

**Fundamentals, Study 32. The Last Judgement (Matt 25:31-46)**

by BS Poh

o There will be a day of judgement for everyone, prior the eternal states of heaven and hell.

1. God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness. God the Father has given to God the Son all power to be the Judge.<sup>1</sup> Not only the apostate (i.e. fallen) angels shall be judged,<sup>2</sup> but also all people who have lived on the earth. All true Christians believe the following about the day of judgement: (i) Christ will return in bodily form in a visible way;<sup>3</sup> (ii) all men will be raised and given their resurrection bodies;<sup>4</sup> (iii) all men will be judged according to their thoughts, words, and deeds;<sup>5</sup> (iv) the righteous ones will be forgiven all their sins and be rewarded for their faith, while the wicked will be condemned to the torments of hell eternally.<sup>6</sup> (1. Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; Rom. 2:5-16; 2. 1 Cor 6:3; Jude 6; 3. Matt 24:30; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16; 4. Acts 24:15; 1 Thess 4:16-17; 5. 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl 12:14; Matt 12:36; Rom 14:10-12; 6. Matt 25:32-46; John 5:28-29)

2. The last judgement will show forth the glory of God's *mercy* in the eternal salvation of the elect. It will also show forth His *justice* in the eternal damnation of the wicked and disobedient.<sup>7</sup> The righteous shall then go into everlasting life and receive fulness of joy and glory in the presence of the Lord. The wicked, who do not know God and refused to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be punished in the torments of hell.<sup>8</sup> This is known as the *second death*.<sup>9</sup> In the first death, the body and the soul were separated, and only the soul was sent to hell. In the second death, the body and the soul are reunited and sent to hell, to be punished forever. (7. Rom. 9:22-23; 8. Matt 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess 1:7-10; 9. Rev 21:8)

3. The Lord wants us to be fully convinced that there will be a day of judgement so that all men will be deterred from sin,<sup>10</sup> and the godly who suffer for their faith will be comforted.<sup>11</sup> Some Christians take sins too lightly because they wrongly believe that their sins are wiped out of God's record on account of their faith in Christ. The teaching of the Bible, however, is that all - including Christians - will be judged. All our sins will be revealed on judgement day, and God will be seen to be merciful and just. The elect have the assurance that they shall be *forgiven*, on account of their faith in Christ. (10. 2 Cor 5:10-11; 11. 2 Thess 1:5-7; Heb 9:27-28)

4. Different views on Christ's return have arisen. Many believe there will be a period, known as the *millennium* (i.e. a thousand years), of unparalleled gospel prosperity on earth before the general judgement.<sup>12</sup> The *premillennialists* believe that Christ will return before that period. The *postmillennialists* believe that Christ will return after that period. Among the premillennialists are those who hold to a wrong teaching called *dispensationalism*, in which the events of Christ's return are worked out in detail, contrary to Scripture. They also believe that God saved by methods other than *by faith in Christ alone* in the previous dispensations. The *amillennialists* (or non-millennialists) understand the *millennium* figuratively as the period between the two comings of Christ, in which the gospel will spread, at the same time that evil will increase. The gospel age is also known as "the last days".<sup>13</sup> (12. Acts 1:7; Rev 20; 13. Acts 2:17-21; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Heb 1:2; 2 Pet 3:3)

5. The exact day of Christ's return is kept secret from men so that they may not be slack but be watchful for the Lord's return.<sup>14</sup> After judgement, the whole universe will be melted down, and new heavens and a new earth will be reconstituted, in which righteousness dwells.<sup>15</sup> When all the elect are gathered safely on the new earth, which is in the new heavens (or universe), heaven (i.e. the dwelling place of God) will be on earth and earth will be in heaven.<sup>16</sup> While the eternal state of unbelievers is horrendously awful, the eternal state of believers is stupendously blessed! Believers should be longing for the coming of the Lord, and say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!"<sup>17</sup> (14. Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thess 5:1-11; 15. 2 Pet 3:3-13; 1 Cor 15:40-41, 50-54; Rom 8:21-23; 16. Rev 21:1-8, 22-27; 22:1-5; 17. Rev 22:20)

= Flee from the coming wrath of God! Trust in Christ to be saved!

### Review Questions

1. Who will be the Judge on the day of judgement?
2. Who will be judged on the day of judgement?
3. How will Christ return to earth?
4. Name the two attributes (characteristics) of God that will be manifested in the judgement.
5. What happens to the wicked at the *second death*?
6. State two effects the judgement should have upon us.
7. What do the *premillennialists*, *postmillennialists*, and *amillennialists* believe about the *millennium*?
8. How do the *dispensational premillennialists* err on the return of Christ?
9. Why is the exact day of Christ's return kept secret from us?
10. What is the eternal state of the blessed compared to that of the unbelievers?

### Assignment/Discussion

*Amillennialism* has much to commend itself compared to *premillennialism* and *postmillennialism*. Why must we reject *dispensationalism*? Name some well-known people who hold to, or had held to, each of these views.

### Memory Passage (Heb 9:27)

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

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