

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL  
BIBLE SCHOOL SECOND EDITION  
SESSION 44: - THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST PART 9  
ETERNAL JUDGMENT (Final Judgment)

Final (or eternal) judgment is the sixth and last doctrine of the six foundation doctrines mentioned in **Hebrews 6:1–2**:

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. The doctrine of baptisms
4. Laying on of hands
5. Resurrection of the dead
6. Eternal judgment

In our study previous to this one, Resurrection of the Body, we began to move out of the realm of time and on into eternity. Eternity does not merely consist of a very long period of time, it is a totally different realm of being, scarcely within the grasp of our human understanding.

There are two main ways in which God brings judgment on people. ***The first*** is His judgments in history; ***the second*** is His eternal judgments, which is the subject of this lesson. Eternal judgments are those judgments which confront us as we step out of time into eternity.

Distinguishing between the two types of judgments is necessary; otherwise, we might be confused by what seem to be conflicting statements in the Scripture. To clarify the differences, we will begin by considering God's judgments in history.

### **Judgments in History**

The first judgment of God in history involves bringing blessing or punishment on succeeding generations according to the way the former generation has responded to God. In Exodus 20 we have a very clear example of God's historical judgments. In this portion of the Ten Commandments God says:

**Exodus 20:4–6 (NKJV)** ***"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve [worship] them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."***

The sin of idolatry, which is the greatest of all sins, carries with it a judgment that extends to the succeeding three or four generations. These are judgments in history for which there are countless examples in the history of Israel and of other nations that have been involved in idolatry.

Jeremiah also deals with this question of God's judgment in history. In a prayer that he prayed to the Lord, Jeremiah said:

**Jeremiah 32:18** *"You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts."*

Jeremiah says that God repays the iniquity of the fathers into the succeeding generations. This also is a judgment in history or in time. This same generational principle also applies to God's blessing on the righteous.

David says in: **Psalm 103:17–18** *"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them."*

There is a promise of God's blessing and righteousness to "children's children"—to succeeding generations. Stop to consider the fact that the way we conduct ourselves and relate to God not only affects us, but it may also affect successive generations. This very significant and important principle needs to be kept in mind. We can, in some way, be answerable for either the blessing or the suffering of succeeding generations.

The principle is an obvious fact of experience. For example, a child born to alcoholic parents starts, as they say, with two strikes against him. It is not the child's fault, but the judgment of God on those parents will naturally filter down through succeeding generations. It is, of course, the mercy of God that this generational judgment can be nullified when an individual comes to the Lord, because he has become part of a new family with a new Father.

### Eternal Judgment

There is another kind of judgment of God that the writer of Hebrews calls "eternal judgment." This type of judgment affects our destiny in eternity. The principles of eternal judgment are completely different, and these are stated by God to Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 18:1–2 *“The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, ‘What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?’”*

Ezekiel says the children are suffering for the sins of the fathers.

verses 3–4 *“As I live, says the Lord God, you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die.”*

God is not talking about historical judgments here, but about the judgment of every individual soul as it steps out of time into eternity. At this point, every soul will bear responsibility only for the life that it has led and the soul that sinned shall die for its own sin.

That is repeated in **verse 20**, where God is still more emphatic:

**Verse 20** *“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”*

When we step out of time into eternity, we are no longer being judged for the sins or blessings of our parents or forebears. We are going to answer to God personally only for what **we did** in life. The righteousness of the righteous will be upon **him**, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon **him**.

The book of **Ecclesiastes** tells us: *“Where the tree falls, there it shall lie”* (11:3). The condition you are in when you die will determine your condition throughout eternity. *This is eternal judgment, and it is a very solemn thought.*

Whether we like it or not, we must face the reality of eternal judgment because it says in **Hebrews 9:27** *“it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”*.

### **Five Principles of God’s Judgment**

We will now consider the five principles of God’s eternal judgment, all of which are stated in **Romans 2**.

## **1. Judgment is according to truth.**

The first principle: God's judgment is based on truth. It is based upon real facts, not hearsay.

**Romans 2:2** *"But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things."*

Consider, for instance, when the Lord wanted to find out the truth about the condition of Sodom and Gomorrah. He had heard terrible reports from the angels and others, but He said to Abraham, *"I've come down to see for Myself."* (See **Genesis 18:20–21**.) God never judges by hearsay; He judges according to truth.

