

Matthew 24

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[0 : 00] As Jesus taught a way to explain his return, he quite clearly refers back to how it happened in the days of Noah and the flood.

A message of judgment was proclaimed then. That message is proclaimed still. People didn't listen in the days of Noah and we are told quite clearly that God was displeased with the people. People in our day, in this 21st century, still don't listen, generally speaking. Noah was chosen by God to save, to be the passion used to save the faithful, to build the ark as he was instructed. Christ, in our day, has been chosen by God to save the faithful. In Noah's day, a flood of water came.

A flood of fire will come in Christ's day. Noah built a safe place in the ark as he was instructed.

[1 : 16] Jesus made a safe place on the cross for you and for me. Those who believed in Noah's time went in and hid in the ark.

Those who believed in the time of Jesus are hidden in him. Our sin is hidden in Christ. Most important, what God did in Noah's generation, he will do in our generation. God will pronounce a universal, irreversible judgment.

A judgment in which his grace will be revealed, rewards will be unveiled, and the impenetrable, impenetrable, impenetrable, impenetrable, impenetrable, impenetrable, impenetrable.

Will be punished. As we read the story of Noah, I don't know if you have ever noticed, you will not find any reference to the word judgment.

[2 : 36] However, you will find certainly plenty of evidence relating to it. We're told in Genesis chapter 6, verse 11, and I'm sorry I'll tell you now, I am going to make many references back and forth to Scripture, but I feel it's the only way I can justify it by saying what I might say.

Genesis chapter 6, verse 11, we're told, The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

If that's how it was in Noah's time, how grieved is the Lord today? Then in verse 13, in the same chapter, we're told, God said to Noah, I'm going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them.

I am surely going to destroy them and the earth. And so he did. Then going on in chapter 7 in Genesis, we have the account how Noah obeyed God's command regarding the building of the ark, and taking himself from family, and as he was instructed to, of each animal and creature, into the ark.

And then we're told, in that story where God caused the earth to be covered in water as it rained for 40 days and 40 nights.

[4 : 12] And every living thing in the face of the earth was wiped out, we are told. Men and animals and the creatures that move on the ground were wiped from the face of the earth.

In other words, every living creature, man and animal, were destroyed. Only Noah and his family and the animals that were in the ark survived.

Everyone else perished. And God did not slam the gavel of bench on the bench as a judge would do when passing sentence.

God did close the door of the ark. And I would take your words, your direction now to the words we read together.

That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. A door will close, never to be opened again.

[5 : 09] Just think as it to what this thought, how it must stir anxiety. Just a very termed judgment.

I don't know if any of you or how many have ever appeared in a court of law before a judge. I've appeared there numerous times, but thankfully on the right side of the counter.

But it's not funny to watch the judge pass sentence. Especially in the higher courts where he puts on the dark cloak and passes the sentence of life.

So that's in a human term. When God does it, it's permanent. It's eternal. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 18 we are told we are supposed to encourage one another with these words. How can the day of judgment encourage us? Does it encourage you tonight? Does it still panic? For the unprepared it cannot be anything else but panic.

[6 : 30] but hopefully if you and I are a follower of Christ tonight, one who has trusted the Lord Jesus, it needn't necessarily be such a dread.

Once we understand, we can surely maybe anticipate it. God Now there are some points this time allows I want us to look at and the first of these is who will be judged?

Who will be judged? Again, back to scripture in Matthew chapter 25 and many other places too, but at verse 32 we are told all nations will be gathered before him.

no one is to be missed. All nations. It is very clear that covers everyone. And again in 2 Corinthians, a well-known verse I am sure to you all here tonight, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

is very clear and categorical resounding all. Everyone. It is an appointment you and I will not be late for.

[7 : 50] It is an appointment we won't miss. It is an appointment we can't get an excusal letter. I truly appreciate it stirs a nest of dilemmas, not least of which is what about those who have never heard of Christ?

And it is a dilemma. Have you given thought to the person who has never heard of Christ? What about those who lived before the time of Christ, or who have never heard the gospel?

