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Final Judgment and Rewards



Beyond End Times - Steve Gregg

In "Final Judgment and Rewards," Steve Gregg discusses the concept of the second coming and Judgment Day as depicted in the New Testament. He emphasizes that the term "day of the Lord" refers to a general judgment and not a specific event, and that Christ will come to reward individuals according to their works. Gregg stresses that faith without works is not true faith and that individuals must proactively repent of their sins to avoid condemnation. Finally, he suggests that rewards in the afterlife are not necessarily materialistic, but rather reflect one's inheritance of eternal life.

Transcript

You have the notes I made for these lectures. I think you have all four of them. There's four pages.

If you follow along while I teach, you'll find that I don't follow my notes exactly. My notes I make for my benefit, and I don't mind sharing them with others, but I don't feel bound by them. They usually have references that I don't want to forget if I want to make a certain point.

I make the points I make essentially off the top of my head while I teach. I do look at the notes to see if I'm forgetting something I wanted to say, and sometimes I'll just leave out whole sections. In the case of this lecture, I'm going to add some things that aren't in your notes.

Well, that's because I did some further preparation after these were printed. So the notes will be kind of in general covering the lecture, but not exactly. So I just want to say that.

So if you're wondering, you know, well, where is the outline now? And there may be a point where I'm not on it at all. And there might be parts of the outline that I don't touch at all. This you're forewarned about that.

OK, well, let's pray. And then we will look at these topics that are before us today. Father, I ask you in Jesus name that you would open our understanding, that we would

understand the scriptures, that you would also make us not only have an intellectual understanding, that you'd birth in us an excitement about what you have made us for and what you're going to do when you bring the culmination of all of your purposes for our lives and for the and for the world and for the creation.

Father, we know that there are many exciting things in our lives from time to time, and nothing could be as exciting as what you have in mind as the ultimate climax of history. Even if we don't fully grasp it, I don't fully maybe even appreciate it. But I pray, Father, that we would come to understand what you have revealed and what we can't know, that we'll be content to be undecided or ignorant about.

But I ask your Holy Spirit to help us to see what the scriptures do say so that we will not be ignorant of the things that you have revealed for our learning here. And we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

I may be clearing my throat a bit. I woke up kind of with a sore throat. It's not very sore right now, but I can tell there's occasionally going to be a need to clear it.

So, again, I forewarn you, those of you in the front row especially. All right. Today we're going to be looking at the subject of the final judgment and rewards.

The notes say just the final judgment, but Chris wanted me to talk about rewards also. So there's some some things that aren't on your notes that we will talk about. I said in our last lecture that there are many passages in the Bible which just at first blush when you read them, they appear to be talking about the second coming of Christ.

They use words like coming of the Son of Man and things like that, but which are not necessarily always about that subject. That is, they're not about the second coming. The expression the coming of the Son of Man is an expression that can, of course, refer to the second coming in certain context.

But it doesn't always, because the word coming is a generic metaphor used often in the Old and the New Testaments. I mean, for example, if you look at the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation, chapters two and three, six of those churches are told in the letters that Jesus dictates them that he will come to them yet in different senses. He said to the church of Ephesus, if you don't repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

That's not the second coming. It can't be. You know why? Because the church of Ephesus doesn't exist anymore.

In fact, the city of Ephesus doesn't exist anymore. It's gone. Its lampstand has been removed.

Jesus said he was going to come to them and remove it. That was an act of discipline,

apparently, or judgment. He came and the church, if it did not repent, would be removed in the symbolic language of that passage.

In the church of Laodicea, he says, behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him. That's also a language of coming, but it's an entirely different concept.

As we know, we all are familiar with that verse. We all think of that as Jesus coming into the individual believer. And there are churches there that he says, you know, if you don't repent, I will come to you and fight with you with the sword that proceeds out of my mouth.

Well, that could sound like the second coming, but in particular, I think he says that to Thyatira Pergamum. And that church isn't there anymore, either. So, I mean, they're not going to be there to see the second coming.

Apparently, he came and did what he said he was going to do. And we saw other verses yesterday. We won't keep on this, but the point is that the idea of God coming or Christ coming in the scripture has a much wider range of possible meanings than simply to refer to his second coming.

But in some cases, it does speak of his second coming. The second coming, I believe, in the New Testament is usually that event which is spoken of as the day of the Lord or the day of Christ. Or in 2 Peter 3, it's called the day of God.

They're all the same day, the last day, what Jesus called the last day in John 6 and in John 12. He used the expression on the last day. In fact, Mary used that expression or Martha did when when Jesus said, your brother Lazarus will live again.

So I know that he will rise again on the last day in the resurrection of the last day. That was part of the Jewish eschatological understanding. There would be a last day with the resurrection.

And that last day in some passages in the New Testament is called the day of the Lord or the day of Christ. Paul uses the term day of Christ quite a bit. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 1, he used the term the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So we've got the day of Christ, the day of the Lord mixed together as the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, that's important to note if you're ever dialoguing with people of a dispensational theological bent, because they believe the day of the Lord is an expression that means something different than the day of Christ. They're always making these hairline distinctions in terminology, but it's artificial.

That is the distinction is. Christ is the Lord. So the day of Christ is the day of the Lord to the New Testament writers.

And as I pointed out in 2 Peter 3, that same day is referred to as the day of God. It's the day when Jesus comes to judge the world, to raise the dead, to create a new heavens and new earth. And this is the these are things are said about it.

