

Heaven and the Afterlife
Lesson 3 – The Day of Judgment and the Moral Nature of Man
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Introduction: We serve a God that is in control of all the universe!

- A. God has always had complete control of the universe. (Ps 47:7-8; 93:1-2; Rev 19:6)
 - 1. We might ask “then why does evil exist?”
 - 2. God can reign and make provision for evil men to repent. I am thankful he does!
- B. God has decreed that all evil will be punished. (Ex 34:6-7)
 - 1. This is where God alone has the power to know and act. God will make judgements and from that He will punish. He wants us to know and trust Him!
 - 2. Punishments come at different levels (nations, rulers, individuals) and in different ways (physical, psychological and eternal).
 - 3. The assurance of a just God who punishes should be a source of great encouragement to us. (2 Tim 4:6-8)

I. What is the day of judgement?

- A. Jesus often spoke of it as a commonly understood truth! (Mt 10:14-15; 12:36-37)
 - 1. Some Jews recognized the judgement day, but it did not humble them.
 - 2. Jesus tried to shock these men to open their hearts by actually seeing what God’s judgement would be like! (Mt 11:22-24; 12:41-42)
 - 3. The day of judgement can help men to overcome their pride. God in is His mercy lets us experience guilt and terror so that we might turn to Him. Trust God! (Heb 12:28-29)
- B. This is a day that all who have ever lived will experience. (Heb 9:27-28; Rom 14:10)
 - 1. All will appear in the presence of God.
 - 2. We will have the personal detailed attention of the God of the universe.
 - 3. Our entire life will be open to see and to be accounted for. Things that were once hidden will be revealed. (Mt 12:36-37; 1 Tim 5:24-25)
 - 4. There will then be a final sentence that will involve either an eternal life with God or an eternity without God. (Mt 25:46)

II. God wants all men to know of the day of Judgment

- A. This is a core principle in understanding the gospel of Christ. (Rom 1:1-18)
 - 1. Facing a living God in my sin is terrifying unless I have found the “really good news” of forgiveness in Christ! (Rom 6:23)
 - 2. There is a reason that Christ came to this earth, men were not ready to face the judgement day! (Jn 3:17-18; 12:47-48)
 - 3. God wants men to know how real peace can be found. We are created with a sense of right and wrong and can experience the pain of guilt and inadequacy.
 - 4. When men come to understand that the Son of God was raised from the dead then they need to understand the truth about the day of judgement. (Acts 17:30-31)

B. The *foundation of the Christian mind* involves consciousness of the judgement day. **(Heb 6:1-3; Jn 16:8-11)**

1. This helps me to *avoid taking God's place* and attempting to sit on His Throne in vindictive judgement. **(2 Thess 1:6-8; Phil 1:28-30)**
2. The day of judgement should *keep our thoughts in the proper perspective*. What really matters? What riches do I have as a Christian? What priorities should I choose? **(2 Pt 3:9, 11)**
3. The understanding of hell makes me greatly appreciate the love of God. It draws me closer to God and I want *to better know Him*.
4. This understanding of the unseen reality of hell makes me a more *loving and patient person towards others*. I become a debtor to help all men. **(Rom 1:14; 2 Cor 5:10-11)**
5. I will be *very patient and merciful* with my brothers in Christ. **(Rom 14:10-13)**

III. The day of Judgment reveals a universal moral standard

A. In order for God to judge men fairly, there must be *a basis of accountability*.

1. God's word reveals *what sin is* and thus all men are accountable. **(Rom 3:23)**
2. Men are accountable even if they *have not heard* of the written law! **(Rom 2:14-15)**

B. This accountability is for each man, we are *judged as individuals*. **(Ezk 18:10; Rom 14:10-11)**

C. This moral standard causes a Christian to *think and act very differently* from the world. **(1 Pt 4:3-5)**

1. We must both recognize this moral standard and *seek to keep it*.
2. The pain and conflict this brings is a crucial element in *keeping our hearts for God*.

IV. The day of judgment teaches us the crucial nature of the conscience.

A. Consider the heart of the struggle in *the daily life of Paul*. **(Acts 24:15-16)**

1. The heart can be hardened. What happens when you do not care anymore?
2. If Paul had to "strive" then how about us? *Without strife there will be failure*.

B. What is a conscience?

conscience - συνείδησις 1) the consciousness of anything 2) the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other.

1. The conscience is *a judge* based upon *previous training*.
2. A conscience *can be trained in a wrong way*. You may do bad and feel good or do that which is not sin and feel bad! **(Acts 23:1, 26:9; 1 Cor 8:7)**
3. One can *destroy their conscience*. **(1 Tim 4:2; 1 Cor 8:7-13; Rom 14:23)**
4. The conscience is a great gift from God that we must carefully protect! Postmodern movements try to deny and destroy the conscience *by denying all standards*.

C. *God's word is the basis* of right and wrong. **(1 Pt 2:9-12; 1 Tim 1:18-19)**

1. If associations and practice do not change *you may eventually not care*.
2. When a church is committed to teach as to promote a "good conscience," God's standards *will be plainly taught*. **(Heb 4:11-2; 2 Cor 4:1-2)**