

Hell — Here Comes The Judge

July 7, 2019

Each one of us followed the story. It was constantly in the news for two years. It wasn't that long ago. It was from 2017 to 2019. Does anyone remember what held national attention in those years? Do you remember the Mueller report and the Special Council Investigation?

For two years, Robert Mueller used unlimited resources to see if there was Russian interference in the 2016 election and if suspicious ties between the Trump campaign and Moscow were intentional and nefarious.

He investigated everything and everyone. Thirty-four people were charged with crimes. Eight were sent to prison. Most were not imprisoned from the purpose of the original investigation but from process crimes where they didn't tell the full truth and their lack of candor was discovered. Others were sent to jail not from process crimes but from previous crimes. Those are crimes in someone's past that were discovered in the process of lawyers turning lives inside out and upside down when they scoured people's lives looking for Russian connections.

The special council issued 2,800 subpoenas. They exercised 500 search warrants. They interviewed more than 500 witnesses. They obtained millions of documents from the President and others. The special council exercised its power to confiscate people's clothing, emails, laptops, tax returns, and even the hard drives right out of their computers. In just one Mueller case, that of Roger Stone, the government estimated it turned over 9 terabytes of information to

investigate. If that was printed on paper, it would be a stack twice as high as the Washington monument.¹

This morning, I am not concerned with the outcome of Mueller's investigation. I simply want you to imagine what it would be like if you were the focus of his investigation and there was a team of lawyers with unlimited resources investigating you. How would you feel if someone reviewed every email you sent, every text message you wrote, and everything you viewed on your web browser? How would it feel to have lawyers reviewing everything you spend your money on and every place you traveled for years.

Would any of us feel violated? Would any of us be scared the lawyers might find something embarrassing or convicting that we don't want printed in the newspaper? I think every one of us would be scared under that kind of intense scrutiny. I am sure aggressive lawyers would reveal things about ourselves we didn't even know existed.

Thankfully, everyone in this room is breathing sigh of relief because we were not the focus of Robert Mueller's Special Council Investigation. Our lives were not turned inside out by lawyers and exposed to the public.

Before we relax too much, you need to know a day is coming when the lives of many will be investigated with intense scrutiny. There is a day coming when everything that many people spoke, thought, and did will be tried in a court and people will be held accountable. That day when all sin is finally accounted for will make Mueller's investigation look like child's play.

¹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mueller-team-likely-compiled-massive-amount-of-documents-and-evidence_n_5c9cbd64e4b08c450cd24fea

Today, we will find out the details on the day of final judgment and who will preside as the judge on that great day.

If you are new, I am thankful to have you with us. At CrossWinds, we are in the second week of a small four-week series to look at what the Bible teaches about hell. Last week, we studied a brief overview on hell to learn what the Bible says about it. This week, we are studying something that comes just before people are sent to hell. It is all over both the Old and New Testament. It is something so obvious that many of us miss it. It is called the day of final judgment. It will take place immediately before God consigns the wicked to the Lake of Fire.

This day of final judgment is a day when lives will be exposed, sin will be revealed and a just judgement given. It is written about in both the Old and New Testaments.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, [and after that comes judgment](#), Hebrews 9:27 (ESV)

but [they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead](#). 1 Peter 4:5 (ESV)

because [he has fixed a 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 raising him from the dead.” Acts 17:31 (ESV)

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](#). Romans 2:5 (ESV)

The problem is that today people live as if there is no final judgment. People instinctively think that if they can get away with something, they have nothing to worry about. They think if they were not honest on their tax returns and they were not caught, they got away with it. That isn’t true. They will give an

answer on the final day of judgment. If they pad their expense reports, they get away with it, they never got away with their dishonesty. They need to answer to God on this great final day of judgment. The point of the final judgment is that while sins may be forgotten, they are not forgiven. At the final judgment, God will right all wrongs. Justice will be served. Nobody gets away with anything.