Now, when you read the Old Testament, the term the day of the Lord is used quite frequently also. But in the Old Testament, the day of the Lord almost never refers to the second coming of Christ, if it ever does at all. You see, when the New Testament writers pick up the term the day of the Lord, they're using a term that was used broadly in the Old Testament of general judgment.

If you read them in the oracles that are given against Babylon or against Edom or against the Philistines or against the Moabites, you'll commonly find it is the day of the Lord against Babylon or it is the day of the Lord against Edom. And what it means, of course, is it's the day that God can judge that nation. And all the all such judgments occurred in history.

Those those nations aren't there anymore. And so in the Old Testament, the day of the Lord, simply a day of judgment, a day when Yahweh, God, the Lord comes and judges whoever is in view in the context of the passage. But in the New Testament, except in those instances where the New Testament is quoting an Old Testament passage about the day of the Lord, like Peter does in Acts, chapter two, and he quotes from Joel, there's a reference to the day of the Lord there.

And that is, I believe, the destruction of Jerusalem he's talking about there. But he's quoting an Old Testament verse about that subject. But when the when the authors are not quoting an Old Testament passage, they usually use the word day of the Lord to speak of the day of judgment, not of this nation, that nation or another nation, but of the whole world, because there is an ultimate day of the Lord, the day when Christ comes and he takes, he vindicates himself thoroughly against all his enemies and he takes full control of the universe.

Not that he doesn't have control. He's at the right hand of God and all authority in heaven and earth has been given to him. And he's reigning at the right hand of God right now.

But he's reigning in the midst of his enemies, as it says in Psalm 110, I believe. And, you know, there are enemies still that that he allows for the moment to remain in rebellion. But there will come a time where those enemies are no longer allowed to remain in rebellion.

He will judge them and consign them to an eternal fate that will be, you know, out of out of the picture. And then he'll be all in all. Christ will be all in all that is all who remain after that judgment will be Christians and he'll be everything to them.

So that's what he's going to come and do now with reference to the judgment. Matthew 25 is a good example of a passage about the judgment at the second coming of Christ. Matthew 25, 31.

Jesus said, when the son of man will come in his glory with all his holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. And he will call all nations before him and he'll divide between the nations as a shepherd divides between the sheep and the goats. And he'll put the goats on his left and the sheep on his right hand, and then he'll speak to each of these groups, he'll speak to the goats and he'll say, you know, I was naked and you didn't clothe me.

I was hungry. You didn't feed me. I was in prison and you didn't visit me, et cetera.

And they'll say, when was this? We didn't see such things. We don't recall this. And he'll say, well, when you did not do it to the least of these, my brethren, you didn't do it to me.

And then he'll speak to the sheep and I'll say, well, when I was hungry, you fed me. When I was naked, you clothed me. When I was in prison and sick, you visited me.

And they say, when did we see you in these conditions and do these things for you? And he'll say, in as much as you did it to the least of these, my brethren, you did to me. And Jesus said, and these shall go into everlasting life, but the goats into everlasting punishment. And so this is this is the day when the son of man sits on the throne of his glory at his coming with all his holy angels.

There is a day there is let's put it this way. There's a feature of the second coming that is very negative from the standpoint of nonbelievers. Now, Christians love his appearing.

Paul told Timothy, henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness and not for me also only, but also for all who love his appearing. Well, Christians should love his appearing. But people who are not Christians should dread his appearing.

In Amos, the prophet said to the people, and they're not really talking about the second coming here, but it's talking about, well, you'll know it. You can see how it goes. He says, well, unto you who desire the day of the Lord.

The day of the Lord will not be for you a day of light. It'll be a day of darkness and disaster. Now, the day of the Lord in that case apparently means the day when God comes to settle the score and probably not the second coming, but whatever whatever was out of joint in the society at that time.

There is I wish God would just show up and and set things right. Why hasn't he done that? Well, the reason he hasn't done it sometimes is because if he did, it'd be a disaster for for some people, even some people who say, I wish God would just come and set

things right. They don't realize that they aren't right enough to face a day like that.

If you look over at Second Peter passage we looked at last night with reference to the second coming. Chapter three, beginning with verse one, Peter says, Beloved, I now write to you the second epistle, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and by the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior. Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation, that is, people will say you Christians have been saying that Jesus is going to come back.

In fact, not only you Christians of this generation, a previous generation, a previous generation, they were all saying Jesus come back and they've all died. The fathers have fallen asleep means, you know, the previous generations, they're dead now. They were talking about this second coming.

It didn't happen. So where is it? You know, is he going to come or is he going to come? And the scoffers are going to make fun of the fact that earlier generations had spoken of the coming of Christ, but he didn't come and they're dead. And so what right do you have to expect that he'll come? What they're suggesting is he's never really going to come.

This idea that he'd promised to come back is simply a pipe dream. It's never going to happen. And he says in verse five, for this they willingly forget that by the word of God, the heavens were of old, that is, they were created by the word of God and the earth standing out of water and in water.

By that water, the world that then existed perished. He means in the flood. Being flooded with water, but the heavens and the earth, which are now, which means after, since the flood of Noah are preserved by the same word, the same word that judged the world in the flood is now preserving the present world for another judgment, holding it, you know, waiting for the right time to judge this present world since the flood.

He says it's reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, do not forget this one thing that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. We saw this last night.

He's addressing the scoffers saying, well, the fathers have fallen asleep and it hasn't happened. He's saying it doesn't matter whether it happened a day after predicted or a thousand years after he predicts all the same. He's as faithful to keep his promises, whether he waits a day or a thousand years.

