

# THE224 Christian Narrative 2 Redemption

## Unit 6c The Final Judgment of Christ

Presented by the



**LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE**  
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

For Use by the

**Blue Letter Bible Institute**

**[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)**

A Ministry of the

**Blue Letter Bible**

**[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)**

Hello and welcome to Session 6C of Christian Narrative 2. In this session, we'll be talking about the judgment of Christ. Our main teaching point for this session is that when Christ returns, he will judge all of humanity. Again, I'll remind you of the progress that we've done. First, we'll see Christ's return, then we'll see his millennium kingdom, and finally we'll see his judgment of humanity. Now, what I want to do for us is highlight. We talked about four views of the millennial kingdom in our last session. I'm going to drill down to just the two pre-millennial positions and talk about how they differ in their approach to judgment. At the close of our last session, I said the bulk of evangelical Christians hold to this pre-millennial position in one of its two forms, either classical or pre-tribulational or dispensational. And so I'm going to focus our time talking about how these two approaches to the pre-millennial position differ on the judgment, and then we'll just talk about some of the various aspects of the judgment itself.

Let's start by taking a look at the pre-tribulational or dispensational view which holds that there are multiple judgments. A key text for that, Matthew 25:31-46. I'm going to read that to you because that will help give us some context to why they're going to argue that there is more than one judgment at the end of all things. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food. As you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food. As you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Also, they're going to hold onto 2 Corinthians 5:10 which really all the positions hold, but they are going to make some distinctions here. There you see, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Finally, they look to Revelation 20:11-15. "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Now, the key points about this view, the dispensational view of pre-millennialism is that there's a judgment of the nations after the tribulation for the millennium. There's a judgment of the works of believers, also sometimes called the Bema seat of judgment. And then finally, that there is a judgment for unbelievers. So three distinct moments of judgment. Again, we read the work of Grudem to help us understand how this approach is viewed. "From a dispensational perspective," Grudem says, "Matthew 25 does not refer to a final judgment, but rather to a judgment that comes after the tribulation and before the beginning of the millennium. They say that this will be a judgment of the nations in which the nations are judged according to how they have treated the Jewish people during the tribulation. Those who have treated the Jews well and are willing to submit to Christ will enter into the millennium. Those

who have not treated them well and have refused will be refused entrance. Thus, in the dispensationalist view, there are different judgments: the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25 determines who enters the millennium; the judgment of believers in 2 Corinthians 5 in which Christians will receive degrees of reward; and a great white throne judgment at the end of the millennium to declare eternal punishments for unbelievers.”

So here’s a description of a multiple judgment view. And we’ve got to contrast that against the classic pre-millennial approach which really argues for a singular judgment. So they’re going to take some other passages. John 5:28-29, “Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.” Acts 17:31, there is “a fixed day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by the raising of this man from the dead.” All right? So a singular judgment. 2 Peter 3:7, “By the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.” Matthew 7:22-23, “On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many (righteous) works in your name?’ Some people say. ‘Depart from me. I never knew you.’” 2 Timothy 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on the day of his coming, and not only that. He would also give it to those who have loved his appearing.” Revelation 11:18, “The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” And of course, Revelation 20:11-15 we’ve already read.

So there’s some overlap in the passages that classic pre-millennialism will hold because we’re talking about judgments, and some of these passages are the same. But most classic pre-millennialists will hold that while there are many passages that discuss judgment, they seem to be talking about a singular judgment. And passages that are discussing the judgment, often there is a separation of the righteous and the wicked within that judgment. For a slightly deeper understanding of this particular position, we look to Berkhof. Berkhof suggests that “it should be noted that the Bible always speaks of the future judgment as a single event. It teaches us to look forward not to days but to the day of judgment and the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Premilleniarians feel the force of this argument, for they reply that it may be a day of a thousand years. Moreover, there are passages of Scripture from which it is abundantly evident that the righteous and the wicked appear in judgment together for a final separation. Furthermore, it should be noted that the judgment of the wicked is represented as a concomitant of the parousia and also of the revelation. And, finally, it should be borne in mind that God does not judge the nations as nations where eternal issues are at stake, but only individuals; and that a final separation of the righteous and the wicked cannot possibly be made until the end of the world. It is hard to see how anyone can give a tolerable and self-consistent interpretation of Matthew 25, except on the supposition that the judgment referred to is the universal judgment of all men, and that they are judged, not as nations, but as individuals.” So obviously, you see him there disagreeing with some more of the dispensational approach to pre-millennialism. And that’s okay. There’s a couple of different approaches here. Again, remember what they focus on. All of them agree that both the just and the unjust will be judged. There’s simply a disagreement in these two camps on how the judgment will take place.

