



The Church of God International

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

6

Understanding Eternal Judgment

Doctrinal Statement:

The time of one's judgment is the time of his opportunity for salvation, extending from one's calling by God until his death (or the resurrection at Christ's return). Those who shall qualify for God's kingdom—the overwhelming majority—shall inherit eternal life, and those who deliberately reject God's way shall be consumed in the lake of fire

In this day and age the archaic threat of “eternal judgment” is scornfully received by most, and just as quickly discarded. Yet the apostle Paul concludes his listing of “the principles of the doctrines of Christ” in Hebrews 6:1,2 with the term “eternal judgment.” Eternal judgment seems to mean everything to the modern-day human being except what it was meant to portray.

To many in the religious community, “eternal judgment” points to a fearful future, one of standing before a majestic throne and being looked down upon by a stern-faced judge, having your whole sinful life paraded before you, and then being dragged away by a couple of angels and thrown into a lake of fire. But is this what God intended “eternal judgment” to portray?

Nothing in this whole physical universe even approximates eternity. Nothing that is physical will ever be eternal. Eternity, by its very nature, and by the incredible vastness inherent in the word itself, transcends the physical. This is the great gift God holds out to us: eternity beyond this physical universe!

Final Instructions

This is a very important lesson, so

be sure you have prayed to God to open your heart and mind to receive the truth of His Word and to help you understand, because God does exist. He is real, and He is actively controlling this entire universe.

Because God is the great authority in the universe, we should never put anything ahead of Him. Paul wrote, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey...?” (Romans 6:16). So why not obey Almighty God, the Ruler and Sustainer of the entire universe? If you have your Bible and other necessary Bible study tools at hand, and if you have prayed, it is time to begin “Understanding Eternal Judgment.”

Our Position in Eternity

Can we really know what eternity holds for us, and what we can expect to be doing? What will all the saved be doing after the 1000 years of Christ's rule upon this earth?

Yes, we can know what the future holds for us. God reveals it to us, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little” (Isaiah 28:10). God uses repetition and simple words to reveal His

truth to us. By a line here and a line there He reveals the amazing future He has planned for us. And we must search all the scriptures to come to a proper understanding of that future eternal life.

In New Testament times, God spoke clearly to those He called out of the world to serve Him. The apostle Paul had this to say: “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9,10.) God has amazing plans for us and is revealing those plans to us through Christ Jesus.

The apostle John tells us he saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” a “holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven,” and that “the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them....He who overcomes shall inherit all things...and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:2,3,5,7).

These are marvelous statements from God for us to contemplate. The author of Hebrews goes on to tell us, “You have made him [man] a little lower than the angels...and set him over the works of Your hands” (Hebrews 2:7).

These revelations, true sayings of God, are more sure than the air we breathe or the food we eat. The apostle Paul reminds us that “The Spirit Himself bears

witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:16). Can you grasp that? We are the children of God, the heirs of God, and we are joint heirs with Christ, and we will be glorified with Him.

That is our position in eternity! As children of God our Father, we are going to share the same quality of life that God the Father and Jesus Christ enjoy! “God is love” (1 John 4:8)—and God loves to share! God never does anything except in love!

Please read and meditate on Hebrews 2:5–10. These verses are exciting, are they not? Presently there are only two members of the God Family: God the Father and Jesus Christ. But this Family is going to grow and expand by the addition of other begotten and born sons and daughters of God. Its influence will cover the earth and expand without end throughout the universe. “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end” (Isaiah 9:7).

This is the magnificent gift God holds out to us: eternal life with Him in the Family of God, with Jesus Christ as our Elder Brother.

Review

1. *God reveals our future with Him if we obey Him and study*

His Word.

2. *We must search all of the scriptures on any subject.*
3. *Man has been set over the works of God’s hands.*
4. *We are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and will be glorified with Him.*
5. *We must be willing to suffer with Him if need be.*
6. *We are the children of God.*
7. *God is love, and He loves to share.*
8. *There will be no end to the expansion of God’s government and family.*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite:

Isaiah 28:10; 1 Corinthians 2:9,10; Revelation 21:2,3,5,7; Hebrews 2:5–10; 1 John 4:8; Isaiah 9:7

Positions of Authority

Before Jesus was crucified He told His disciples that He would go and prepare a place for them in His Father’s House. The heavenly Temple is God’s House. It is symbolic of God’s universal government. The word *mansions* would be better translated “offices.” Jesus is telling us that He is going to prepare an office, or position, for each of us in His Father’s Temple, or Government, so that wherever He is we will be with Him (John 14:1–3).