## **2. Judgment is according to deeds.**

**Romans 2:6** [He] *"will render to each one according to his deeds."*

We will be judged for what we have done. That is a basic principle that runs through the Bible, and it applies to believers as well as unbelievers. Peter unfolds this principle as well, applying it specifically to believers:

**1 Peter 1:17** *"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear. . . ."*

This fact is not publicly disseminated in most churches today. Peter tells believers that we must bear in mind that we are going to be judged according to what we have done and that we are to live reverent, godly lives in view of this fact. We must not be rash, proud, or presumptuous—because one day we will have to answer to God for everything we say and do. Bear in mind, this passage is addressed to believers, not to unbelievers.

**Revelation 20** tells us that in the final judgment, all people will be judged according to what was written in the books, because God keeps a record of every life. In the days of the New Testament, books were not like today's volumes. They were scrolls rolled up like a tape. I am inclined to think that in the judgment every one of us will be confronted with something like a video tape that projects the entire course of our life before us.

God was dealing with a man at one point in his life when he was very sick. He earnestly sought God as to why he was not being healed. One night God woke him up at two A.M. and gave him a review of the life he had been leading. He was a generally well accepted preacher (though sometimes criticized) at about the same level as many other preachers who are comparatively well known. However, God showed him that in many ways he had been extremely carnal.

He had not committed any gross sins like sexual immorality, drunkenness, or the misappropriation of funds. But nevertheless, God showed him there were things in his past that were displeasing to Him.

He brought to him the Scripture in **Malachi** where God says, *“Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated”* (**Malachi 1:2–3**). Esau is a type of the carnal man. There are no gross sins recorded about Esau; he just was a carnally minded man. God said, “I hate that!”

After nearly fifty years in the ministry, God showed him that there were things in his life that He hated. He showed him that he had been careless in some respects. Some of the scenes He showed him were in restaurants.

You may not realize that God judges you in restaurants, but He does. Somebody once said, “All you Americans can talk about is food.” I have also heard it said, “If you want to find out where the best restaurants are, ask a preacher.”

He began to realize what it means to spend the time of our stay (or sojourning) in this life in fear—not slavish fear, but reverent awe, as before God who will judge everything we say and everything we do.

### **3. Judgment is with no respect of persons.**

**Romans 2:11** states the third principle of God’s judgment, which is judgment without respect of persons:

**Romans 2:11** (NKJV) *“For there is no partiality with God.”*

All the modern translations are worded this way because it is a modern phrase. However, the original King James Version says, *“There is no respect of persons with God.”* It is a much more accurate translation because partiality can be toward any kind of person.

For example, think of a weak, insignificant person—you can be very partial to that person. They are so weak you really want to help them and do everything you can for them. However, “respect of persons” means we are not impressed by what people are in their natural selves. A man may be a general, a president, or a bishop, but he does not get any special judgment from God. He is treated just like everybody else. That is what is meant by the phrase “no respect of persons.” It is particularly aimed at people who occupy positions of prominence in the world today.

#### 4. Judgment is according to the measure of light.

The fourth principle of God's judgment is according to the measure of light.

**Romans 2:12** *“For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.”*

If you have the law, you will be judged by it. If you do not have the law, you will not be judged by it, but you will still be judged for what you have done based **on what you knew**.

This principle is also illustrated by Jesus in **Matthew 11** when He spoke to some of the major cities of His day who had not responded to His preaching.

**Matthew 11:20–22** *“Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.”*

Jesus said it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment because they had less light. Bethsaida and Chorazin had the greatest light, and they would be more severely judged. You and I will be judged according to the light that is available to us.

Generally speaking, for people in the English-speaking world, there is a greater measure of light available today than has ever been available to any previous generation in history. We have masses of Bibles, endless books, CDs, DVDs, and preachers. We are going to be judged by the light that has been made available to us. Bear in mind that God's standards of judgment for this generation will be the most severe because we have had the most light.

Jesus goes on in the next verse: verses **23–24**

*“And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”*

Judgment is according to light; the more light we have, the stricter will be our judgment. There probably has never been a generation of Christians that have had the measure of light available that we have today. That is going to be the standard of our judgment and it is a sobering thought.

## **5. Judgment includes secret thoughts and motives.**

The fifth and final principle of God's judgment is found in **Romans 2:16**

***"In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."***

God is not only going to judge our open acts, but He is also going to judge our secret, innermost thoughts, motives and attitudes. God is very concerned about our motives. Two people may perform the same outward action, but their motives may be entirely different. When God judges them, He will take into account their motives.

### **Successive Scenes of Judgment**

As I understand the judgments of God as they are presented in the New Testament, there are going to be four major, successive scenes of judgment.