Will they be judged? There are many issues and questions arise. And it is good for us to go into fear, and go into these depths and look at them. And to that I would answer yes, they will be judged. Everyone, all will be judged. How they will be judged, I am not making any statement that I personally know. But perhaps they may be judged on a different standard.

I don't know. And I am not claiming to know. It has been said, and I think very fairly, men will be judged on the basis of the light they were given.

[9 : 03] which is quite true. Not on the basis of the light they never saw. I would understand that the person who lived in the remotest jungle and has never heard the gospel of Christ or anything about Christ will be judged differently from those in Aberdeen and Bonacord Free Church where the gospel is preached faithfully week by week.

The man or the woman who is only a broadcast or an open Bible away from the gospel will certainly have more to answer to God. Jesus himself explains that in the times where he had performed most of his miracles the people refused to turn to God and with such he was upset with those people when he said, as is recorded in Matthew's gospel chapter 11, Woe to you Chorazin, woe to you Bethsaida, for the miracles that were performed in you, had they been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

So here we find the Lord Jesus himself making a distinction. Then note what he says in verse 24, but I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

Some translations actually say that it will be easier. So here we find the Lord Jesus Christ himself making a statement in relation to it.

It was well said, was it not, the saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible and through the middle of warnings and invitations.

[11 : 00] on the other hand, the indications given are that Tyrant Sidon saw less, so less was expected. We don't know and I'm not going to be speculating.

The principle of God's judgment is based on humanity's response and your response and my response to the message of God. God will never hold any one of us responsible for something we were not told about, that he did not tell us about.

At the same time, however, God will not let any one person die without telling them something. And this is an interesting point. Even those who have never heard his gospel are given something.

The Bible tells us they are. Psalm 19 verse 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands, day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Nekir, perhaps, is God's missionary.

[12:21] Where there is no Bible, there are stars. Where there is no preacher, there are seasons. Where there is no scripture, there is the testament of the changing seasons.

The profession has nothing else but nature alone, as we are so clearly reminded at this time of year, the beauty around us, God's hand is declared.

God's power and divine nature have been clearly seen.

And then it goes on to say, men are without excuse. Men are without excuse. what excuse do you or I have tonight?

We have God's open word before us. The subject of who will be judged can surely bring us to these words in Revelation chapter 16 verse 7.

[13:42] John writes, and I heard the author respond, yes, Lord God, Almighty, true and just are your judgments.

Second question I would like us to ask is, what will be judged? Simply put, all things will be judged. Nothing that we have done in this present life will be eliminated from judgment. I would not claim any expertise and I want us again to take the safest route, that is the Bible and what is recorded for us.

Second Corinthians chapter 5, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done.

while in the body, good or bad, for the things done while in the body, good or bad.

[14:56] This will include the deeds, it will include the words, yes, even our silent thoughts. It's good for ourselves to remind us, ourselves, even the silent thoughts.

you listen to these words from John in Revelation chapter 20, the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books.

It's quite clear to us, God is recording everything we do, everything we think, the jealous thoughts, the sneering thoughts, anything that is unjust, God is recording.

It's difficult for our puny minds to realize just what God is kicking in. There are numerous other references, Ecclesiastes chapter 12, for God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing.

I don't know about you, but that really rattles me. Every hidden thing. We all, we all have hidden things that we would be horrified for anyone here to know about.

[16:22] Again, in Matthew's gospel, Jesus himself tells us, that I tell you that men will have to give an account for every careless word.

Every careless word will be accountable.

Jesus summarizes, again in Luke's gospel, chapter 12, there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known.

I don't know about you. This causes me to shudder. You may be asking then the question, but I'm a believer. Will I be judged as well?

The Bible says, in Hebrews, chapter 10, the Lord will judge his people. Note, his people.

[17:32] And the apostle Paul concurs when he says in Romans, chapter 14, for we will stand before God's judgment seat, so then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

I hear you perhaps asking the question, why would the Christian be judged? If I believe in Christ, why would I be judged?

Two, and that's certainly a very reasonable question to ask. And that leads me on to the third point. Why would the Christian be judged?