It's all the same. A day is the same as a thousand years to him. And he says, but

beloved.

Or he says, excuse me, verse nine, the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some count slackness. But is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Now, that is that is why Jesus hasn't come back sooner, because he's not willing that any should perish.

And if you would come back today, there's a great number of people who would perish because they're not ready, because that's the day of reckoning. That's the day of judgment. That's the day of redress for all wrongs done.

And we might say we'd like Jesus to come back now. We might wonder why God allows horrible atrocities to take place. Genocide in some parts of the world is going on.

Why does God allow that? There's children being tortured, molested and abused in some households right as we speak. We don't know where they are. We knew we'd probably have them arrested, but we will learn of them someday.

And there are people doing horrendous things that God sees and hates. And we think, why doesn't God put an end to this? And the answer is he's going to. But the reason he hasn't judged yet is because if he would judge now, there's many people who aren't ready, who would be ready if he waits longer.

Maybe even some of us haven't gotten our laundry all cleaned yet. I'm sure that there are some here, or if not here, at least in the body of Christ, who are compromised in ways that they really need to get their act together before Jesus comes back. And he knows it.

And he says, I'll give him some time. Like he said of Jezebel in Revelation 2, I gave her space to repent. That means he gave her time to repent.

He gave her an opportunity to repent. But she didn't repent. He said, so I'm going to judge her.

And so God is giving the world opportunity to repent, but he won't give it infinite opportunity. In Genesis 6, he said, my spirit will not always strive with man. And that was in the context where God looked and saw that every imagination of men's hearts was only evil continually.

He says, my spirit won't always strive with man. I'll give him 120 more years. Then comes the flood.

You know, when we think of God judging the world or judging sinners, we're thinking of one of the harsher aspects of God. God is a loving father, Jesus told us. And, you know, and is very merciful.

Even the Old Testament says, you know, that he's very merciful. And yet we know there's a hard side, a harsh side, a severe side of God. It says in Romans 11, 22, behold the goodness and the severity of God on those who fell severity.

But towards you, goodness, if you continue in his goodness, otherwise you also shall be cut off. Paul said Romans 11, 22. You need to see both sides of God.

He's got goodness toward those who believe and he's got severity toward those who are his enemies. And when we think of the judgment of God, we're thinking of the severe side of God. But we have to remember that even when we're considering God's severity, it's tempered with grace.

When God said, I'm going to have to wipe out the world with a flood, he says, the only good man on earth is Noah. Everyone else's every thought of their evil hearts is evil all the time. There's not a good thought happening.

I'm going to wipe it out. I'm only going to give him another 120 years. Well, why so long? Well, let's just make sure we give him enough time to repent.

When God told Abraham that he was going to give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan, which was at that time inhabited by pagans, by Canaanites, wicked pagans. I mean, they were sacrificing their children alive to an idol, burning them alive as sacrifices to Moloch. That's what the Canaanites were doing all the time.

And God said, I'm going to wipe these people out. Abraham, I'm going to take your people in there and you're going to drive these people out and judge these people. But he says, I'm going to have to take your people into Egypt for 400 years first and then bring them back to do that.

Because I'm going to wait for 400 years because, he says, the iniquity of the Amorites, that's the Canaanites, is not yet full. I'm going to give them 400 more years to repent because they haven't quite exhausted my patience. They're sacrificing babies alive and having orgies in front of this idol every single day.

And God says, this is getting pretty bad. I'm going to have to judge these people. I'm going to give them, well, 400 years to repent.

I mean, God is very patient. And we might think, well, that's, you know, if he can wait 400 years, why doesn't he wait forever? Why does he ever judge if he's got that much patience? Well, God's judgment is necessary for the purpose of setting right his creation. He has an interest in the creation.

He has an interest in the universe he made. And there has to come a time when it is set right for eternity. And that means he's got to eliminate all rebellion against himself and deal righteously or justly with it.

So he's got to have a day of judgment. It seems to us he's waiting a long time, but if a day to the Lord is like a thousand years, he's only been waiting about six days. Even that requires a great deal of patience when he sees what's going on in those six days by the human beings.

But he he has shown patience, but he has got to set things right. And he will. He's guaranteed it.

And that is actually an occasion for rejoicing for the righteous. It is said of Lot that day by day, he vexed his righteous soul in the city of Sodom as he beheld their lawless deeds. As he watched the perversion and the wickedness of the people of Sodom around him, it vexed him.

His soul was vexed. And everyone here knows what it's like to just groan when you hear about some atrocity and say, why doesn't God do something? Well, when he does do something, it's definitely going to be an occasion of rejoicing. We see rejoicing over the judgment of God in a lot of places in the scripture.

And, well, for example, over in Revelation near the end there, we won't concern ourselves with what the actual event is that's being discussed here. But we can see that it's it's it's good for the righteous. It says about the fall of Mystery Babylon, whatever wicked entity that is referred to.

But it's talking about God judging it says in Revelation 18, 20, rejoice over her, O heaven and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her. The day of judgment is a day of not just God running out of patience and flying off the handle and and hurling lightning bolts because he's just gotten angry. Can't take it anymore.

He has to avenge the righteous because sin in his universe has victimized. Not only God, but his people and it is occasion of rejoicing of sorts when God finally does judge it because someone's got someone's got to handle this. God said to Israel in Deuteronomy and it's quoted in the book of Hebrews.

It says vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord. I will repay. It's actually quoted also in Romans 12, both places.