#### **1. The Judgment Seat of Christ**

The first will be before the judgment seat of Christ. The Greek word for "judgment seat" is bema which means a platform on which a Roman official sat to execute judgment. Pontius Pilate sat on his bema when Jesus appeared before him for judgment. The judgment seat of Christ will be an eternal judgment for believers only. Remember Peter's admonition:

**1 Peter 1:17** ***"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear."***

This verse is written to us as Christians, who call on the Father. Later, Peter says:

**1 Peter 4:17** ***"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"***

Judgment always begins with the house of God, always with the people who have the most truth. When judgment starts, the first people to be judged will be the Christians, and we will have a special judgment.

**Romans 14:10–12** ***"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we [Christians] shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ [the bema]."***

***For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So, then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”***

There is only one person you must give account of—yourself. You will not have to give account of your spouse or your pastor, and you may waste a lot of time judging others when you should be judging yourself. The only person you are going to have to give account for is yourself. Paul says that all of us, as Christians, will have to give account of ourselves to God, a theme which he returns to in **2 Corinthians**:

**2 Corinthians 5:10** ***“For we [Christians] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”***

The New King James Version says, “We must all appear,” but the Greek says, “We must all be made manifest.” Before Christ’s judgment seat there will be no secrets. Everything will be totally exposed. Nothing will be hidden.

We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive according to the way we have lived in the body. And there are only two categories of deeds: good or bad. There is nothing in between. Everything that is not good is bad. Jesus said very clearly,

***“He who is not with Me is against Me”*** (**Matthew 12:30**).

There is no neutrality. Jesus has excluded it. Many people in church are sitting on the fence, unwilling to make a commitment. They are not on one side, nor are they on the other. They are not doing good, but neither would they admit to doing bad. A man once said, “When the Holy Spirit comes to a church, one of the first things He does is to electrify the fence! You have to jump off on one side or the other.” That is why a lot of people don’t welcome the Holy Spirit—because He abolishes their neutrality. There is no neutrality with the Holy Spirit.

**A. There are five main features of the judgment seat of Christ:**

1. It is individual; each one will answer for himself.
2. It is for the things done in the body; the way we have lived while we were in this body.
3. There are only two categories: good or bad. ***“All unrighteousness is sin”*** (**1 John 5:17**), anything that is not righteous is sinful. A third category of neutrality seems to have slipped into people’s thinking and it deceives many. However, there is no neutrality.



4. This judgment is not for condemnation. This is very important. We are going to be judged, but we are not going to be condemned if we are true, sincere believers in Jesus.

5. This judgment is for assessment of service.

Some of you may be a little concerned about this judgment because we often think of condemnation when we think of judgment. There are three Scriptures which may comfort you at this point. First, Jesus says:

**John 3:18** *“He who believes in Him [the Son] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already.”*

If we are truly believers in Jesus, we will be judged, but we will not be condemned. Jesus says again in the most emphatic way He can:

**John 5:24** *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment [or condemnation] but has passed from death into life.”*

**Romans 8:1** *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”*

We are not talking about a judgment of condemnation but a judgment that will assess the service we have offered to Jesus during our lifetime. This judgment is described clearly in 1 Corinthians 3, where Paul is speaking about building:

**1 Corinthians 3:11–15** *“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”*

The New International Version translates the last phrase, *“Like one escaping from the flames.”* This passage is the essence of the judgment of Christians.

First, we must be built on the foundation of Jesus Christ; there is no other foundation. By building on the foundation of Jesus Christ we are not building upon our own works or our own righteousness, but upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

## **B. Second, the value, or quality, of the service we have offered will be determined.**

Paul places the believers' works in one of two categories:

1. gold, silver, precious stones.
2. or wood, hay, stubble.

Remember that things that are easy to acquire can be offered in large quantities: wood, hay, and stubble, but they will all be burned up. The things that are valuable are not obtained in large quantities: gold, silver, precious stones. Some people assess the quantity of their service, but that is not the way God assesses it. God looks for quality.

We must examine ourselves continually. Am I just producing wood, hay or stubble that will be burned up? Or am I producing something of eternal value? What a tragedy it would be, having worked all your life for something, piled it all up, to then see fire sweep through it in the day of judgment and finish it all off. There is nothing left, but you are as a naked soul that is spared, like one escaping through the flames. What a solemn thought!

## **C. How to Withstand the Fire**

How might we assess our service for Christ to know whether or not it will stand the fire of judgment? I suggest three ways to assess your own service.

