

100 BIBLE LESSONS

Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 47 – THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Judgment has to do with the discernment or separation between good and evil.

In the Bible the most important judgment is the final judgment, the ultimate separation of good and evil at the end of history. The precise time of this judgment is appointed by God (Acts 17:31), but it remains unknown to man (Matt 24:36). The return of the Lord to earth, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment, together with the end of the world—all these may be thought of as belonging to a single complex of events at the end of time.

From earliest times it has been recognized that God Himself is the Judge of mankind (Gen 18:25), and that He has the power and wisdom to judge with righteousness, truth, and justice (Ps 96:13; 98:9). The final judgment is a task given specifically to God's Son (John 5:22; Acts 17:31) to conclude His work as mediator, deliver His people from sin, and destroy all God's enemies.

The final judgment will be comprehensive in scope; it will include all people and nations from the beginning of the world to the end of history (Matt 25:31-46; Rom 14:10-12), as well as fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4). Those who trust in the Lord, and repent of their sins, will not be condemned but will enter into eternal life (Ps 1). The purpose of the final judgment is the glory of God through the salvation of the saved and the condemnation of the ungodly (2 Thess 1:3-10).

The final judgment has been anticipated throughout history in a series of judgments brought by God upon the wicked. The whole world was affected by the FLOOD and by the confusion of tongues at the Tower of BABEL (Gen 6-8; 11:1-9). The heathen nations, such as the Egyptians and Canaanites, also experienced God's judgments, just as God's people, the Israelites, did when they persisted in rebellion. These judgments serve as a continual warning of the consequences of unbelief.

The death of Jesus Christ is unique among these judgments of history. Through His death God paid the judgment price demanded by mankind's sin. The death and resurrection of Jesus are the foundations on which sinners are saved (Isa 53:5) through their trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

God's role as judge is reflected in the leadership functions of political officials, who uphold order in society and execute judgment on evildoers (Rom 13:1-7). The rulers of Israel bore special responsibility in this respect (Deut 16:18-19), as do the leaders of the church today (Matt 18:17-18). Believers also have a responsibility to judge matters of

wrongdoing among themselves (Matt 18:15), but this should always be done fairly and with compassion. Believers are never to take over the task of judgment that belongs to God alone (Heb 10:30).

Adapted from the Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary & LessonMaker. Not to be sold.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Matthew 13:47-52 and answer the following questions.

1. To what did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven? (13:47)
2. How was the net used, and what was the result? (13:47)
3. In the Parable of the Net, what did the fishermen do with the full net? (13:48)
4. What happened to the good fish? (13:48)
5. What happened to the bad fish? (13:48)
6. Why did Jesus use this analogy? (13:49)
7. Jesus interpreted His parable to say that wicked people can expect what kind of eternal destiny? (13:50)
8. What question did Jesus ask His disciples when He finished teaching? (13:51)
9. How did the disciples answer Jesus' question? (13:51)
10. How would it alter the way we live if we kept in mind the fact that God will judge?
11. How do these kinds of passages make you feel?