

# ETERNAL JUDGMENT (PART 1)

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Hebrews 6:1-2 says, “Therefore leaving *the principles of the doctrine of Christ*, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, *and of eternal judgment.*” In identifying the foundation doctrines of Christianity, we should take special note of the last one in the list, the doctrine of eternal judgment.

## **The certainty of eternal judgment**

Over time, polls taken of the American people concerning their religious beliefs have demonstrated a consistent near-universal belief in the existence of Heaven, and that all but about 1% of those who believe in Heaven also believe that they will be spending their eternity there. Yet, the number of people who profess belief in a literal Hell is becoming a vastly shrinking number. The Devil is doing a nice job of deceiving many millions of people that they are never going to have to give account of their lives before their Creator on Judgment Day and that they do not need to fear eternal punishment for disobeying Him. Concerning eternal judgment, there have always been doubters and scoffers (Jer 23:17; Mal 2:17; 2 Pet 3:1-7), but they are all wrong today as they were in Bible times. Though only the Father knows exactly *when* Judgment Day will come, it is an absolute certainty that it *is* coming. It is an indisputable fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and God says that *assures* us that there will be a Judgment Day. Acts 17:30-31 says, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; *whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*” It is an “appointment” that all men will keep (Heb 9:27).

## **The universality of eternal judgment**

Matthew 25:31-46 is another passage that teaches about eternal judgment and gives several details about what will happen on that day. Judgment Day will immediately follow the return of Christ and the end of the world. “*The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*” (Matt 25:31). Revelation 20:11-15 says, “*And I saw a great*

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*white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”* Everyone who ever lived will be gathered there that day. Matthew 25:32 says, “*And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats*” (see also Heb 12:23). All will stand before the Lord on that day, and then they will all bow and confess Christ (Rom 14:10-12; Php 2:10-11). There will be no more “atheists” on that day!

## **Few will be saved, and scarcely so**

On the day of judgment, Jesus will first separate everyone, the sheep on his right and the goats on his left (Matt 25:33). The righteous will be judged before the wicked, and Jesus will judge and pardon the righteous (Matt 25:34-40). But relatively few will be pardoned and saved. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ preached: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, *and few there be that find it*” (Matt 7:13-14). On another occasion, Jesus was plainly asked if only a few will be saved, and he answered in the affirmative. “*Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*” (Luke 13:23-24). In 1 Peter 4:17-18 asks a couple of very serious questions: “*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*” We all need to diligently prepare for that “great day” that is coming.