### **1. Motive**

The only motive acceptable to God is ***for God's glory***. Much of what is done in the Church today is done by men and women for their own glory. It is my observation that the greatest problem in the Church today is personal ambition on the part of ministers. Who has the largest church, the longest mailing list, or the most miracles? That will all be burned up because it is the wrong motive.

Paul says in **1 Corinthians 10:31**: ***Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***

There is only one acceptable motive for our service and that is the glory of God. Pause for a moment as you are reading this and consider what has been motivating you in your service for the Lord.

In Romans **12:1**, Paul said we need to be renewed in our minds. The difference between the renewed mind and the unrenewed mind is clear: The unrenewed

mind says, “What’s in this for me?” The renewed mind says, “Will God get the glory?” It is a total change of motivation.

This same principle applies to marriage. Many marriages are unhappy because the people approach them with an unrenewed mind. The attitude of each spouse is, “What will I get out of this? Will it make me happy?” This is almost a certain recipe for an unhappy marriage. The right motive is, “What can I give?” When a man and a woman come together with the intention of giving to one another, they will have a happy and successful marriage. The whole issue of motivation is far more important than most people realize.

## **2. Obedience**

Second, if your work is to stand the test of fire, it must be done in obedience to the Word of God; it is the only acceptable basis. In **Matthew 7**, Jesus spoke very plainly about obedience.

**Matthew 7:21** *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”*

The only acceptable motive is to do the will of God the Father.

Then Jesus goes on with a statement that offends some people:

**verses 22–23** *“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”*

By the grace of God, I have been privileged to cast out many demons. I have seen a number of very definite miracles take place. Frequently, I have prophesied. However, I do not base my hope of reward on any of that, and anybody who does is in danger. There is only one essential requirement for reward in heaven. It is doing the will of the Father who is in heaven.

Jesus says to these miracle workers,

*“Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”*

In reality, many miracle workers are a law to themselves. They do basically whatever they feel like, take whatever they can get, and ignore the great central principles of the Word of God. Jesus concludes His sermon in **Matthew 7** with these words:

**verses 24–27** *“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”*

The difference between the man who built upon the rock and the one who built upon the sand is clearly stated by Jesus. It is the one who does not merely hear His words, but also “does them.”

A man once wrote a teaching about Balaam because he was so impressed with his story. Here was a man with miraculous prophetic gifts, words of knowledge and words of wisdom. In **Numbers 22–24**, he gave forth prophecies as beautiful as any that are uttered in the Bible concerning the destiny of Israel. Yet he perished. He was executed by the people of Israel. Do you know what Balaam’s problem was? He is mentioned three times in the New Testament, and each mention states very clearly that Balaam’s motivation was love of money. That cost him his soul.

**II Corinthians 2:17** says, *“Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit”* (NIV).

That is a startling statement Paul made concerning the time in which he lived. Paul said there were many people motivated by making profit out of the gospel. In today’s church, we need to ask ourselves if we are motivated by the love of money or if we are motivated by the glory of God and obedience to His Word. It is our motives and obedience that God searches.

### **3. In the Power of the Holy Spirit**

The third way of assessing our service is the power in which we operate. Paul says:

Romans 15:18–19 *“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.”*

**There are, then, three requirements for our work to stand the test of fire.**

1. What is our motive? Is it for God’s glory?
2. Are we working in obedience to the Word of God? Or are we doing our own thing or making our own rules?
3. Are we working in the power of the Holy Spirit or in our own fleshly ability?

**Two Patterns of Judgment**

There are two fundamental patterns of judgment for believers that Jesus related in two different parables—one based on *ability*, the other on *percentage*.

**The first** is the Parable of the Minas found in **Luke 19**. (A mina is a measurement of money.)

**Luke 19:11–15** *“Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore, He said: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. [It was going to be a long while before he got back.] So, he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas [one each] and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’ [In other words, make a profit.] But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’ And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”*

God is going to require an accounting of service from each one of us, and our faithfulness in service in this life will determine the position we occupy in eternity—that is, the responsibility we will be able to carry in the kingdom of God.

**verses 16–19** *“Then came the first, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned ten minas.’ And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have over ten cities.’ And the second came, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned five minas.’ Likewise, he said to him, ‘You also be over five cities.’”*

Notice the master didn't just say, "Well done, good servant." This would have been a lower level of commendation.