God said vengeance is mine. I will repay. And the way that's implied by Paul in quoting it is don't avenge yourself when people do things wrong to you.

Do good to them. Feed your enemy if he's hungry. Do kind things to those who hurt you.

You might say, well, that doesn't seem just. They don't deserve to have that. Doesn't isn't God concerned about justice? Isn't he concerned that people get what they deserve? Well, yes, but he's concerned that he is the one who dishes that up.

He is a much better judge of what people do deserve. And he's much less selfish, much less reactive. He's much more patient.

And when he finally judges, it'll be righteous judgment. Whereas if we would avenge ourselves, we might act. It might overreact to injury and so forth.

And so God says, I will avenge. Don't you avenge. Vengeance is mine.

I'm going to repay. So that's what he's going to do. The righteous suffer at the hands of wicked men and simply the righteousness of God suffers in the world at the hands of people who are in rebellion against him.

And that's going to be turned around and that's going to be a blessing and a matter of rejoicing for the righteous. Now, it doesn't mean, however, that the righteous have nothing to be concerned about. If you look at First Peter, chapter one and verse 17, Peter says to the Christians, and if you call on the father.

Who, without partiality, judges according to everyone's work, conduct yourself throughout the time of your sojourning here in fear. He's talking to Christians, if you call God your father and you know he's going to judge everyone according to their deeds without partiality, then you should have an element of fear in your life, the fear of God. The judgment of God should inspire the fear of God.

Now, that doesn't mean we're terrified and not sure if we're going to heaven or not, because we can be absolutely sure that we're saved or not. But there's still a day of reckoning, which Christians, if they don't live in the fear of God, will live in such a way that there will be cause for consternation even for them. When God sets everything right, because sometimes Christians live in ways that aren't as right as they should be because they lack the fear of God.

But if they fear God and they live according to his will, then the day of judgment will hold no terror to them. But the prospect of being judged by an impartial judge, knowing that we are imperfect people, is something that should cause us to be strongly motivated. The fear of God is a strong motivation.

In Proverbs it says, by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. That's the idea. That's the intention God has.

Fear him so that you'll depart from evil and then you won't have anything to be afraid of. And so God wants us to be aware of the judgment of God because it plants in us a proper sense of caution in our lives, the fear of God, so that we rightfully are afraid to live in rebellion against God because we know that he's going to judge everyone, including us. That's what Peter's implying.

If you call him the father, but you know he's going to judge all men impartially. I'm a

man. I'm going to be one of the men he's going to judge impartially by their deeds.

Then he says, pass the time of your sojourning here on earth with the fear of God. It's an appropriate emotion in view of the judgment of God. It's an awesome thing.

It's a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We're told in, I guess it's Hebrews 12. Now, some of these verses we look at have already said, and you probably noticed that everyone is judged according to his works.

Apparently even Christians are, because that's what Peter said. You who call God your father, you know God's going to judge everyone according to his works impartially. That means he's not going to show partiality toward me because I'm a child.

He's going to have to look at my works too. And, you know, the sheep and the goats, what do they judge? They're judged for their works. Actually, if you look at all of the places in the Bible that talk about the judgment and indicate what the basis of judgment will be, what people are judged by, it's always their works.

In Revelation, Jesus says, I'm coming and my reward is with me to give to every man according to his works. In Matthew chapter 16 and verse 27, Matthew 16, 27, Jesus said, for the Son of Man will come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he will reward each according to his works. Doesn't matter which author you look at.

If you look at John or if you look at Jesus or if you look at Paul or Peter, they all say the same thing. Over in Romans chapter 2, and of course, one reason I'm bringing this out is because it creates a conflict in the minds of some. I thought we're saved by faith, not by works.

What's all this business about being judged by my works? But in Romans 2, beginning at verse 5, Paul is speaking apparently to those who are not saved or at least who are careless about salvation. He says, but in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Now, when Jesus comes back, he's going to have a righteous judgment to be just.

There won't be anyone who can complain that he didn't get a fair trial. And he says, who will render to each one according to his deeds. That's what we've been saying.

All the judgment has to do with what you do. And he says, eternal life to those who, by patient continuance in doing good, seek for glory, honor and immortality. But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, that's deeds also, but obey unrighteousness, there's indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man that does evil.

To the Jew first and also to the Greek, but glory, honor and peace to everyone who works

what is good. It's all about deeds and working what's good and doing evil. It's what you do, he said, on the day of the righteous judgment of God.

This is what's taken into consideration. So we see it from Jesus. We see it from Paul.

We see it from Peter. We see it in the book of Revelation. That's from John.

You know, you name it. Whatever author in the Bible talks about the judgment, he always says, you're going to be judged by your works. Now, how does that jibe with the teaching, especially of Protestantism, that we're not saved by works.

We're saved by faith, not by works. And Paul, of course, is the one that is most probably vehement in putting forward that doctrine of justification by faith. And yet he himself just said, you know, God's going to judge everyone according to his deeds.

There obviously is not a conflict in the mind of Paul between these two concepts, nor apparently in the mind of God, nor need there be in our minds. We are justified by faith, but faith, if it is genuine, changes the way we live. A person who says he has faith but does not have works doesn't have faith because faith, such as the Bible teaches will save us, will produce works.

In Galatians chapter five and verse six, Paul said, with reference to being saved or justified, he said, For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything. That is, when it comes to availing with God for salvation, being circumcised or being uncircumcised has absolutely nothing to do with it. It has no impact on it.