Let's turn our attention to the who and what of judgment. Moving away from various approaches to it, what are some of the clear things that we can see laid out in Scripture for us that will help us understand how Christ will in fact judge all people? First of all, we see it clearly laid out for us in Scripture that it is Jesus Christ himself who will be the judge. 2 Timothy 4:1, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom." So, okay, it's clear to us that it is Jesus Christ and none other that will do judgment. Romans 2:5-7 tell us that unbelievers will, of course, be judged. "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to their works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life."

So, unbelievers will be judged. And as we look through Scripture, what we discover is that there will in fact, it seems to be, degrees of punishment meted out to unbelievers. There is more than one passage that discusses this. Revelation 20:12-13, we see that the great books opened "and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done." We see that both in verse 12 and then we see it again in verse 13: "Each one of them, according to what they had done." So clearly, there's a judgment related to their works. We see also that their secrets will be revealed. Romans 2:16, "On that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." So there's this idea that before the judgment, particularly when we're talking about unbelievers, that they will be judged based on their deeds and that the secrets of their life will be revealed, that there's nothing that will be hidden from God at the judgment place, that we will be laid bare, that individuals will come before God, and that the whole total sum of their works throughout their lives will be judged by him.

Now, as we come back to Scriptures, we also see that there is a clear judgment of believers as well. We look at Romans 14, starting in verse 10. "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 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 will give an account of himself to God." Now, Paul is here speaking to believers when he's talking about this judgment. So we must recognize that as unbelievers will be judged, believers also will be judged. However, where believers are judged by the deeds of their life, Christians are also, in a different way, rewarded for the works of their life. We read of this in 1 Corinthians 3, starting in verse 12. "Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

So, okay, our works as believers are not the entrance into heaven. We are justified by faith in Christ Jesus, but we will be rewarded based on what we've done for his account. We are not laying the foundation of our salvation with our works. We are building on the foundation of our salvation with our works. Also, we're told that believers will also have their secrets revealed in a very real sense. 1 Corinthians 4:5, "Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God." And also in Colossians 3:25, "For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done because there is no partiality." There is no partiality. God will

look both to the secrets of the believer and to the secrets of the unbeliever. So who? Christ will judge. Who will he judge? Believers and unbelievers, the just and the unjust. And what will occur? A penalty for sin and a reward for righteousness. Also, we'll see the revealing of secrets.

Now, we also see that angels will be judged in some manner. 2 Peter 2:4 talks about this. It says, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment." And 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 tells us, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!" So we see that angels will be judged. And in fact, we're told there later on in 1 Corinthians 6 that believers will in fact participate in the judgment. So Christ will be the one to judge. We will participate as believers in some way in this judgment. Just and unjust will be judged. Angels will also be judged. What we're beginning to see is the whole of creation falls underneath the judgment of Christ. This is why read Philippians, it tells us every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. There is absolute universal agreement that Jesus Christ is Lord. And this cannot be escape. It will occur during the millennium. It will occur at the final judgment when every knee will bow. Some willingly and some unwillingly, but all will bow.

Now, we ask the why of the final judgment. What's the point? What are we seeking? Well, first of all, let's recognize we're seeking justice. God is a god of justice. 1 Peter 1:17, "And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile." God judges impartially. He is just and he will judge according to individuals' deeds. Romans 2:11, "God does not show partiality." There is no partiality in God. Revelation 19:1-2, "After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, chanting, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.'" So, great judgment of God, but that it is true and that it is just and that he judges rightly. So one of the primary reasons for the judgment is that full justice might come to the earth. And also we want to see accountability, right? Romans 3:19, "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God." The judgment is about justice and about accountability. And the believer need not be afraid but justice and accountability are the goals of the final judgment.