**verses 20–25** *"Then another [the third] came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')*"

The bystanders really did not think it was right that the one who already had ten should get one more. But Jesus goes on:

**verse 26** *"For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."*

Pay careful attention to this because most of us do not think the way Jesus thinks. He gave to the one who had ten minas because that servant had proven he could be ***faithful*** with whatever was entrusted to him. The first servant made the most and was rewarded with the most. This is a principle of multiplying what we have been given.

### **Use It or Lose It**

At one time, God gave a man a supernatural gift of faith in a very strange way. He would pray for people with unequal legs and the short leg would grow out. It happened to literally hundreds of people and as it was happening, he would tell them, "Now, God has touched you. His supernatural power is working in your body; help yourself to all that God is giving you." As a result, many people were supernaturally healed of a multitude of ailments.

However, some of his fellow ministers said, "You know, you have a reputation as a dignified Bible teacher. If you go around holding people's feet and lengthening their legs, it may not fit in with your reputation."

So, he thought, "Maybe they're right." He questioned the Lord about the matter, and this is what he believed He said: I've given you a gift. He suddenly realized it was a gift, the gift of faith.

Then the Lord explained to him, “There are two things you can do. You can use it and get more, or you can fail to use it and lose it.” He made up his mind at that point that he was going to use it and get more. And, to the glory of God, he did receive more.

Whatever gift you have been given, there are two things you can do: *You can use it and receive more, or you can fail to use it and lose it.*

### **Laboring Faithfully**

**Second**, as we have already seen, your service in this life will determine your position in eternity. The one who gained ten minas was given authority over ten cities, and the one who gained five minas was placed over five cities. Their position in eternity was in exact proportion to their faithfulness in this life.

Notice, Jesus did not say, “Well done, good and successful servant,” He said, ***“Well done, good and faithful servant.”*** Some of us put too much emphasis on success and too little emphasis on faithfulness.

A man used of God was privileged to see tremendous works of God in many foreign mission fields. He once stated, “I could get a little puffed up and say, “Isn’t that wonderful! Thousands of people come to my seminars.” However, God reminded him, “Don’t forget, there was a generation before you that saw very little fruit. They labored faithfully and you have entered into their labors. Don’t give yourself too much credit for this fruit.”

We must respect the pioneers: the men and women who labored and laid down their lives. When the first missionaries went to East Africa, four out of every five died before they had been there many months. They saw few results for their brief labor. However, their lives were seeds planted in the earth that brought forth fruit later on. Though many of them saw very little fruit, they were faithful to the work God sent them to do. That faithfulness, I believe, has earned them great reward in heaven.

### **Put It in the Bank**

The third man in the Parable of the Minas produced no return on the money entrusted to him. His master said to him,

***“Well, you maybe didn’t have the ability to make money yourself, but you could have put it in the bank. Then I would have gotten my own with interest.”***

How does that apply to us? What could we do if we feel we are not extremely gifted people? We might think, “I don’t have a big ministry; I’m not a preacher or an administrator. What can I do?” We can “put it in the bank.” We can find a ministry that is bringing forth fruit, examine the ministry to see if it is genuine, and then invest in it. You may invest your money, or you may invest some of your time. This is a legitimate way of multiplying what God has given you. This is putting the money in the bank. We will receive our reward when the Lord comes.

### **Jesus as Judge**

At the end of the Parable of the Minas the master declares:

**verse 27** *“But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.”*

This parable is a picture of Jesus as the Judge. Here Jesus is not the Savior; but Jesus is the Judge. Remember, the same person who is the Savior is also the Judge, and as thorough and efficient as He is in saving, so He will be in judging.

Does your picture of Jesus include that? Or are you one of those who say, “Gentle Jesus, meek and mild”? Praise God, this is true also, but it is not the whole truth. There is another side to Jesus. He is the Judge with eyes like a flame of fire, a two-edged sword that goes out of His mouth, a voice like the sound of many waters, feet like bronze refined in a furnace. (See **Revelation 1:12–16.**)

When John the Revelator met Him in that capacity, he fell at His feet as one dead. That impresses me! This is John—the one who had the closest relationship of all the disciples with Jesus. He had lain on the bosom of Jesus at the Last Supper. He had been one of those who was at the Sea of Galilee when Jesus had revealed Himself after His resurrection and made breakfast for them. (I like the fact that Jesus had breakfast ready for His disciples.) However, when John, who has known Jesus so intimately, is confronted by Jesus the Judge, he falls at His feet like one dead.