You're not going to be saved more or less by being circumcised or by not being circumcised. Those don't avail anything. But what does avail? Well, he says, but faith working through love is the New King James.

The King James says that faith that works through love. Now, Paul has been very emphatic in Galatians that we're saved by grace through faith and not by works and so forth. I mean, his epistles, so many of them, he says that in Galatians is an epistle particularly written against the idea of legalism and the idea that you could be justified by works.

But he is in that very epistle said, What matters on the day of judgment, what matters for salvation is not about circumcision or uncircumcision. What it's about is if you have faith. But he identifies or qualifies what he means by faith.

We're talking here about a faith that works through love. A faith that if you have it, it will produce works. So it says in New King James, faith working through love, faith working, faith works.

It doesn't just reside in your mind and provide information to your head. Faith is a

working dynamic reality if it's the kind of faith that saves. And that's why James could say, you know, faith without works is dead.

The devil has faith. He says the demons believe and they tremble. They even have the fear of God, sort of, but they don't have any faith that causes the works to change.

They have some kind of faith, but not the right kind of faith. And there are many people, and I believe throughout history, churches have been filled with people who could say truthfully that they have faith of a sort. And that's why they're in church.

They believe, you know, that God's real. They believe Jesus is the son of God and so forth, but their works don't prove that they are truly Christians. A genuine saving faith will produce works and there will be no danger to the true Christian for God to put his works on display, because his works are going to be works that come from his faith and that are not shameful.

Now, I realize most of you are probably thinking, yeah, but not all of my works are good works. I mean, obviously, I'm a better person now that I love the Lord in terms of my behavior. I do fewer things that I'd be ashamed of on the Day of Judgment now that I'm a Christian, but I still do some things that I know aren't right.

But we'll get to that in a moment. But the point here is on the Day of Judgment, there's going to be a class of people who are saved and class who are lost. The ones who are saved are the ones who have faith.

But it's not enough for them to just go up there and say, I had faith and expect God and and the universe to take it for granted that they did, because many of those who are sent off to hell are also going to be able to say, hey, I had faith. I had faith. Remember, Jesus said in Matthew seven, he says, in that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, we cast out demons in your name.

And we prophesied your name and we did many great works. You name it. I'll say to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. Now, obviously, there are people who will be lost on the Day of Judgment. Jesus can say, I don't know you go on to your reward in hell.

And there's a way, way, way, way, way. We were believers here. We were casting out demons in your name and prophesying your name.

We had faith. But the verse before that in Matthew seven says, not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of God or heaven. But those who do the will of my father in heaven.

Now, you might say, well, I thought casting out demons and prophesying in my work was

the will of God. Well, on some occasions it probably is. It wasn't in their case.

The will of God is for you to live a life submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In fact, a parallel to that statement in Luke says, Jesus, why do you call me Lord, Lord? And you don't do the things that I say. So it's obvious that on the Day of Judgment there will be a class of people.

Jesus said many who are lost, but they will claim that they had faith. Well, how do we resolve that? Are people going to be able to go to hell saying God was unfair? I had faith and he didn't save me like he said he would. No, he's going to say, let's see if you do.

Let's pull out the works. Let's see what you did. Then we'll know if you had faith or not.

That's what James says in James, chapter two. Being in verse 14, James 2, 14 and the verses that follow says, What does it profit my brethren if someone says he has faith, but he doesn't have any works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body. What good is that? What does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

But someone will say, you have faith and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I'll show you my faith by my works. Someone will say that quite legitimately.

We both say we have faith, but you don't have any works, and I do. Show me your faith without your works. How can you do that? How in the world can you prove you have faith unless your behavior demonstrates it? So on the day of judgment, those who have faith will be saved.

But the fact that they have faith will be demonstrated by looking at what they did. Not by their profession that they have faith. It won't be enough to say, yes, Jesus, I believed in you.

He'll say, I heard you. I heard you. Now let's watch.

Let's watch your life. Let's see if you believed in me. Your works will show it.

So that the works, being judged by works, is not in conflict with being saved by faith. The examination of the works is what will prove that someone has faith or not. It's not just that they say they have it.

That's not enough. Show me your faith with your works. Or actually, show me your faith without your works, and I'll show you my faith with my works.

James said. And that's what the judgment is going to be about. We're going to look at the works.

Now, what kind of stuff is going to be brought up on that day? Well, there's a lot of detail, apparently, on the day of judgment. In Matthew 12, 36, Jesus said, every idle word that men shall speak, he'll give account of it on the day of judgment. Now, I'm not sure what idle word suggests to you.

Some people think that that means every bad word you speak will be brought up on the day of judgment. That's not what it means. An idle word is a careless word.

A careless word may not be a bad word. When you slam the door on your finger and something just comes out of your mouth, that's a careless word. It was an unguarded word.

It's an idle word in the sense that it wasn't contrived. You know, it's spontaneous. Now, if a person never has any careless words, if they're always cautious, they may always speak good words even if their heart is evil.

Hypocrites can do that. You know, someone who really is sinful can put on a smooth, you know, way of talking and so forth, and you'd never know there's anything wrong with them because they're careful about choosing the words. But the careless words are what show what's in the heart.

It's in that same context, Matthew 12, that Jesus says, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. But that doesn't mean that every word a person speaks really tells what's in their heart because they can be lying. They can be pretending.

But not when they have an unguarded word. An unguarded word will show what's in the heart. Now, every unguarded, every incautious, every careless word you speak, Jesus said, it'll be brought up on the day of judgment.