You may come back and say to me, but the Bible tells us, as a Christian, we are clothed in righteousness. You may ask, have not our sins been cast as far as east is from the west?

They certainly have, and never let us lose sight of that. However, we are also reminded that therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[18:43] condemnation for us. You may further ask then, but if we are clothed in Christ Jesus and there is no condemnation, why do we need to be judged?

Firstly, I would say the answer to that is twofold. Firstly, we must be judged so that our rewards can be unveiled. revealed. And secondly, so that God's grace can be revealed.

This is very delicate, I know, regarding rewards, and I am not going to go into it in any great way, but it is certainly worthy of exploring. Without exception, no man, woman, or child has ever done

any one work that will enhance our salvation.

That work was finished by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. There is nothing you and I can do to earn salvation. It is in and only in and through Christ Jesus we can gain that salvation.

However, our service in this life does impact on our rewards. One writer said, we are accepted into heaven on the basis of faith and faith alone.

[20 : 06] heaven on the basis of the fruits of our faith.

Strange and bizarre, yes. Scripture offers perhaps just enough to convince us of rewards, but I'm not claiming that I know that much about it.

We are simply not told, but we are, however, assured, I understand, they will exist. They do exist in addition to the crowns of life, righteousness, and glory.

The Bible indicates there are other rewards. 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and I'll leave you to read that for yourself. Paul describes two lines.

Both are built on the foundation of faith, yes. The Lord Jesus tries to say, both are trusting in the Lord Jesus as their own and personal Savior.

[21 : 15] One, however, adds to that foundation with valuable works of gold, silver, and jewels. The other life is content to take up an easier and less demanding way and roots to the kingdom without making any substantive contribution.

In fact, just to save any confusion, let me read this passage to you. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 at verse 13.

Because I'm conscious of the fact that we're and I want to make myself clear.

His work will be shown for what it is. This is 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 13. His work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light.

It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

[22 : 33] If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Only as one escaping through the flames. I would just ask that you take note in relation to both lives. Both will be saved, but I understand that only one will be rewarded.

I recall bending Roddy Rankin's ear quite a bit about this, and I'll never forget how wisely Roddy answered me when he said, Bill, peacefully and reverently remain ignorant as to the answer, because we're not told.

And it was quite wise counsel. There is a hint towards an answer, but I must emphasize I'm only speculating. When I refer you to Matthew chapter 5, verse 21, that passage well known to you and sure, the parable of the talents.

The servant who was faithful with a few things was given more responsibility rather than relaxation. Now take from that what you wish.

[23 : 58] I would however underscore I'm speculating, and I don't wish to mislead you. But what I would emphasize, and I'm sure of, is that if you trust the Lord Jesus Christ tonight, you're saved by grace, and we will be rewarded according to our deeds.

Anything beyond that, I'm afraid, would lead us into competitiveness, and for that we've got to be careful. It reminds me of a story where I was involved in a week's mission up the coast, and I had to give my testimony, and it was in the early days, it was almost 24 years ago, but those meetings were being held in a hall outside Fraserburgh, and they were well attended, and the meetings went well, and there were people professed faith.

But I'll never forget that a subsequent meeting we were at when the, one of the leaders of a local hall were at the meetings I'm speaking of, the weeks' meetings.

And the endacity to say, and I quote, ah, but if these meetings had been held at our hall, there would have been more souls saved. That's a horrific statement.

That is competitiveness. And thankfully, no, here in Scripture, is there any reference to competitiveness in heaven. You may ask, but would the rewards to some and not to others create a jealousy?

[25 : 48] jealousy? Well, I would say no, because in heaven, there wouldn't be a jealousy. That's a human issue.

That's a sinful issue. Hopefully, in heaven, we will gladly adopt the attitude of Christ, where in Luke's gospel, he tells us, so you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should

say, we are unworthy servants.

We have only done what was our duty. You may still be asking the question, then, why must our deeds be exposed?

Remember what we are told, everything that is hidden will be shown, and everything that is secret will be made known. Jesus is saying, all secrets will be revealed.