I think something like that needs to happen to the Church in our day. The Church, which has been living on a buddy-buddy relationship with Jesus, needs to be confronted by Jesus the Judge. It certainly would not do us any harm if we fell at His feet like someone dead.

### **The Parable of the Talents**

The second pattern for the judgment of our service is found in the Parable of the Talents in **Matthew:**



**Matthew 25:14–15** *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.”*

In the Parable of the Minas, each servant received one mina but in this parable one servant received five talents, one received two, and one received one. The talents (like the minas) are a sum of money. They were distributed to the servants according to their ability. God gives us talents according to what He knows we can do with them.

If you can use five talents, He will give you five. If you can only use two, He will give you two. And, if you can only use one, He will give you one. According to your ability He measures what He gives.

**verses 16–19** *“Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them and made another five talents. And likewise, he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground and hid his lord’s money. After a long time, the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.”*

We need to keep in mind that the Lord is going to come and settle accounts with us.

**verses 20–21** *“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*

Notice the same principle as in the previous parable: what you do in this world will determine what you do in eternity.

**Verses 22–23** *“He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*

In this parable there is a different principle of commendation. One servant made five talents and the other made two, but the words of commendation were exactly the same to each of them. In other words, it is the percentage God looks for. If you have received five, He expects a hundred percent; five more. If you received two, He also expects a hundred percent; two more.

He knows what you are capable of, and He asks no more from you than He knows you can deliver.

**verses 24–26** *“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant.’”*

Please note that laziness is wickedness. Most of our churches would not accept drunkards as part of the congregation. However, many of our churches would accept lazy people. In the sight of God, I think laziness is a worse sin than drunkenness. That is the way I see Jesus measuring things. Please understand, I do not endorse drunkenness—it is a sin. However, I think in the eyes of God laziness is a worse sin. Jesus said:

**verses 26–27** *“You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. So, you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.”*

Again, we see the same “investment” principle as in the previous parable. If you do not have the ability to produce fruit yourself, invest it in a ministry that is bringing forth fruit.

**verses 28–30** *“Therefore take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents. [The one who has, receives more.] For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

That phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is used several times in the New Testament. I have studied where it is used and have come to the conclusion that it is only used about people who have been very close to the real thing in God and missed out. They had every opportunity but failed to apprehend what God had for them.

### **A Serious Lesson**

This is not written about people who never knew anything about God. It is the people who have been right on the edge of God’s best all their lives but never entered in. Those are the ones of whom the Bible says, *“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

They will have tremendous bitterness, saying, "I could have been in this. I had the opportunity all the time, but I never availed myself of it. Now I'm cast out forever into outer darkness." This should motivate us to fearlessly pursue the things of God.

Furthermore, the people in this parable who were rejected were the ones who had the least committed to them, the one-talent people. I find in most churches that the people who have great ability will do something with it. However, the one-talent people sit back and say, "There is nothing much I can do, so I won't do anything." They are the ones who are in danger of being rejected; they will be cast out.

I would say to the one-talent persons that most of you have underestimated your responsibilities. You have said, "I don't have much; there's not much I can do. God doesn't require much of me." God does. He requires faithfulness, whether you have a little or whether you have much.

A man once preached on this in his own church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Talking to the one-talent people, he asked for a response from those who felt they had one talent and had not been using their talent. The response was shocking. About half the congregation responded when he asked them to stand for prayer! He came to see this as a major problem with many believers.

It is too easy to simply say, "I've only one talent, so what can I do with it? I'll do nothing." Jesus will not accept that as an excuse. He would say, "You can put it in the bank. You can invest your one talent in a ministry that is really bringing forth fruit. Then much of that fruit will be credited to you."

Dear one-talent person, look out! You are in danger. You may one day hear the words, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

### **Sober Assessments**

Here are three conclusions we may draw from the study of these parables:

1. Our service in this life determines our position in the next life.
2. Not to use your talent is to lose it.
3. Not to do good when you can is sin.

**James 4:17** says, *"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."*

Sins of omission are just as real as the sins of commission.

In **Matthew 25**, three classes of people were totally rejected by God:

1. The foolish virgins who took no oil (**verse 12**),
2. the one-talent servant who did nothing with his talent (**verse 30**),
3. the goat nations who did not help the brothers of Jesus (**verse 46**).

They were all totally and finally rejected by God.

What did they all have in common that caused them to be rejected? What did they do?" A simple answer, "They did nothing." That is all you have to do to be rejected—nothing. It is a solemn thought.