Now, that doesn't have to be bad because when you slam your finger in the door, you have to say, well, glory to God. You know, I know someone who did that. He was a butterfly collector and he went out in the woods somewhere where no one else was around.

And he. So I depend on his testimony for the story of what happened. But he got his equipment out and he was ready to go and he slammed the car door and his finger was stuck in the car door.

And it was, you know, throbbing with pain. And he'd locked the door and his key. He had his key, but it was in the pocket on the same side of his pants that his hand was caught in the door.

And I think it was his his right hand was in the door. It was in his right pocket. So while his finger was there, throbbing with pain, he had to try to get into that pocket and get the door.

And finally, of course, he did. But he said he was really he was really pleased with the reaction that came out of mine, because he wouldn't have been able to predict it. But he said he just he just started singing praises to God on that occasion.

Now, you might think that's phony or whatever, but I know it isn't because I know I know that reaction. Not to that exact event, but I mean, when things happen that elicit and a spontaneous and unguarded response. A person's heart loves the Lord out of the events of their heart, the mouth will speak.

But if they curse and so forth and complain, that will show there's something else in their heart. The unguarded words, every unguarded word you speak is going to be brought up. Why? Not because God is so concerned about words, but he's concerned about the heart.

And that's where the evidence comes out of what's in the heart. And but that's a lot of detail. If every idle word a man speaks, every careless word will be given account of.

That's nothing to be ashamed of if your unguarded words are revealing that you have in your heart love for God, because there's not a problem there. But it will certainly reveal something about those whose hearts are wicked. That detail of the judgment is also affirmed over in Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, the closing verses of that book.

And there's a lot of stuff in Ecclesiastes that isn't as reliable as these closing remarks. But he says, Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 12, 13 and 14. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all. King James says this is the whole duty of man. He says, for God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Now, he's going to bring every work and every secret thing into judgment, every idle word. So this is not just a generic judgment. This is a detailed judgment.

Now, sometimes Christian depictions of this in art or in drama or something have have pictured this drama as, you know, like there's going to be a videotape of your life and you just have to sit and watch everything you ever did. Now, to tell you the truth, if every human being that's ever lived, let's say there's been 10 billion or so, their whole life has to be watched. That's going to take an awful long time.

Is that a day of judgment or is that, you know, an aeon of judgment? You know, how long is it going to take to go through the whole lives of people that took at least 6,000 years for them to live out? And a lot of them were being lived simultaneously. So we have to watch one by one. This is going to take millions of years, right? If we're going to watch everything that's done.

And by the way, is that really going to be very edifying? And when you think about it, the majority of lives that are played back, if that imagery is true, are going to be non-Christian lives. I mean, in a sense, it might be like a pornographic film festival. I mean, is that what we're going to do in heaven? We're going to sit around and watch these sinners lives in every detail.

Well, I can hardly think that that'd be very fun. And so I got a feeling that the the idea that we sometimes have that we're going to watch the tape, you know, going to play the tape of everyone's life probably is not really how it's going to be. We don't know how it is going to be.

But God, who I suppose is not bound by time. We don't know much about God's nature in that respect. But who who can probably do what would take a million years for us to do in a moment.

I don't know. He is nonetheless going to in dealing with every individual, bring up all the significant things that that depict what's where they're at, where their heart's at and what. And the purpose of that will be, of course, to justify his consigning of them either to eternal life or not.

The person who says, Lord, we prophesied your name. How come we're going to hell? God's not going to let them go to hell thinking that he did the wrong thing. He's going to show them.

Here's what you did. Here's what you said. Here's who you are.

And that's why you're going there. I don't I don't know if it'll be in a moment's time. And, you know, in a split second, the whole thing, you know, when people say that when their life is in danger, their whole life flashes before their eyes in a few seconds time.

You know, maybe that's kind of a psychological phenomenon that that, you know, crosses over into that realm of what's going to happen outside of time. I don't know if it is or not, but God can certainly cause your whole life to flash before you in an instant of time and make notes at the point at the significant points. I'm sure in any case, we can't have any confidence that some detail of our life will be omitted if it's significant.

And in determining what's in our heart, even things that we've forgotten about, God remembers. And there's scriptures there in your notes. I'm going to not take the time to look at right now.

Although Psalm 27, 25, 7 says, remember not the sins of my youth. A prayer like that suggests that, you know, maybe God normally does. And I'm asking you not to in my case.

You don't remember the sins of my youth because they are not necessarily good things.

Now, if there's no condemnation to those who are in Christ, is it really necessary on the day of judgment for God to go through everything I ever said, even before I was a Christian? Which things I thought he said in Jeremiah 31, I will remember their sins, their iniquities no more. And that's kind of encouraging because Paul says in Romans, what fruit then did you have in those things of which you are now ashamed? The fact that you're now ashamed is because you're now a Christian, you're ashamed of sinful things and God's forgiven you.

Is it really necessary for us to stand there and watch all the things we've been ashamed of and that we repented of? I mean, is that going to happen if every idle word that we speak is going to be given account of? I have a feeling that that applies only to such things have not as have not been repented of. I'll tell you why. If you look over at First Corinthians, chapter 11 and 31 and 32, Paul is talking about some chastisement that came on the church of Corinth because of abusive behavior of the Lord's Supper.

But he makes an interesting observation in that context that I think may answer to this issue. He says in verse 31, First Corinthians 11, 31 and 32. But if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world. Now, God's committed to us not being condemned. And if we're doing the wrong thing, he'll chasten us.

He'll chasten us. That's his judgment coming on us temporarily to induce us to repent. So we won't have to be condemned of the world eventually in the end.