The sins and secrets of sinners and saints alike, I would suggest to you, will be revealed. Yes, they will be revealed. And it is essential that they will be revealed, but I would also suggest to you that the sins of the saved passion will be revealed, and then it will be announced, price paid.

[27 : 11] That passion who has trusted in Christ, our sins will be revealed, but they will be covered by the blood of Christ. The price has been paid.

Why? It will be to show God's glory, his love, his grace. That is the second reason.

First reason, so that our acts can be rewarded, but the second, so that God's grace can be revealed. You have maybe heard the story about the couple who resorted to a DIY marriage counselling.

They weren't getting on, and they decided to try and address the issue. And they sat down one evening in their wisdom and decided to write out a list of each other's thoughts.

So the husband sat with his big sheep, and the wife sat with her big sheep, and they were writing and writing, and can't you imagine it? I can't, to be honest.

[28 : 16] Anyway, it came to the point, they had completed our list, and the husband then handed his to his wife, sorry the wife handed her list to the husband, and he read it out aloud, as was agreed before, and it went, you snore in bed, you come home too late, you get up too early, you play too much golf, you don't do any housework, you don't tell me I love you, and so it went on and on.

This is his wife who had written all this about you. And then he handed over his list to her, for her to read aloud. And then receiving the bit of paper, she smiled, because he too had written quite a list. But after each one, he wrote, I forgive you. So it will be in heaven. So it will be in judgment day, sorry.

Our list will be right out, but Jesus will say, forgiven. Forgiven. As believers in judgment day, you and I will receive such a list.

But God's grace will be magnified. Your sins are announced, God's grace will be magnified. The result of that will be God's merciful verdict will echo throughout.

[29 : 53] For the first time in history, we will understand something of the depth of his love. Talk, Lord, kindness, forgiveness.

We will stand in awe as each sin is forgiven. Pardoned. Jealousies revealed and removed.

Infidelity is announced and cleansed. Lies exposed then erased. Satan will be exposed for all that he is not on that day.

Look, I said he's not. We're told he will be crushed. He will sink into total insignificance as we see how much God has forgiven us.

as we see the great mercy flowing forth in that shed blood on the cross. And we will hopefully join the saints and we will sing as recorded for us in Revelation chapter 5.

[31 : 01] They sang a new song, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you are slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every kind and language and nation.

What a triumphant day that will be. You stop saying yes triumph and wonder and glory but for me it will be humiliation.

But rest assured it will not be humiliation because anyone who trusts in him we are told will not be put to shame.

God's reward will be unveiled. That leads me on to my fourth and last question. What happens?

What is the destiny of those who don't know or recognize Christ? God's rewards will be revealed.

[32 : 09] God's grace will be revealed. God's rewards will be unveiled will be unveiled and those who don't know him will pay a price. It's not easy for one to say this.

And like C.S. Lewis if ever one was able to do anything he would wish to remove the word hell from the dictionary. But unfortunately that can't be done.

God has told us quite clearly for those who have not trusted in Christ they will go to hell and they will go to hell forever.

And the worst words that you or I could ever ever hear no matter what or how sore life may be is these words we are told that Christ will say depart from me for I know you not. Now that's reality friends that's the truth from God's own words. For you an unbeliever the day of judgment will be a day of shame it will be a day of hurt and it will be the first day of eternal hurt and damnation.

[33 : 32] Any words I can put around it don't describe it for what it's going to be. We were taken to the edge of hell by Christ himself when he spoke about the rich man and Lazarus.

We suddenly found a situation where a rich man is in his huge mansion with everything he could wish in life. And Lazarus the beggar is at his gate searching for something to eat.

We are told the dogs licked his sword. God decided to bring down the curtain of death on both these people and the role is totally reversed.

The rich man opens his eyes we're told in torment. Lazarus is carried by the angels to Abraham's side.

man was buried. What is hell like? Jesus himself is the only eyewitness and he gives us a very clear illustration in that story of the rich man and Lazarus.

[34 : 41] We're told the time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell he, that is the rich man was in torment.

He looked up to Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. You know the most frightening thing that struck me out of that verses is that the rich man could see Lazarus at Abraham's side.

