



The Final Judgment

Chapter 46

Judgments of God

- What are some different judgments that come before the Final Judgment? How do all these judgments relate to one another?

We are often told in the scriptures that the day will come when we will stand before God and be judged. We need to understand how judgment takes place so we can be better prepared for this important event.

The scriptures teach that all of us will be judged according to our works: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12; see also D&C 76:111; 1 Nephi 15:32; Abraham 3:25–28). We will also be judged “according to the desire of [our] hearts” (D&C 137:9; see also Alma 41:3).

Here on earth we are often judged as to our worthiness to receive opportunities within the kingdom of God. When we are baptized we are judged worthy to receive this ordinance. When we are called to serve in the Church or interviewed for a priesthood advancement or a temple recommend, we are judged.

Alma taught that when we die our spirits are assigned to a state of happiness or of misery (see Alma 40:11–15). This is a judgment.

Our Words, Works, and Thoughts Are Used to Judge Us

- Imagine being judged for all your thoughts, words, and actions.

For teachers: You do not need to teach everything in each chapter. As you prayerfully prepare to teach, seek the Spirit’s guidance to know which portions of the chapter you should cover.

The prophet Alma testified, “Our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; . . . and our thoughts will also condemn us” (Alma 12:14).

The Lord said: “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36–37).

Faith in Jesus Christ helps us be prepared for the Final Judgment. Through faithful discipleship to Him and repentance of all our sins, we can be forgiven for our sins and become pure and holy so that we can dwell in the presence of God. As we repent of our sins, giving up every impure thought and act, the Holy Ghost will change our hearts so we no longer have even the desire to sin (see Mosiah 5:2). Then when we are judged, we will be found ready to enter into God’s presence.

- Think about what you can do to improve your thoughts, words, and actions.

We Will Be Judged by Records

- From what records will we be judged? Who will judge us?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that the dead will be judged out of records kept on earth. We will also be judged out of the “book of life,” which is kept in heaven (see D&C 128:6–8).

“Every one of you . . . must stand before ‘the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel . . . and then must . . . be judged according to the holy judgment of God.’ (II Nephi 9:15.) And according to the vision of John, ‘The books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ (Rev. 20:12.) The ‘books’ spoken of refer to the ‘records [of your works] which are kept on the earth. . . . The book of life is the record which is kept in heaven.’ (Doc. and Cov. 128:7.)” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 226–27).

There is another record that will be used to judge us. The Apostle Paul taught that we ourselves are a record of our life (see Romans 2:15). Stored in our body and mind is a complete history of everything we have done. President John Taylor taught this truth: “[The individual] tells the story himself, and bears witness against himself. . . . That record that is written by the man himself in the tablets of his own mind, that record that cannot lie will in that day be unfolded before God and angels, and those who shall sit as judges” (*Deseret News*, Mar. 8, 1865, 179).

The Apostle John taught that “the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). The Son, in turn, will call upon others to assist in the Judgment. The Twelve who were with Him in His ministry will judge the twelve tribes of Israel (see Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30). The twelve Nephite disciples will judge the Nephite and Lamanite people (see 1 Nephi 12:9–10; Mormon 3:18–19).

Inheriting a Place in a Kingdom of Glory

- How will our faithfulness during our life on earth influence our life in the eternities?

At the Final Judgment we will inherit a place in the kingdom for which we are prepared. The scriptures teach of three kingdoms of glory—the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the telestial kingdom (see D&C 88:20–32).

In Doctrine and Covenants 76, the Lord described the ways we can choose to live our mortal lives. He explained that our choices will determine which kingdom we are prepared for. We learn from this revelation that even members of the Church will inherit different kingdoms because they will not be equally faithful and valiant in their obedience to Christ.

The following are the kinds of lives we can choose to live and the kingdoms our choices will obtain for us.

Celestial

“They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized, . . . that by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit.” These are they who overcome the world by their faith. They are just and true so that the Holy Ghost can seal their blessings upon them. (See D&C 76:51–53.) Those who inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, who become gods, must also have been married for eternity in the temple (see D&C 131:1–4). All who inherit the celestial kingdom will live with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ forever (see D&C 76:62).

Through the work we do in temples, all people who have lived on the earth can have an equal opportunity to receive the fulness of the gospel and the ordinances of salvation so they can inherit a place in the highest degree of celestial glory.

Terrestrial

These are they who rejected the gospel on earth but afterward received it in the spirit world. These are the honorable people on the earth who were blinded to the gospel of Jesus Christ by the craftiness of men. These are also they who received the gospel and a testimony of Jesus but then were not valiant. They will be visited by Jesus Christ but not by our Heavenly Father. (See D&C 76:73–79.)

Telestial

These people did not receive the gospel or the testimony of Jesus either on earth or in the spirit world. They will suffer for their own sins in hell until after the Millennium, when they will be resurrected. “These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.” These people are as numerous as the stars in heaven and the sand on the seashore. They will be visited by the Holy Ghost but not by the Father or the Son. (See D&C 76:81–88, 103–6, 109.)

Outer Darkness

These are they who had testimonies of Jesus through the Holy Ghost and knew the power of the Lord but allowed Satan to overcome them. They denied the truth and defied the power of the Lord. There is no forgiveness for them, for they denied the Holy Spirit after having received it. They will not have a kingdom of glory. They will live in eternal darkness, torment, and misery with Satan and his angels forever. (See D&C 76:28–35, 44–48.)

- According to Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–53, 62–70, what are the characteristics of a person who overcomes the world by faith and is valiant in the testimony of Jesus?

We Should Prepare Now for Judgment

- What must we do to be ready for the Final Judgment?

In reality, every day is a day of judgment. We speak, think, and act according to celestial, terrestrial, or telestial law. Our faith in Jesus Christ, as shown by our daily actions, determines which kingdom we will inherit.

We have the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. The gospel is the law of the celestial kingdom. All the priesthood ordinances necessary for our progression have been revealed. We have entered the waters of baptism and have made a covenant to live Christlike lives. If we are faithful and keep the covenants we have made, the Lord has told us what our judgment will be. He will say unto us, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

Additional Scriptures

- Romans 2:6–9; Revelation 20:12–13 (the Judgment)
- Alma 11:41, 45; Mormon 7:6; 9:13–14 (we are judged in a resurrected state)
- 2 Nephi 29:11; 3 Nephi 27:23–26 (books used in the Judgment)
- Alma 41:2–7 (our judgment is determined by our works, the desires of our hearts, repentance, enduring to the end)

- Mormon 3:22 (repent and prepare to stand before the judgment seat)
- Luke 12:47–48; D&C 82:3 (of whom much is given, much is required)
- D&C 88:16–33 (we each receive that for which we are worthy)