This morning, we are going to answer questions about final judgment. Let's look at some of them.

When will God's judgment take place?

God's judgment takes place in two places. God's judges in history and at the end of history.

God judges sin in history.

We often forget God is a spectator of world events. From the moment God stepped into history to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden for their sin, he has continued to step into history to judge sin. If we begin tracing our fingers through Scripture, soon after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden we run across the flood. The flood was God stepping in to judge sin in the world. A little later, we see the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. That was God stepping into history to judge sin. The wasting of Egypt with plagues was God judging Egypt for its sin against his people. When God's people left Egypt and conquered the Promised Land, they were to destroy the inhabitants of the land. When I was younger, I thought that was incredibly cruel and unnecessary on God's part. If we read the text carefully, we find the reason the inhabitants of the Promised Land were destroyed by God's people is because

God was using his people to execute judgment on the sin of the indigenous people. At times, God even stepped into history to judge the sin of his own people. He sent the Assyrians to judge the sin of the northern kingdom of Israel and take them into captivity. He sent the Babylonians to judge the sin of the southern kingdom of Judah and take them into captivity. Clearly, God does not turn a blind eye to sin. He steps into history and judges sin.

While God judges sin in history, he doesn't do that all the time. Many times he is incredibly patient with those in sin and gives them many opportunities to repent before he steps in for judgment.

Clearly we see God judges sin in history, but we also see God is very patient and he lets much sin go unpunished as he waits for people to repent. This is a reminder that there is yet much sin to be judged at the end of history that was never judged in history.

God will judge sin at the end of history.

Last week, we learned what happens to people after they die. Since not everyone was here last week and because some last week were a little confused, let me take a few minutes to review what we learned last week about what happens to people after they die.

In the Old Testament, we learned everyone who died went to a place called Sheol. The Old Testament doesn't give us much information on Sheol. Sheol is a temporary holding place for the dead. We also learned there is evidence in the Old Testament that Sheol is divided into two compartments, one of torment for the wicked and one of comfort for the righteous.

When we come to the New Testament, the Hebrew term Sheol is replaced with the Greek term Hades. The Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament used in the day of Jesus, used the Greek word Hades to translate the Hebrew word Sheol when the Septuagint was written. That means Sheol in the Old Testament and Hades in the New Testament are the same thing. In the New Testament, we learn more about Hades. In Luke 16, Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The Greek text tells us this is a description of Hades, not hell. As the Old Testament hinted, in Luke 16 we see Hades is divided into two compartments, one for the wicked, the other for the righteous. The compartment of the righteous in Hades was also known as Paradise.

When Christ came, Scripture in the New Testament leads us to believe that when he rose and ascended to heaven, he took the Old Testament saints in Paradise home with him. He emptied the compartment of Paradise in Hades. When Christians die today, Paul told us we do not go to the compartment of in Hades known as Paradise. We go directly home to heaven to be with Jesus. As Paul said, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, which is better by far."

Last week, we also learned Sheol or Hades was only intended by God to be a temporary holding place for the dead until Jesus returned. While there are many details of Christ's return we will not get into this morning, let us simply say that when Christ returns, he will empty Hades. There will be a great and final judgment on that day, before those in Hades are consigned to hell. When Jesus judges those in Hades on that day, he will judge them with infinitely greater

precision and detail than Robert Mueller and his team of lawyers could ever achieve.

Let's look at some Scripture about this great day of final judgment.

...he has fixed a 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 raising him from the dead. Acts 17:31 (ESV)

If you are taking notes, circle the words, "he has fixed a day." God the Father has fixed a day at the end of history when Jesus will return as a judge. God the Father is not guessing at a day or speculating about a day. That day is already determined by God the Father.

One of the best ways to show yourself a heretic is to claim you know that day. That is the hallmark of false religions. They get caught up in setting the date of Jesus' return. The Jehovah's Witnesses tried this multiple times. They set the day of Christ's return as 1874, 1914, 1915, and 1975. They were wrong every time. The Bible promises that nobody knows that fixed final day of judgment other than God the Father.