## **2. THE JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL**

Up to now we have been dealing with the judgment of believers because that is the one that really concerns each of us. However, there are three other judgments to take place. The next judgment is a judgment in history—the judgment of Israel, a special people set apart by God. Though the Jews as a whole have been disobedient and unfaithful for many centuries, God has never permanently rejected them.

The Scripture says: **1 Samuel 12:22**

***"The Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you [Israel] His people."***

God's faithfulness to Israel is not because Israel deserves it, but because of God's name, that it may be glorified. God is going to deal with Israel in a special way. Here is a principle that I want to pass on to you about blessing and judgment: God blesses the Jews directly, but He blesses the Gentiles through the Jews. However, God judges the Gentiles directly, but He judges the Jews through the Gentiles.

Those of us who are Gentiles need to remember that every spiritual blessing we have ever received we owe to the Jewish people. Jesus said in **John 4:22**, ***"Salvation is of the Jews."*** Every single blessing we have ever received in salvation we owe to one people—the Jewish people. God expects us, as Gentiles, to recognize that and act accordingly. **(See Romans 11:17–22.)** When it comes to judgment, God judges the Gentiles directly. But He judges the Jews through the Gentiles. Through hundreds of years of Jewish history God has persistently used Gentile nations to judge the Jews for their disobedience and their unfaithfulness.

The final judgment of Israel will take place during the Great Tribulation. Consider Jeremiah's prophecy concerning this time:

**Jeremiah 30:3** *“For behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will bring back from captivity [exile] My people Israel and Judah,” says the Lord. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’”*

No matter what any government or politician thinks, the Bible says, “they shall possess it.” Everybody who knows the Bible knows “the land” is the little piece of land which is today called Israel. A preacher once said, “If the return of the Jews to their land was from God, there would be peace.” However, he did not know his Bible, because God says in connection with the return of the Jews: **Jeremiah verses 5–6** These are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah.

*“For thus says the Lord: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale?’”*

Jeremiah says the greatest pressure that Israel has ever experienced is immediately ahead, after they have returned to the land.

**verse 7** *“Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.”*

Notice, it does not say saved from it, but saved out of it. Their God will deal in judgment with the Jewish people. At the end of the Tribulation, their judgment will have taken place.

### **3. THE JUDGMENT OF THE GENTILE NATIONS**

Following the judgment of Israel, God will judge the other nations. This judgment takes place at the end of the Tribulation just before the beginning of the Millennium.

**Joel 3:1–2** *“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives [exiles] of Judah and Jerusalem, [Notice this refers to the same period—the return of the Jewish people to their own land. God says:] I will also gather all nations [Gentile nations] and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.”*

God says that when He has finished dealing with the Jews, He will then deal with the Gentiles. He will deal with them on one basis—the way they have treated Israel. That is a remarkable fact, but there it is. In the passage above, God has two accusations against the Gentile nations:

**first**, they have oppressed the Jewish people.

and **second**, they have divided up (or partitioned) the land. God says, “That’s My land. I gave it to Israel, and no human authority or government has any right whatever to divide that land up.”

What is happening today? Exactly what God said should not happen. The land has been partitioned, is being partitioned and probably will be partitioned. However, when God comes in judgment, He will judge the nations that have partitioned that land. Unfortunately, He could put Britain at the top of the list because Britain was responsible for a major partitioning of the land. At the end of World War I the British were authorized to provide a national home for the Jewish people in what was then a large area known as Palestine. In the year 1922, by a single decision of Winston Churchill, Britain allocated seventy-six percent of that land to an Arab nation, which is now called Jordan, where no Jew was permitted to live. The remaining twenty-four percent of land has been divided by the United Nations. All of these Gentile nations, including the U.S. are going to have to answer to Jesus for these acts when He comes.

Regarding the judgment of the nations, we read in **Matthew 25:32–46** that Jesus separates the nations into two groups: the sheep and the goats. The sheep nations are invited into the kingdom; the goat nations are dismissed from the kingdom and sent into everlasting punishment. The basic principle of division is the way they have treated the brothers of Jesus. This is so important because Israel is a major factor in world affairs today and many of the nations are lining up on the wrong side. Israel cannot defend itself; but, sooner or later, when the time comes, God will intervene.

#### **4. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT**

The fourth judgment is before the Great White Throne which is described in **Revelation 20**. This great eternal judgment is a judgment of all unbelievers. John the Revelator paints a most awesome and vivid picture of what this final and great judgment will be like.

**Revelation 20:11–15** **verse 11**: *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*

Think how terrible to appear before the One from whom earth and heaven have to flee, when He is in His majesty and in His wrath against sinners.

