

A Bible Guide about:

Judgment

The Bible gives many descriptions of God dispensing judgment on individuals, communities, and nations through captivities, disasters, and destruction. But *all* mankind is under judgment of death as a result of sin (Romans 6:23). God warned Adam in the Garden of Eden that if he ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would die (Gen. 2:16-17). The consequence was carried out when Adam ate the fruit (Gen. 3:19). Death comes to all mankind as a result of Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12).

At Jesus' return, "the dead in Christ will rise" to reign with him for 1000 years (1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:6; see Bible Guide: Resurrection). At the end of that age, all the rest of mankind will be raised from the dead for a final great judgment before the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Those whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire, where they will perish eternally – the second death (Mal. 4:1, 3; Rev. 20:14). This great judgment is known as both the wrath of God and the Day of the Lord.

Wrath of God

God's wrath is reserved for those who refuse to acknowledge Him as God. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom 1:18-32, NASB), against what comes from the "earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5-6, NIV). "For those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger" (Rom. 2:8). "Because of [man's] stubbornness and unrepentant heart, [he stores] up wrath for [himself] in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5, NASB). In His patience, God has not yet carried out the judgment of destruction for sin, giving all people opportunity to obtain salvation to eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:22; 2 Peter 3:9).

Day of the Lord

The Day of the Lord can refer to the day of God's wrath and judgment on mankind. "The day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fuel and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it" (Isa. 13:9-13). This is the day that God will "punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity" (Isa. 13:11).

"The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD" when the nations will be judged (Joel 2:31; 3:12-16). "And all the earth will be devoured in the fire of [God's] jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth" (Zeph. 1:18). "'For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,' says the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 4:1). "The present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed by intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:7, 10).

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Hell

The Greek word *Gehenna* is translated "hell" or "hell-fire" in the New Testament. *Gehenna* (hell) refers to a place of fire. *Gehenna* literally refers to the Valley of Ben-hinnom southwest of Jerusalem where children were sacrificed by fire to the false god Molech in Old Testament days (2 Chron. 28:3, 33:6; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31-32, 32:35). By Jesus' time, this valley held a garbage dump where a fire consumed the refuse. Jesus uses the term *Gehenna*, adding that it is "fiery" and "unquenchable," to describe destruction due to sin in contrast to life (Matt. 18:9; Mk. 9:43). This place where the wicked are destroyed is called the lake of fire, the second death (Rev. 20:14).

Lake of Fire

Jesus refers to judgment of some in a fire which is "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). After his final deception, the devil will be thrown "into the lake of fire and brimstone" and tormented to the ages of the ages (Rev. 20:10; Ezk. 28:18-19). Then all dead will be raised and judged according to their deeds. "If anyone's name [is] not found written in the book of life, he [will be] thrown into the lake of fire" to be destroyed and die (Rev. 20:11-15). The Old Testament describes the wicked ultimately being "no more," "cut off," "passing away," etc. (see Psalm 37). Malachi tells of a coming day when the wicked will be destroyed in a great fire so that they become ashes (Mal. 4:1, 3).

Escape from Wrath

God provides a way for mankind to escape the judgment of eternal death through the blood of Jesus (Rom. 6:23), for "God has not destined [those in Christ] for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9; see Bible Guide: Salvation).

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14
Isaiah 2:2-4
Ezekiel 18
Joel 3:1-2, 12-17
Matthew 12:33-37
John 5:21-30; 12:46-50
Romans 2:5-11, 16
2 Corinthians 5:10
Hebrews 9:27-28
1 Peter 1:15-21
2 Peter 2:4-11

God as Judge:

1 Chronicles 16:31-34
Psalm 9:4-5, 7-8; 50:1-6
Psalm 96:7-13

Jesus Messiah as God's Representative Judge:

Psalm 110:1-2, 5-6
Isaiah 11:1-5
Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46
Acts 10:38-43; 17:30-31
2 Timothy 4:1, 8
Revelation 19:11-16



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