Those who surrender to God’s way of righteousness now will reign and rule with Christ during

His coming thousand-year reign, sitting on thrones and instructing others in God's ways (Revelation 20:4).

When Jesus returns from heaven to earth in the clouds, we will meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17). At that time Jesus will give us our positions in the kingdom, based upon how productive we have been with the talent we have.

Our reward is based not so much on what we do, but how well we do with what we have. Jesus said, "And he who overcomes [meaning, overcomes our human nature in this life], and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron'" (Revelation 2:26,27). Therefore, the overcomers will be ruling with Jesus Christ here on this earth, helping to teach the nations God's way of living.

In Revelation 1:6, we are shown that we will be made kings and priests. This will be for the purpose of judging and guiding the people here on earth during the Millennium (the thousand years) and the "white throne" era in order to help them gain full entrance into the Kingdom of God (Revelation 5:9,10; 1 Corinthians 6:2).

Due to the guidance that all these people will receive from God's kings and priests, and without the influence of Satan the devil, we find that the earth will

be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9).

Review

1. *Jesus is preparing a position and place for each of us in His Father's House.*
2. *Those who yield themselves to God now will reign and rule with Christ.*
3. *When Jesus returns we will meet Him in the air.*
4. *We shall always be with the Lord.*
5. *Jesus will give us power to rule over the nations.*
6. *We will be kings and priests, guiding and directing people on earth.*
7. *Because of the guidance and the teaching given by the kings and priests, the earth will become full of the knowledge of the Lord.*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite:

John 14:1–3; Revelation 20:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17; Revelation 2:26,27; 1:6; 5:9,10; 1 Corinthians 6:2

The Church of God

If God the Father is to have Spirit-born sons and daughters in the First Resurrection, He must have a way to reach people. He has chosen to reach out to them through a spiritual organism called "the church of God." Jesus Christ Himself said, "...I will build My church, and the gates of

Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

The religious sects of Jesus' day were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Samaritans. Jesus joined none of them. In fact He called His disciples out of them. The Greek word *ecclesia*, translated "church" in English, means "called-out ones."

Jesus never intended that His church should grow huge in size or become a powerful organization. On the contrary, Christ's instruction to His church through the New Testament was not to be involved in politics in an effort to improve the world, but rather His command was to "Come out from among them and be separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17). This does not mean we should isolate ourselves from nonbelievers. Paul told Christians to stay with their unbelieving spouses. We are to avoid situations that could cause us to compromise our faith, or that would force us to divide our loyalties. We must be willing and able to actively witness for Christ to nonbelievers.

In His final prayer for His one church, Jesus prayed, "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours....I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world....They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (John 17:9–16).

God's "crowd"—*ecclesia*—is

His church, but the church is not the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ established the church to care for those God calls, to help them prepare for God's kingdom when Christ returns. The church Christ built began on the Day of Pentecost, one of the holy days of God, also called the "feast of first-fruits" (read Leviticus 23:11–16; Acts 2:1–8). The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was only the beginning. Ever since, God has been giving His Spirit to those who repent and yield to Him. It is the Holy Spirit that makes them a part of the Body of Christ on earth through which He carries out His work.

The apostle Peter, when giving instructions to the people on the Day of Pentecost about repentance and baptism, reminded them that the promises were to them and to their children, "as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). One of the works God ordained the church to perform was to prepare those He called for the eternal Kingdom of God. In other words, to teach them. Three times He told the apostle Peter to "Feed My sheep" (John 21:15–17).

The church of God takes this command of Jesus Christ very seriously. Remember, Christ is also God, and from the time Jesus Christ founded His spiritual organism, it has been known as "the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 15:9; 2

Corinthians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:5).

The very foundation and structure of the church was built upon "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:18–22).

Throughout the book of Acts, from one end to the other, we see God performing mighty acts through the apostles in building God's church and in carrying out His work.

God the Father and Jesus Christ chose this way to prepare the people being called into the Family of God, the Kingdom of God!

