that man’s final chance has passed.

This review process is part of God’s warning. It is to become part of our last warning messages to the world.



Recall John the Baptist’s appeal to mankind:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”
(Matthew 3:2 – NKJV).



Why repent? A timing reason! The *“kingdom of God”* is soon to begin.

We will know when the judgment is underway. It will give us the ability to be like John the Baptist – *“the hour has come.”*

The Last Judgment Thought

There is something amazing and wonderful in prophecy regarding this selection process. The wrath of God is about to be poured out on planet earth. Remember the word *“desolation”* – *“nothing left.”*

But before that, the Judgment must be completed. Here is a stunning and wonderful part of that judgment:

“Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea” (Revelation 7:2 – NIV).

WHY? *“Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees **until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God**”* (Revelation 7:3 – NIV).

“Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel” (Revelation 7:4 – NIV).

That divine **“seal”** is the byproduct of the judgment. The sealed ones are those whose names are retained in the Lamb’s Book of Life. They are safe to save. They will be with Jesus throughout eternity.



They have chosen the *“way of the Cross.”* God, in turn, has accepted them as citizens of His eternal kingdom.

The summation of God’s judicial work – every human being receives a *“sentence”* – some for eternity, most forever lost.

“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11 – KJV).

The wonders of salvation:

“Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never send away” (John 6:37 – NET).

- They are the ones retained in the book of Life.
- They make up the *“Kingdom of Glory.”*
- They sing:

“Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a vast throng, like the roar of many waters and like loud crashes of thunder. They were shouting: “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the All-Powerful, reigns!”

“Let us rejoice and exult and give him glory, because the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:6-7 – NET).

Prophecy Research Initiative © 2016–present