John continues in **verse 12** *“And I saw the dead, the small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”*

In other words, the book contains the records of all they had done in this life; and this was the most complete and universal judgment. All unsaved human beings from every corner of this earth were assembled before this throne. This is how John describes it:

**verses 13–14** *“The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades [Sheol, the place of departed spirits] delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”*

Remember that the second death is the irrevocable, eternal banishment from the presence of Almighty God, but it is not cessation of consciousness. Once we become beings in the womb, consciousness continues forever and ever. And then John sums it up this way:

**verse 15** *“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

### **Held to Account**

We need to note some important facts from this passage.

**First**, even after resurrection, these individuals are still called “the dead.” John says, *“I saw the dead, the small and great, standing before God.”* Their bodies had been restored to them, but they were still dead. *Dead in trespasses and sins*; alienated and cut off from the life of God; and resurrected in their bodies to receive judgment for what they had done in their bodies.

**Second**, there are universal records kept of everything that each one of us has ever done. All has been recorded. There will be universal accountability, each one being required to answer for what they have done.

The word accountability is most unpleasant in the ears of modern culture. There are many different religions and philosophies today whose supreme objective is to declare to man that he is not really accountable to anybody but himself. I want to serve notice on you, that is a lie! Man is accountable to his Creator, who will one day be his judge. All of us are accountable.

Finally, there is only one way of escape from this judgment: through the Book of Life. Everyone whose name was not written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire. Now who, or what kind of person, has his name written in the Book of Life? In **Revelation 21:7**, John goes on to describe the kind of person whose name is written in the Book of Life.

Jesus says: ***“He who overcomes shall inherit all things [all the glories of heaven], and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”***

Notice, the primary requirement is to overcome; not to be defeated by sin and by the world and by ungodliness and by Satan. ***“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”***

John defines overcoming in his first epistle:

**1 John 5:4–5** ***“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”***

The requirement is to be born of God through faith. What are we required to believe? That Jesus is the Son of God. He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God and is born again through that faith, has the faith to overcome the world. That overcoming faith will cause him to inherit all things. God will be his God and he will be the son of God. The alternative is stated in **Revelation 21:8**, where John describes the kind of person who will be thrown into the lake of fire:

***“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”***

It is easy for us to understand that immoral persons and murderers and sorcerers and liars will be in the lake of fire. But would you note that the first two in the list are the cowardly and unbelieving? Those are the first two categories of people who are lost. I believe a person can get to heaven without theology. But I doubt whether a person will ever get to heaven without courage. In the midst of an unbelieving world, it takes courage to believe Jesus is the Son of God and remain faithful to Him.



## **The Great Divide**

Someone was once visiting the Rocky Mountains in the state of Colorado. Someone pointed a little west of where they stood and said, “That ridge is the watershed of the continental United States. The rain that falls on one side flows down into the Pacific Ocean and the rain that falls on the other side ultimately flows down into the Gulf of Mexico.”

He realized that even though there might only be a few inches between where two raindrops fell, their ultimate destiny was thousands of miles apart. As he was picturing that in his mind, he said to myself, “Jesus is the watershed of human souls. Their destiny in eternity is determined by which side of Jesus they are on.”

Two souls can be so close together—husband and wife, parent and child, or brother and sister—yet one is on one side of Jesus, having received Him and believed in Him. The other is on the other side, not having believed and not having received. Though they are so close in this life, their ultimate destiny is an immeasurable distance apart. One will end in the eternal glory of heaven and the other will end in the lake of fire, the place of eternal judgment and destiny for unbelievers. The tiny little difference of a few inches in where two raindrops fall in the Rockies determines their ultimate destination. So, it is with you and me. Just a tiny little difference in this life—one side of Jesus or the other—will determine our eternal destiny.

### **The four main judgments, then, are:**

1. The judgment seat of Christ, a judgment of believers only.
2. The judgment of Israel in the Great Tribulation.
3. The judgment of all other nations before Christ’s throne at the beginning of the Millennium.
4. The final judgment of all the remaining dead before the Great White Throne.

Are you prepared? If so, praise God. If not, then perhaps you should pray this prayer:

Lord Jesus, You have spoken to us many times that You are coming quickly, You are coming soon. You have warned us many times that we need to be ready for Your coming. I pray that You would grant me, by Your grace, to be ready for Your return, to be ready to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus and give an answer to the things I have done in the body. Lord, I pray for mercy, in Your name—the name of Jesus. Amen.