

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-43 Judgment of the Wicked

Sometimes it seems like evil people are never held accountable for their crimes or evil deeds. This can be very frustrating. Why do the wicked prosper? Will there be no judgment for them? These questions have been asked by righteous people for thousands of years. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah asked this very thing of God. He said, "You are always righteous, LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" (Jer 12:1).

Is God unfair? The answer is found in God's love. The apostle Peter wrote this, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wanting any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9). We must remember that it was God's intent that all of mankind should be His children. God will give His children every opportunity to return to Him in love. But there is a limit to His patience. Eventually, every living being in all of creation, both mankind and all of the angels in heaven, will be judged for their lives and actions.

And so we come to the end of the 1000-year reign of Jesus upon the earth. The resurrected and immortal saints have had 1000 years of training in the use of God's power and authority in government, by ruling over the wicked who survived the seven years of the Tribulation. The saints' education is complete and it is time for God to bring an end to the evil of mankind upon the earth. Satan has been imprisoned in the bottomless pit for the entire 1000 years. It is now time for him to receive his final judgment. But he will not go to judgment without one last fight.

Satan is released from his prison in the bottomless pit and he immediately sets about deceiving all of the wicked upon the earth. He gathers all of the armies of all of the nations of the world. They then march to Israel and surround Jerusalem. This army is beyond counting—like the sand on the seashore. Satan knows that this is his last chance. They surround Jerusalem, the city God loves, with the intent to try to destroy Jesus and all of the righteous saints. But God rains down fire from heaven and destroys all of them.

And now Satan and his fallen angels are judged. A special place of punishment has been prepared for them. In the very last book of the Bible, the apostle John wrote this, "And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur . . . They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev 20:10). And with this act of judgment, God eliminates the original source of all evil in the universe.

But judgment has just begun. Most people would say that they would like to live forever. Immortality would be a wonderful thing if your life was filled with love and good things. But what if you were granted immortality and then sentenced to a horrific punishment that never ended? This is the fate for every human being who has not accepted God as their Father and Jesus as the price for their adoption as sons and daughters.

We have learned about how the grave was divided into two places. Paradise, which is now empty, was created as a temporary place to house the souls and spirits of the righteous dead. But Jesus freed all of the Old Testament saints from this prison. The other half of the grave was the place we call hell. It is a hot and terrible place of torment for the souls and spirits of the wicked. But hell was also a temporary prison. The apostle John explains to us what will happen after Satan and his angels are thrown into the lake of fire.

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and the grave gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:11-15).

In this lesson you have learned a tremendous and ominous truth. In the Book of Hebrews we read that "it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27). Every man, woman, and child will one day stand before God and be judged for their lives and actions. The penalty for all sin is eternal death. The apostle Paul wrote, "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23). We must remember that God has offered to all of mankind this free gift of forgiveness and eternal life. It is His desire that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance and receive eternal life. But those who do not accept Jesus and die in their sinful condition will be judged. It is for this very reason that every one of us has been given the authority and power of Jesus Christ to witness to the lost and lead them to Christ.

This lesson is **important** because it reveals that all the wicked will be judged, and all whose names are not written in the book of life will be punished forever in the lake of fire.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that when the final judgment comes, all who have not believed in Christ will be cast into the lake of fire.

Let's **review** what you learned in this lesson.

1. What does Satan immediately do when he is released from the bottomless pit? [Pause]
A. If you said, “Satan leads all of the wicked upon the earth to attack Jerusalem and the saints,” you are correct.
2. What is the final judgment of Satan and his fallen angels? [Pause]
A. If you said that Satan and his fallen angels are thrown into the lake of fire, you are correct.
3. What happens to the people whose names are not written in the book of life? [Pause]
A. If you said, “All whose names are not found are thrown into the lake of fire with Satan,” you are right.

Your **assignment** is to review this lesson at least three times. Spend time in prayer for at least five people you know who have not accepted Christ. Pray that God will provide the opportunity for you to share God's love with them. And, when God presents the opportunity, witness to them about what God has done in your life and how He wants to forgive them of their sins.

Memorize the following three important verses:

"It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

"The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wanting any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9).