But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Mark 13:32 (ESV)

While God the Father has fixed the last day of history and fixed the day of judgment, he has delegated judgment on that day to Jesus the Son.

For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son... John 5:22 (ESV)

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:27 (ESV)

Who will be judged by Jesus?

Fallen angels will be judged by Jesus.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (Tartus) and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment... 2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day... Jude 6 (ESV)

We are not told the identity of these angels but there are angels who are being kept in a temporary place holding place until the day of final judgment. The Greek word used to describe their place of punishment is Tartus. While man and woman who have died without Christ are kept in Hades until the day of final judgment, these particularly wicked demons are kept in a place called Tartus until that great day of final judgment.

Who are these particularly wicked angels? Most Bible scholars believe these are the especially wicked fallen angels talked about in Genesis 6 that powerfully influenced people in the days before the flood to plunge the world to astounding depths of wickedness, so wicked that God sent the flood to wipe everything out and start over again with Noah and his family. Genesis 6 has some freaky stuff in it. I encourage you to read it this afternoon. Apparently the particularly wicked demons were even trying to create a demonic-human hybrid. To put an end to that, apparently at the flood, God removed them from the earth and confined them to Tartus to be held until this great and final day of judgment in front of Jesus.

Those in Hades will be judged by Jesus.

So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Romans 14:12 (ESV)

If you are taking notes, circle “each of us will give an account of himself to God.” The judgment of this great and final day will be personal, not corporate. There will be no hiding. There will be no blending in with the crowd. The judgment of this great and final day before Jesus will be each one giving a full and personal account of the sin in his or her life before the mighty Son of God.

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. Revelation 20:13 (ESV)

By linking death and Hades, John showed us that death — that is the grave — gives up the body, while Hades gives up the soul. On this day of final judgment, people in Hades will have their bodies and souls reunited so they will stand before Jesus as whole persons to be judged by Jesus. They will not just be souls. They will be bodies.

The simple truth is everyone will one day get his or her body back. On this day those apart from Christ in Hades will get their bodies back to be judged by Jesus. The problem is these bodies are resurrection bodies so they are indestructible. That means when people in these bodies are thrown into the Lake of Fire they are thrown in with bodies that cannot be destroyed. The mere thought of this makes us shutter.

Today, we talk about people being dead and buried. According to the Bible, people may be dead and buried, but they are never dead and gone. On this day, everyone in Hades will come back to life. They will stand before Jesus in

judgment, looking like they did in this life with their unique features and points of recognition.

The judgment of this final day will be complete. Every human alive apart from Christ will be judged by Christ. Every dead human being who died apart from Christ will come from Hades, get his or her body back and be judged by Jesus. Every fallen demonic power that roams the earth will be judged by Jesus on that day as well as the particularly wicked demonic powers bound in Tartus, who will also be judged by Jesus. Nobody apart from Christ will escape the terrifying scrutiny of this day.

While will there be a final judgment?

It will show Jesus' authority.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

Every human being and rebellious demonic being will bow their knees to Jesus and confess the authority of Jesus. On this day, everything spiritual and physical will be forced to recognize that Jesus is not just their creator but he is the one who is the authority over them, who has the authority to judge them and hold them accountable for sin.

It will display just judgment of sin.

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. Romans 2:5 (ESV)

Sin is rebellion. Sin is an assault on God. It is an attack on his authority, his goodness, and his character. In this final judgement, as people stand before

Jesus, it will be the time when Jesus displays his right response to sin. For hundreds of years God waited patiently for people to repent of sin. It was as if he overlooked sin and judicially people were able to get away with sin. One of the purposes of this day is there is just judgment for the sin that was done and a just response will be given.

It will be fair judgment for sin.