But he says there's even something better than being chastened and corrected. Instead of having God chasten us, we could just judge ourselves. Could we not? I mean, if we would just judge ourselves, God wouldn't have to judge us at all.

Now, that sounds like he's saying you can avoid God's judgment, at least the negative aspects of his judgment, if you'll simply judge yourself. In this case, the Corinthians, some of them were misbehaving and it was being tolerated at the Lord's table. And God, therefore, had brought some chastisement on the church in the form of people dying and getting sick.

Paul said, for this cause, many of you are weak and sick and some have even died, he said, fallen asleep. He says that's the chastening of the Lord in the church because you've been tolerating irreverent, sacrilegious behavior at the Lord's table. Now, it's that context where he says if you judge yourself, God wouldn't have to judge you like this.

The idea is if you'd recognize this is bad behavior and deal with it, then God wouldn't have to come in and deal with it as he is. Now, when you repent of sin, you are judging yourself. That's what repentance is.

When you do something and then you repent, that repentance is making a negative judgment against what you did. I'm guilty of something. I did the wrong thing.

This is not good. And in repenting of sin and bringing that to the cross, that's where it was judged for us. Jesus took all our sins, which, of course, none of them had yet been committed when he died because we weren't living yet.

So that includes all our sins that we'll ever live. He took them on the cross. Now, we're not automatically forgiven because of that, because if people were automatically forgiven, the whole world would be saved because he died for the sins of the world.

But we appropriate forgiveness. All of our sins were his. His death was adequate to cover them all.

And we appropriate forgiveness as we repent. We bring by repentance our sins to the cross and say, I judge that this action I did was wrong and offensive and evil. And I don't approve of it anymore.

And I and I count on the fact that Jesus died for such inappropriate and evil acts of mine. And you are actually judging yourself by repentance. And availing yourself of Christ's atonement for your sins so that it says in 1 John 1 9, if we confess our sins, I think confession there suggests the whole category of repentance.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Well, if he's forgiven us, he's not to bring it up again. So even though in general, human beings can count on every idle word they speak and be brought up.

Well, not the ones you've repented of. If your repentance has been genuine, you say, I shouldn't have done it, shouldn't have said that. I, you know, I repent of that.

That doesn't exist anymore. It's not there for him to bring up anymore. It's been judged already.

And when we judge ourselves, we will not be judged by God. The sin only has to be judged one time. Each sin has to be judged only one time.

If we judge ourselves, there's nothing left of it to be judged in the future. I believe that's what I understand Paul's teaching to be here. And I think that it's accurate and to my mind, sensible.

It it corresponds, you know, and harmonizes with the fact that he said he'll remember our sins no more. Those that we have repented of. So the Christian, of course, you might say, well, then do I have to nervously try to think of everything I ever did so I can repent of it? I think that when the person comes to Christ on a daily basis and praises Jesus,

forgive us our sins as we forgive our debtors.

We forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors. We're in a sense saying, God. Each day I have committed sins.

And I'm calling them sins and calling them debts. I'm asking your forgiveness for them. I'm saying they were wrong, but I can't pay for them.

And therefore, I'm asking your forgiveness. That is confessing our sins. That is, if it's genuine repentance, which there's every reason that it should be, even if we don't know what the sins were.

Now, there may be specific sins that God will bring up to your conscience to say, you know, this is still a problem. Remember, Jesus said, if you bring your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, that means you wronged him. He has something against you because you did something to him wrong.

And you there remember, he says, then leave your gift to the altar and go back and make peace with your brother. There will be times when, even though in general, you're just saying, God, forgive my sins. God, forgive my sins.

God, forgive my sins. There'll be something there where there's some unfinished business between you and somebody because of one of your sins. And God will convict you of it and say, you've got to do something about this.

But we have to remember, it's God's. We don't have the power to remember everything we ever did unless God brings it up. So we have to just trust in him that if there's anything he's still holding against us that we've ever done, it's kind of the balls in his court.

Because, I mean, I don't want I don't want there to be, but I can't remember it all. So he's going to have to remind me. And if he doesn't, there must be nothing there because he wants me to repent more than I want to.

He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So if there's something God is requiring me specifically, an individual thing that I have to repent of and do something about and set right so that I won't be condemned with the world. He'll bring it up.

He'll let me know. And when he does, I have to respond. I have to go and make peace with that brother, whatever it is that he said we have to do before I bring that gift to God.

That means that God will not accept my gift, my worship, my sacrifice. If I am neglecting to deal with some unfinished business that he's brought to my mind, because a Christian

is a person who is, by definition, a servant of Christ and obedient to Christ. And while we know we're not perfect and God knows we're not perfect, we're not going to be condemned for the fact that we're not perfect.

God will bring to our minds the specific imperfections that maybe there's something we need to do something about. Apart from those specific things, I think when we say, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, that's kind of a blanket expunging of guilt. So when we stand before God in the judgment, I don't think if we're up to date with God on these things, I don't think we're going to have any problem with past sins being brought up and paraded before the public or even before God or before us.

We know about them. I mean, some of them. We know our past and we don't want to look at it again.

And God, I don't think will make us look at it again if it's been something we've brought under the blood of Christ. So the judgment will be detailed, but the details that have already been judged by us will not have to be brought up on that occasion. Everything we do has got to be judged, but we can judge it now and avoid having it judged later.

That's what I think Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 11, 31 and 32. Now, there are some other things in the notes I don't really have time to get into because we have to wind this up. I wanted to talk something about rewards because I know when Chris brought this up, he says, you know, it's not really real clear in the scripture what our rewards are.

