

# Judgment Day

Fear has been the traditional reaction to the words "Judgment Day." It is no wonder! Dark-age theology has promoted a picture of a 24-hour horror when Jesus returns, brings the dead back (from wherever they were), tells them their eternal fate (which apparently they had already experienced), and sends them back to their rewards and punishments. He then burns up the earth, and that's it!

The Bible, however, gives a different picture. Psalm 96:10-13 sums it up well:

**"Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth:  
The world also shall be established  
that it shall not be moved:  
He shall judge the people righteously.  
Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad:  
Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.  
Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein:  
Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice  
before the Lord:  
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth:  
He shall judge the world with righteousness,  
And the people with his truth."**

The fact is, the "judgment day" lasts a thousand years. (II Peter 3:7-13) And, according to the Apostle Peter, it combines the passing of the old order ("the heavens and earth which are now") with the establishment of a wonderful new order ("new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness").

Another fact is that there is more than one judgment day. The present, between the first advent of Jesus and the establishment of Christ's peaceable kingdom, is "the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2) for Jesus' disciples. The second advent of Jesus (II Peter 3:7-13) is the judgment day for the institutions of this world followed by the judgment of individuals. (Revelation 20:11-13)

This two-part judgment (see [SALVATIONS](#)) was pictured in Israel's experiences when they were delivered out of bondage in Egypt. At that first "Passover," the "first-born" were delivered first, during the night. This pictures the judgment and salvation of the "church of the firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23) during the nighttime of the Christian age. When the Millennial morning arrives, the remainder of mankind will be delivered

from its bondage of sin and death even as the nation of Israel was delivered the morning after the nighttime deliverance of the firstborn.

In brief, the Scriptures summarize the matter thusly:

**—John 12:47, 48:**

While Jesus came at the first advent to save the world by his offering, he did not come to judge those who would not believe him in this life. Those will be judged "in the last day" when the truth will be made plain to them. They will not be judged by their deeds in this life, but according to their deeds in that future age. (Revelation 20:12 where "books" = the truth from the Scriptures. Revelation 22:12)

**—Acts 17:31:**

The time for the judgment of unbelievers is the Millennial Age, the "appointed" day in which "He will judge the world in righteousness" by Christ. (I Timothy 4:10 shows the "special" salvation now of the church and also the salvation later of "all men.")

**—John 5:22:**

God has given Jesus the entire work of judgment. When Jesus has finished the work, he will turn the perfected race over to God. (I Corinthians 15:25-28)

**—I Corinthians 6:2, 3:**

Jesus' disciples will participate with him in judging the world and the angels!

**—I Peter 4:17:**

Before faithful Christians will receive the honor of judging the world and angels, they must pass the judgment of this Christian Age — the time before the establishment of the peaceable kingdom.

**—Matthew 11:11, 22, 24:**

When the general judgment of mankind arrives, it will be a time for the judgment of righteous men who have not been disciples as well as for those who have lived lives of degradation. John the Baptist will receive his judgment then. But so will Tyre and Sodom, places known for their depravity. Interestingly, it will be "more tolerable" for those wicked cities who acted in ignorance than for those like Capernaum who were exposed

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to the light. Yet, it is clear that all have the opportunity to pass the judgment. No one will be condemned before at least a century of opportunity. (Isaiah 65:20)

The Scriptures consistently picture the judgment day for the world as a wonderful and joyous period. They clearly point out the seriousness of the age and its objectives, but they also stress the optimism of that "day."

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In Volume I of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES there is an entire helpful chapter on "The Day of Judgment." The Volume is available through this website at the **Available Literature** Link.