Many of us do not realize that hell is not one-size-fits-all. One of the reasons Jesus returns as a just judge to give perfect judgment over those resurrected from Hades is to determine a just punishment in hell. Hell is always eternal. Hell is always anguish. Hell is also fair. Those who sin greatly, will be punished more intensely in hell. The greater the sin in this life, the greater the suffering in the Lake of Fire in the next life. The sufferings in hell are a fair response to the magnitude of the sin committed in life.

This is extremely important for us to realize. So many people have wrong thinking in this area. They reason that since it is one act of sin that sends people to the lake of fire, why not plunge in and commit great acts of sin because they are already on their way to the Lake of Fire? That is wrong thinking. Less sin is always better. Greater sin now means greater suffering in the Lake of Fire because hell is always just.

The idea of varying degrees of punishment in hell is seen in a variety of Scriptures.

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. Revelation 20:13 (ESV)

Judgment by Jesus is based on what people did in this life. There would be no reason to judge people for what they had done if it didn't matter in hell what they had done.

But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. Matthew 11:22 (ESV)

Jesus makes the point that for some, this day of final judgment will be more bearable for some than for others.

...who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation. Luke 20:47 (ESV)

On the day of final judgment, some will receive greater condemnation than others. One of the purposes of this day is to determine the right judgement for sin. Hell is not one-size-fits-all. It is always fair and just.

What will be taken into account on the day of final judgment?

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)

The Bible is clear that everything about people will be judged to determine a just punishment in hell. Nothing will be left unexamined.

Words will be judged.

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Matthew 12:36–37 (ESV)

On that day, all of our words will be judged. Not just our intentional words and well-crafted words but people will give an answer to Jesus for their careless words. The little jabs and barbs we shot at one another people will be taken into account and judged by Jesus. The insults and innuendos matter. The bad attitudes that were held and the biting comments that were spoken will all be

judged. If we must give an answer for our careless words, what will happen when our outright lies are judged?

Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.
Luke 12:3 (ESV)

Jesus's point is there will be no secrets on this day. There will be no hiding the things we said, even the secrets we spoke. Everything about us will lay open and exposed before God. Probably the best rule to follow is that if you can't say something to someone, you shouldn't say something about someone. On the Day of Judgment, people will give an answer for all their words; even their secret words will be revealed.

About 15 years ago, I learned that lesson the hard way. As a pastor, I wear a headset microphone. Years ago, I was officiating a funeral and everything was falling apart that day. The office secretary was having trouble organizing servers for the funeral. There was not going to be enough potato salad. My message was not prepared. Everything was falling apart. I was trying to hold things together. To make matters worse, at the last minute, the sound tech didn't show up. I went to the sound board and turned my microphone on and needed to leave it on for the entire service. I bumbled through the funeral and followed the casket out the back door. The bathrooms were immediately past the main sanctuary door so I made a quick exit to the bathroom while the family was still in the auditorium. I was talking to myself about how bad the funeral went. "Jesus, that went terrible. Nothing went right. I am so frustrated with myself." Another reason I exited to the bathroom is I needed to use the bathroom. You can imagine the sounds that were made. After about a minute of me grumbling to myself about the funeral and

some great bathroom sounds, a lady was so kind to throw open the men's room door and yell in the men's room. "Pastor, your microphone is on!" I just about died. I literally left the funeral, went to my basement, and turned off the lights. I couldn't stand the idea of one more thing going wrong that day.

If I felt like I was about to die after I grumbled about a funeral with a hot microphone so the church could hear me, I cannot imagine what it will be like for people on the final Day of Judgment when people will give to Jesus an account for every careless word!

Deeds will be judged.

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:27 (ESV)

While answering to Jesus for every word is like a tape recorder always running, answering to Jesus for every deed is like a video recorder running. I imagine some people will insist they haven't done certain sins when they are judged by Jesus for those sins. I picture Jesus saying, "That is not true. I have it all on tape. Let me show you." That is a terrifying thought.

Imagine everything we have done in our lives being given a thorough review by Jesus. Mueller's investigation was child's play compared to this.