What are the results of the final judgment? This is important. Well, first of all, there will be resurrected bodies. How do we define this? There will be eternal bodies with beginning but no end. 1 Corinthians 15, probably the most classic passage that talks about the resurrected bodies. "But someone will ask," it says there, starting in verse 35, "'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other form of grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another kind for animals, another kind for birds, and another kind for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, there is another glory of the moon, and there is another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a

natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are we also those who are of dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

So there is this clear idea that we are going to receive a new body, what is called the firstfruits, right? This is what Christ had: the firstfruits. And that after that point, there will be this opportunity for us to experience this new body that is free from the pain and sickness and suffering and disease. These things have passed away. Behold, God is making us new. It's a wonderful passage. Revelation 20 and 21 talk much about what it will look like for us after the judgment. So we will have resurrected bodies. Now, the result of the final judgment, some will be sent to hell. Hell can be defined as a place of eternal conscious punishment for the unjust. Again, there are passages that talk about this. Matthew 25:41, "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" We can look at Revelation 14:9-11. "And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark in its name.'"

What we begin to see throughout these texts is that hell is a place of eternal conscious punishment for the unjust, an undying flame, a place of continual torment. This is the place reserved for those who reject the mercy and justice that God offers through Jesus Christ. That is another result of the final judgment. Then we come to heaven. This is the place where God dwells. And we're told that those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will enter this place. It is really the antithesis of hell. Where that is a place of conscious torment and separation, of darkness and flame, heaven is a place of constant relationship. There is no sickness, pain, suffering, or death. These things have passed away. It is a place of light and hope. John tells us in chapter 14 of his gospel, "In my Father's house are many rooms." This is Jesus saying this. "If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." Revelation 21:1, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth," for the old had passed away and the new had come. So heaven is a place where we will have an opportunity to go and we will be with God into eternity, forever, no longer struggling with the fallenness of sin because it has been dealt with. The curse has been removed. We look at that. The return of Jesus Christ, the millennial reign, and the judgment is all part of God's plan to remove the curse.

Finally, we'll see restoration. And this is a beautiful picture. God will restore the earth to its original design. We can see lots of great passages that will talk to us about this reality. Let me share with you Romans 8:19-21. "Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Romans 8 gives us a picture of creation sitting in longing, in anticipation of the return of Christ, where it will be restored to its proper place.

If you remember from Christian Narrative 1, one of the things that we talked about was that sin actually impacts nature itself, that nature has been impacted by man's decision to walk away from God. And so creation waits longingly for the day when God restores all things because in the restoration of all things, it will receive back its original intended purpose. There's a beautiful restoration of things back to the way they were. The beginning of the Bible, we have a story of God creating man, putting him in the garden, and asking him to tend that garden, walking with him in the cool of the day, in perfect harmony and relationship. And at the end of Scripture, we see that once again, that relationship between man and God is restored. They walk together. There is a presence in the ability for man to come into the kingdom of heaven. There is a restoration of creation. There is a new garden planted. There is new life and new hope. The story being told to us in Scripture is the story of God redeeming his people. And so it is fitting for us to end by talking about heaven, the place where God dwells, and the opportunity we have to join him there. It's fitting for us to talk about the restoration of all things, for God will restore us back to our original design and our original purpose, both as human beings and as creation.

So we've talked about the idea that when Christ returns, he will judge all of humanity. And as we close this session, and this is the last session in our unit and in our study in total, let us be reminded that God is restoring all things to himself, that the plan of God through Jesus Christ, his resurrected son, is to reach you and I in our lost-ness and to restore us back to the original intended purposes he had for our life, to bring us into right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We should never fear Christ's return, his reign, or his judgment. As children of God, we come before the Father and cry "Abba!" And therefore, like creation, we should eagerly wait and long for the day when Christ will return. We should actively participate in communicating the gospel to all the nations so that we bring back the king. Any discussion about the end times should be one of joy and excitement in the life of the Christian, for there is nothing to fear, there is everything to gain, and there is much to look forward to. I pray that as you continue to research and dig into understanding the end times, that that would be the conclusion of your study, that we rejoice in knowing that Christ will return. And when he returns, he will remove sickness, pain, suffering, and death. Those things will be no more, for he is creating newness and new life and new hope through his son Jesus Christ. I close this session with one word: Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.