And yet the Bible often says that there will be rewards. And and, you know, maybe it'd be good to talk a little bit about what our rewards are. Well, a lot of people, when they think of rewards, they're thinking of the kind of carnal, materialistic kind of rewards that carnal, materialistic people like to have.

I mean, even Jesus' statement, you know, in my father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I think the average Christian reads that things.

Well, you know, I don't live in a great house here, but if I'm a good Christian, I live in a mansion when I go to heaven. And, you know, the better I am, the bigger the mansion and the more fancy the mansion. And, you know, they're thinking in terms of carnal type rewards, the kind of thing that maybe people in their natural life value.

But there's reason to wonder whether those things will have any value to us in the next life. We're going to talk about what the next life is going to be like in our next lecture. But I'm.

I believe that God is our reward in Genesis. Chapter 15 and some translations read a little differently than this, but I believe this is the correct translation. Genesis 15 one.

God comes to Abraham after these things. The word of the Lord came to Abraham in a

vision saying, do not be afraid of him. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.

Now, Abraham had just on that occasion given up all the spoils of a battle that he had won. He delivered the people of Sodom from bondage. The king of Sodom had offered him, let him keep all the spoils of the battle.

He said, no, I don't I don't. I don't want you to be able to say that you made Abraham rich. I'm going to give up all those riches you've offered me and I'll just I'll do without them.

And God comes and says, that's good choice. I am your reward. You don't need the reward of those riches and spoils of battle.

I'll be your reward. Now, he's not talking about heaven here. You know what now? But if God is my reward now, I can't think of any reward beyond better.

If if the greatest reward I can desire is to have God, when I go to a better place, is there a better reward than God himself to be had? I don't think so. I think the Lord himself being in relationship with him is the reward. Now, if you aren't a person who really loves God, that doesn't sound very attractive.

But if you don't really love God, you're not one of those who love his appearance. You know, but if you love the Lord, nothing is more attractive than that. If you're in love with someone, if you're an unmarried person, you fall in love with someone, you want to marry them, want to want to be with them.

If depending on how much you love them, having them and nothing else is reward enough. You don't care if you live in a shack, if you drive an old car, if you have very little money. If you're with the person that you love supremely, that's reward enough.

Now, you say that sounds pretty like romantic hokum. You know, I mean, yeah, I may love my wife, but I still want a nice house and nice car. Well, you don't love her enough if that's not the case.

I'm not saying you shouldn't have a house and a car. I'm saying that when you love someone enough, just being in their presence and possessing them uniquely, especially is greater than any other reward you could imagine. And is enough to make everything else dim by comparison.

It certainly will be that way when we see Jesus. He is our reward. Now, there are other there are degrees of reward, apparently.

And so, I mean, there must be reward in addition to simply having him. But I think the primary reward of the believer is to have Jesus and to be like him. There's a statement in Colossians chapter three, which says in verse 24, Colossians 3, 24.

Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance for you serve the Lord Christ. Now, from the Lord, we are going to receive the reward of the inheritance. Well, what is the inheritance? I think Jesus answered that question in Matthew 19.

And Matthew 19, Peter says in verse 27, Peter answered, said to him, see, we have left all and followed you. Therefore, what shall we have? We've made some serious sacrifices here. What reward will we have for that? And he said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

That's obviously a promise just to those twelve men and not to all people. But then he makes a general promise to everyone. He says, And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold and inherit.

The reward of the inheritance will inherit eternal life. Now. Eternal life is the inheritance.

It's the primary reward, apparently. And as far as what it's going to be like and what's going to make that desirable in eternity. Those are questions that we're going to address when we talk in our next lecture about the, you know, the destiny, the eternal destiny of the saved.

What is what's going to be like? What are we going to do? But the point is, it is that it is inheriting that eternal life. That is the primary reward besides God. We will have God and we will have him forever.

We'll live forever with him. And that is the main reward. Now, there are other rewards, apparently, that vary.

For example, Jesus said, Whoever receives a prophet in the name of the prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And whoever receives a righteous man in the name of rights will receive a righteous man's reward. And that apparently means there is a particular reward, for instance, that prophets will get.

But you can get the same reward they do if you receive them. If you receive a prophet and, you know, show hospitality, you'll get the same reward he gets, even though you're not a prophet. But it does suggest there is such a thing as a prophet's reward or a righteous man's reward.

We know that there's, in the story that Jesus told about the talents, that different servants got different degrees of reward. You know, the one who had ten talents, or five, and he went and got five more and had ten, he received ten talents as a reward. The one who had two and he got two more, he got four talents as a reward.

I mean, there seems to be degrees of reward, but what that reward is, we don't know. It may, in fact, be degrees of glory. Or when we get to the discussion of our eternal fate, which is what's in the next lecture, there are some things that are part of that that simply may exist in degrees.

And some people have more of something, of one of those aspects, than others. But it's not really a matter of great concern to me. To me, the reward that I'm living for is God and eternal life.

If I get to heaven or whatever, and there's a whole bunch of people on higher rungs of the ladder than me, it's not going to bother me in the least. In fact, if they're not, I'll think there's some injustice there. Just being there, being on the lowest rung, there will be fine with me.

But there does appear to be, you know, degrees of enjoyment of eternal life. And what the nature of that enjoyment is, is connected very much with what the nature of that life is. And that's what's what we're obliged to talk about in our next lecture.

So let's take a break here.