



Old Testament Reading: Psalm 96:1-13
New Testament Reading: Acts 17:22-31

In Search of Old Paths
“From Thence He Shall Come
to Judge the Quick and the Dead”
Revelation 22:12-17

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

The central theme of the New Testament is Jesus’ physical return to the earth as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to judge both the living and the dead.

- The promise of our Lord’s return to earth is called the “blessed hope,” and it is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament.
- During the first three centuries after the resurrection of Jesus, millions of Christians willingly laid down their lives as an expression of their faith in the Lord’s promise to return to the earth and to balance the scales of justice on their behalf.

- That day is called the Great White Throne Judgment of God, which will take place at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ, and is the final event before the creation of the new heaven and new earth.

This section of the Apostle's Creed is about the Lord Jesus being God's only Son, and our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; the third day, He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, **from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.** "Quick" is an old English term that describes something that is living.

- Seven years before the Lord returns, those who received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of their lives and receive their crowns and rewards for their faithfulness to Christ.
 - **In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18**, the Apostle Paul said, when the Lord Jesus descends from heaven and calls His bride to "**come forth**," the bodies of those believers who died from the day of Pentecost to the day of the Rapture will be raised from their graves, united with those believers who are still alive on that day, and be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and then stand before the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - **In Revelation 20:11-15**, the Apostle John said, at the end of the Millennium, the bodies of the unbelievers of all ages will be raised from their graves, united with those who are alive, but did not honor Christ during the Millennium, to stand before the Great White Throne and be judged according to their works. Those whose names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life will suffer the "second death," which is to be cast into the lake of fire forever, along with the devil (Satan), the beast, and the false prophet. This includes the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars.
 - The "Lamb's Book of Life" is a permanent, secure section of the "Book of Life," which is a written record of those who have eternal life through their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. The names of the unbelievers will have been "blotted out" by their unbelief.
 - While there will be varying degrees of punishment for the wicked, which will be based on their works, this event represents the final, irrevocable sentencing of those who refused to receive God's gift of salvation.

1. The Theme of God's Judgment is in both the Old and New Testaments – Psalm 96:1-13 – Vs. 13 – “For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth.”

- Isaiah 11:4 – **“But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth, and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.”**
- At the Great White Throne Judgment, God will balance the scales of justice. He will set things right for those who have been mistreated and scorned by the world.
- In Matthew 19:28, Jesus said to His disciples, **“Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.”**
 - Jesus said He will be the judge of the world.
 - Jesus said those who received Him as their Savior and Lord will sit in judgment with Him.
- In Matthew 25:31, Jesus continues, **“When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne”,** not just to reign, but to judge according to the intent, as well as the actions of men.
- In Acts 10:42, Peter says, **“He (Jesus) ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as the judge of the living and the dead.”**
- In Romans 2:16, the Apostle Paul wrote, **“On the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”**
- In 1 Corinthians 4:5, Paul goes even further: **“Wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts.”**

2. The Fact of God's Judgement is to lead us to Hope, Repentance, Faith, and Faithfulness. Matthew 24-25.

- **Hope** – God will right all the wrongs that have been done to us.
- **Repentance** – God will forgive us for the wrongs we have done to others.
- **Faith** – the assurance we have that He has the power to forgive us of our sins.
- **Faithfulness** – a deeper desire to live above the shallowness and bitterness of the world; to live for the Lord.

The illustration of the Ten Virgins – Matthew 25:1-13

- The ten virgins represent all those who claim to be waiting for Jesus to return.
 - The five wise virgins stand for true believers; those who are living their lives for Jesus, and have adequate oil in their lamps, meaning they are filled with the Holy Spirit; i.e., they are ready to meet Jesus.
 - The other five virgins represent those who look like believers and act like believers, but they have no oil in their lamps; they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, their faith is dried up; their hearts are far away from Him; i.e., they are certainly not ready to meet the Lord Jesus face to face.

The illustration of the Talents – Matthew 25:14-29

- The talents represent the things God entrusted to us:
 - He entrusted believers with His saving grace.
 - Have we used it? Have we abused it? Have we taken it for granted? Are we filled with the Holy Spirit?
 - He entrusted unbelievers with His unconditional love.
 - His Son gave His life for your sin. Have you received it? Have you rejected it? Have you taken it for granted? Have you rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?
 - Everything we have in this life has been given to us by God, to some more than others. But when believers stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, or when unbelievers stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, God will not judge us on the basis of what others did, but rather what we did with what He entrusted to us.

3. The Basis of God's Judgment will be our Love for God and our Love for Others. Matthew 25:31-46 – Vs. 40 – “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

- The measure by which the Lord Jesus will judge our lives is by the way we love others, especially believers, and especially the least of them.

- Jesus said the only convincing evidence of our eternal salvation is a life of faithfulness to God that flows from God's saving grace and then manifests itself in our love for others.