Review

1. *Jesus said, "I will build My church."*
2. *The Greek word ecclesia, translated "church," means "called-out ones."*
3. *The church is to be separate from the world.*
4. *Jesus prayed for those God had given Him; that is, for "the church."*
5. *Jesus did not pray for the world.*
6. *The church Jesus built began on the Day of Pentecost.*
7. *Pentecost is one of God's annual holy days, called the "feast of firstfruits."*
8. *The church is to feed (teach) those God calls.*
9. *The name of the church since its inception has been "the church of God."*

10. *The church is built on the foundation of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ, the "chief cornerstone."*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite:

Matthew 16:18; 2 Corinthians 6:17; John 17:9–16; Leviticus 23:11–16; Acts 2:1–8,39; John 21:15–17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:5; Ephesians 2:18–22

The Throne of God

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth! Imagine a God so powerful, so great, so majestic, He could create—out of nothing—this entire universe and all that is in it (Exodus 20:8).

This wonderful God is revealed to us through the Bible. Also revealed is what He intends to do for us.

See what this marvelous Personage says of Himself: "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; Not one is missing" (Isaiah 40:26). Yes, He knows every planet, star, sun, and all the galaxies. He has named each and every heavenly body. He upholds the whole universe.

In Hebrews 12:22 we find that God lives in a great city called the "heavenly Jerusalem," and it is

situated on a mount called Zion. The earthly Jerusalem in the apostles' day was a type of the heavenly.

We see many of the Old Testament saints, according to the author of Hebrews, looking forward to "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God," desiring a "better, that is, a heavenly country" (Hebrews 11:10–16). But none of them had received the promises because God had planned something better (Hebrews 11:39,40).

The church now enjoys what the believers of the Old Covenant could never know: unlimited access to the presence of God in that Holy City, Mount Zion, "the city of the living God" (Hebrews 12:18–24).

Surrounding God's throne is a multitude of angels. God's throne is holy (Psalm 47:8).

The reason God is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power is that He created all things, and He intended them to be for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11).

We live in a world where nothing is forever. Even in our brief lifetime we have seen nations come and go, governments toppled, and kingdoms and their monarchs trampled in the dust. It is not so with the Great God we serve. "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom" (Psalm 45:6). In Revelation 4, the throne of God is

described as being flanked by the twenty-four thrones of the elders, surrounded by an emerald rainbow and seven lamps, with a crystal sea in front and four living creatures on each side (Revelation 4:1–11).

In the book of Psalms we see that God sits between winged creatures who belong to a created order along with the seraphim and angels (Psalm 99:1,2).

God sits on a throne that is lifted high up, and the train from His robe fills the Temple. Above stand the seraphim having six wings, crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6:1–4).

In Revelation, chapter one, we are given a glimpse of what God the Father and Jesus Christ look like in their glorified form (Revelation 1:13–16).

Would you like to live here with your heavenly Father, and Jesus your Elder Brother? I'm sure we all would. And we will. But remember, we are not going to heaven; Jesus Christ is coming here.

Review

1. *God created the heavens and earth and all that in them is.*
2. *God has given names to every planet, star, and sun.*
3. *God lives in a great city called the heavenly Jerusalem on Mount Zion.*
4. *The earthly Jerusalem was a*

type of the heavenly Jerusalem.

5. *Many looked for that city with foundations whose architect and builder is God.*

6. *None of them received the promises because God had planned something better.*

7. *Through prayer, Christians can enter into God's throne room.*

8. *God's throne is called Holiness.*

9. *Only God is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power.*

10. *God's throne is forever.*

11. *God has at least twenty-four elders with whom He counsels.*

12. *God sits between winged creatures. There are cherubim, seraphim, and other angels present.*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite:

Exodus 20:8; Isaiah 40:26; Hebrews 11:10–16, 39, 40; 12:18–24; Psalm 47:8; Psalm 45:6; Revelation 4:1–11; Psalm 99:1,2; Isaiah 6:1–4; Revelation 1:13–16.

Graduation Day

After reading and studying about the splendor of God, we must also remember what John wrote: "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). Paul went on to say, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cym-

bal” (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23).

God’s holy and righteous character travels in the direction of His Law, the way of love. God has a great outgoing love and concern for all His children—so much so that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

God’s divine nature is the nature of love, of helping others, serving others, and giving to others. It is the nature of humility.

We are not yet perfect. We are in many ways like little children. Little children fall down and hurt themselves, but they are resilient. They get right back up and carry on. Sometimes we fall down and hurt ourselves by sinning. We must get right back up, turn to God in repentance and ask God for His forgiveness, and determine in our heart not to fail again.