Can you imagine what like that is going to be? wherever it may be, I don't know and I'm not claiming to know, that we, as an unbeliever, you're going to open your eyes in hell and you're going to see the redeemed with Christ.

As if the suffering is not going to be enough. It's going to be added to. That you're going to see those who trusted the Lord Jesus Christ.

the roles were rewest. Upon this earth, the lowly beggar had nothing but God. Upon this earth, the wealthy man had everything but God.

[36 : 08] In death, the beggar has everything. The rich man has nothing. What shall it profit a man to evenly gain the whole world and lose his soul?

The rich man is in torment, continual torture. We're told in that passage, in hell he was in torment, in the place of the dead he was in much pain, another version says.

I'm in agony in this fire, the rich man says. But now he, that is Lazarus, is comforted and here you, that is the rich man, are in agony.

The rich man pleads with Abraham. He's pleading with Abraham and he's saying, I have five brothers, let him warn them. This is Lazarus. He's asking Abraham to let Lazarus go and warn his brothers so that they will not also come to this place of torment.

What is this? This rich man suddenly become an evangelist. You can see what it does. We're getting a touch of it.

[37 : 29] You know, I read this statement and I've always kept it. I find it so frightening. But I'm going to share it with you. Because I feel led to. A millionaire Ted Turner, being interviewed on television in New York, said, I'm looking forward to dying and being cast into hell because that's where I belong.

Is that not horrific? As if he had any choice. Because I just want to close and say to you, say to you, we're sometimes using the word hell in this life too loosely.

Let's understand hell is a place of torment. And God does not put a passion to hell. I want to emphasize that to you tonight.

God will never put you or I to hell. God will honor your choice. If you choose hell, God will honor it. Likewise, if you choose heaven, God will honor you. If you trust in Christ tonight, God will honor you. And you will go to heaven.

[38 : 52] And you know, we should take God's own warning through Christ. Christ. Because you know the seriousness of hell. Jesus thought it so serious that he warned us, if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

Or if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. That is how serious the Lord Jesus looks upon hell. Friends, and I'm not here trying to frighten you tonight, and bring God's word to you.

And I trust that through his spirit he'll apply it to you. Heart. It's a very serious statement Jesus makes there.

Do you imagine the pain of losing your limb or losing an eye? We can only begin to imagine what it would do for us. However, Jesus said it will be a lot less than what hell will be.

I trust that we're at the beginning of getting some recognition of what hell is then. You young people, children, please don't ignore it.

[40 : 07] I have to admit, it's a child I heard all about it, and I grew up, and I thought I knew all about it, and I knew nothing about it. but thankfully God opened my eyes to it.

And boys and girls, heaven is the better place. Jesus is the one to trust. Don't allow Satan deceive you, as he did me for many years.

Maybe you turn and say, how can God be like that? He's a God of love. Well, let me say this to you. the story teaches about that love of God, because God actually went there.

Jesus, in his death on the cross, entered hell, so that you and I tonight can put our faith and our trust in him, knowing that he overcame it, and he overcame death itself.

He's the one we should trust to. The apostle Paul makes very clear to us. God punishes sin, and what occurred on the cross, we're told, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity, that's your sin and my sin, was laid on Christ, so that tonight if we trust him, he's paid it.

[41 : 32] For that judgment day we come up before him, and all our sins from the youngest person here, boys and girls, you've got sins the same as us, but when they come before God, Jesus will say, price paid, I paid for that, through my death, that passion is saved.

Oh yes, hell's misery is deep, but God's love is deeper. How do we apply this? If you are here present when you are saved, if you have repented from your sin, you are caused to rejoice, because you will be spared of hell.

But tonight, friend, if you are here, and you haven't trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, what more can I say?

What is the meaning of this message for the lost soul? listen to the Holy Spirit's warnings. Heed his meaning.

Remove man from it. This plane of life will not fly forever. One of these days it will come crashing down. Death will catch up on us all if the Lord Jesus does not come first.

[43 : 03] death. And I close with the words from Ecclesiastes chapter 7 in Rash 2, Death is the destiny of every man.

Thank you.