Thoughts will be judged.

...the Lord—knows the thoughts of man... Psalm 94:11 (ESV)

...on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. Romans 2:16 (ESV)

This is scary. Who can say your thought life is pure? There are so many things we think about we would never want people to know. God knows all of our

thoughts. On this day, Jesus will judge people's thought lives. We think in sinful ways, in lustful ways, in hateful ways all the time. In our movies, we are entertained by watching people live in sin. In our movies, we are entertained by watching people be killed, maimed and dismembered. People will be judged for every sinful thought.

The standard for our thought lives is high. What we think about matters.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

Motives will be judged.

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. 1
Corinthians 4:5 (ESV)

For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:14 (ESV)

Even deeper than judging people's thought lives, Jesus will judge every secret thing, including the driving motives of people's heart. Sometimes we are not even aware of our own motives or the sinfulness of those motives. We are not aware that what we are doing is because we are prideful, we are greedy, or we are bitter.

I don't know how you feel at this point. To be honest, I feel scared. This is depressing. There are so many things in my life I have done that I really want to forget and leave in the past. The idea of a day when Jesus brings up my past

and everything about me is revealed in front of Jesus and judged by Jesus may be fair, but it is terrifying.

The only hope for the day of judgment in front of Jesus is found in Jesus. (inductively presented)

I have good news for you. There is a way to skip this intense scrutiny by Jesus on the final day of judgment.

Listen to me. If Jesus is your savior today. He will not be your judge on the last day. Let me say that again to let it sink in. If Jesus is your savior today, he will not be your judge on the last day.

Jesus is our hero. He died on the cross in our places, for our sin, not just so we can avoid the Lake of Fire but so there is no sin that needs to be judged to send us to the Lake of Fire. Jesus paid for it all. On the cross, Jesus suffered an eternity of punishment for sin so on that great day, when everyone is fully exposed, there is no sin to be judged because there is no sin to be paid for. Jesus paid for it all. Look what the Scripture says.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. John 5:24 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1 (ESV)

Look what the Bible says God has done with our sin through Jesus.

...You will cast all of our sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19 (ESV)

...as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:12 (ESV)

Now it gets better. As Christians, we will still stand before Jesus. We will still be judged by Jesus, but it is not to determine a just punishment for our sin

because that is already paid for by Jesus. The day we see Jesus and stand before him is when he will judge us to properly reward us for what we have done. Jesus is so good. He doesn't just pay for our sin and take away our judgment on this great and final day but he can't wait to reward us for how we have lived.

Jesus transforms final judgment into rewards and joy.

As Christians, the return of Christ is not a day we fear because it is not a day of final judgment. It is a day we celebrate and look forward to with great joy because Jesus can't wait to celebrate over us. He can't wait to reward us. Jesus is so great he has taken the most fearful day in world history and for us transformed it into the best day of world history, a day of joy and rewards. Look what Jesus says.

Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. Revelation 22:12 (NIV)

When Christ returns for Christians, it will be like a high school graduation ceremony. Some will be rewarded more than others but all will be filled with joy because of the greatness of that day.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great... Luke 6:35 (ESV)

Conclusion

There are two practical applications of this I give you for the week.

- 1. Jesus will bring complete justice on the day of final judgment. I don't need to worry about getting even.** So many times, when people wrong us, we get caught up in getting even with them. That is not our job. Either people will repent or they will face judgment by Jesus on the final day, even if they get away with something today. Even better than them facing the day of final

judgment is they trust in Jesus and are forgiven so they become a brother or sister in Jesus.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19 (ESV)

2. Only Jesus can transform the Day of Judgment from fear to joy. That is why we tell others about him.

My friends, the only way anyone can avoid this great day of final judgment, when every sin is exposed and taken into account for a just sentence in hell, is through Jesus. Our friends, our neighbors, and our coworkers are all headed for just condemnation of this final day. We must tell them about Jesus. He is the only way to turn this day of fear to a day of joy.



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