We are not yet perfect, but

God looks on the heart, our inner motive and intention. John wrote, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins...” (1 John 2:1,2).

So we must never give up. There is no reason to give up. God is more “for” us than we are for ourselves. The world, the flesh, and especially Satan want us to fail. With God the Father and Jesus Christ on our side (and remember, we can go to that beautiful throne room and talk with God anytime), we cannot fail!

Therefore we should look at eternal judgment as our “graduation” to a God-plane level of living. The “judgment” is a decision based on your entire life, and this judgment is made by Jesus Christ and God the Father. God the Father is the one we go to in time of need, and He loves us so much He supplies much more than we need. Jesus loved us so much He was willing to lay down His life for us.

The “judgment” is when God determines how you will spend eternity. And for billions upon billions of people, this will be the most magnificent time they have ever experienced in their life.

God the Father and Jesus Christ are not losers. They started a good work in us, and they will finish it!

Review

1. *We should always remember that God is love.*
2. *Without love, we are no better than a clanging cymbal.*
3. *Jesus said that if we love Him, we will obey Him, and He and His Father will make their abode with us.*
4. *The judgment is a decision God makes, based on our whole life.*
5. *God determines how you will spend eternity.*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite:

1 John 4:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1; John 14:23; 3:16; 1 John 2:1,2. □

Notes:

The Church of God International

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Understanding
Eternal Judgment

Test Yourself

Write your answers to the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Check *your* answers with the answers found at the end of the test.

Detach the return coupon at the bottom of the page and mail back to us. We will send the next lesson in the series to you.

HOME BIBLE Study Course E

True or False Questions

1. By precept upon precept and line upon line, God reveals His truth.
2. We must search all the scriptures to come to an overall understanding.
3. It is obvious that all mankind knows everything God has promised.
4. We can't possibly become God's sons and daughters.
5. We are on the same level as the angels.
6. We could not possibly be joint heirs with Christ and be glorified.
7. There is no end to the expansion of God's government through Christ.
8. We can never be set over the works of God's hands.
9. Jesus said that He can't prepare a place for every human being who has ever lived.
10. Wherever Jesus is, we will be with Him.
11. It is impossible to reign and rule with Christ.
12. We will meet Jesus in the midst of the multitudes on earth.
13. We could not possibly rule the nations with a rod of iron; Jesus doesn't operate that way.
14. Jesus will do it all. There is no place for kings and priests.
15. Overcomers will teach the nations on earth God's way of living.

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*Thanks for letting
us serve you!*

16. The knowledge of the Lord is too big to spread all over the earth.
17. Jesus said that He would build His church.
18. Jesus made every effort to join with the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
19. We are told to come out from among the things of this world.
20. Jesus did not pray for the world.
21. Jesus said the world loves us because we preach Christ.
22. The church Christ built began on Easter.
23. Jesus said the church should help politicians become elected.
24. The church began on the Day of Pentecost.
25. The promises are to the children and to all whom God calls, Peter said.
26. The church has the responsibility to teach its members.
27. God's assembly of "called-out ones" is called "the church of God."
28. The apostles, prophets, and Jesus are the foundation of the church.
29. God could not possibly name all the stars in all the galaxies.
30. God lives in a city called "the heavenly Jerusalem."
31. Many in Old Testament times looked for a city built by God.
32. Through prayer we can go into the very throne room of God.
33. God's throne is called Holiness, and it is eternal.
34. Those that say they know God do not necessarily need to obey Him.
35. Jesus never said He and His Father would abide with us.
36. We can love Jesus whether we keep God's commandments or not.
37. God is worthy to receive glory and honor and He hears our prayers.
38. In Isaiah's vision the train of God's robe fills the heavenly Temple.
39. There are twenty-four seats around God's throne where the twenty-four elders sit.
40. If we can speak with the tongues of angels we are sure to be saved.

Answers to True or False Questions: Score Yourself: Miss 0-3 = Excellent; Miss 4-6 = Good; Miss 7-9 = Fair

39. True; 40. False.
20. True; 21. False; 22. False; 23. False; 24. True; 25. True; 26. True; 27. True; 28. True; 29. False; 30. True; 31. True; 32. True; 33. True; 34. False; 35. False; 36. False; 37. True; 38. True; 1. True; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False; 5. False; 6. False; 7. True; 8. False; 9. False; 10. True; 11. False; 12. False; 13. False; 14. False; 15. True; 16. False; 17. True; 18. False; 19. True;