

807 What Will Happen on That Day

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

Most people don't like to think about it, but there is a day of reckoning coming. There is a day when God dispenses to all men what they deserve. Many will enjoy heaven forever, but others will wish they had prepared for heaven. That day is real, and it is coming. You will be there, and it will be the most important day of your entire existence. It is the day when God settles accounts, all accounts! He will give to each man a spiritual reward or punishment according to what he deserves. Whether you have been washed in the blood of Jesus will be the crucial question. Everything else will be unimportant. The apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." That day is coming.

There is a day coming when Jesus will return to this earth. That day will be the most amazing day. Jesus will reveal himself as Lord of all the earth. On that day, people will be surprised to learn that religions are not alike and that there is, after all, only one Lord of heaven and earth. When Jesus ascended, two men in white robes (angels) said to the apostles in Acts 1:11, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Jesus is indeed coming again one day. When he comes He will do a number of things.

First, Jesus will raise the dead. You'll remember He promised in John 5:28-29, "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment." Everyone will be raised on that day, both the good and the evil. They will rise to go to different destinies. The apostle Paul gives us a little more insight into the promise of God for the righteous. He said in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep."

Paul continues, "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words." The Lord is coming in the air with the saints. First the dead in Christ will be resurrected, then those who are living will be miraculously changed. We will all rise up in the air to meet the Lord. Faithful Christians will spend eternity with the Lord. That, my friend, is comforting.

Second, while we go to be with the Lord, the earth and its works will be burned up. The apostle Peter by inspiration said in 2 Peter 3:7, "But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." The present heavens and earth will not last. They are going to perish completely. The apostle explains in 2 Peter 3:10, "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 with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." Don't count on living here on this earth forever, because the earth will not last. Everything we know here on earth will be gone forever. We will all face a new existence either in the favor of God or in His wrath.

There is a *great* day coming, a day when every person throughout all time will be gathered before the Lord Jesus. The apostle John describes that day in Revelation 20:11-15, "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 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. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Every person in every country and in every age will be there. Some will wish they could flee, but there is no place for them to go. Each one will be judged according to their deeds good or evil. The standard of right and wrong are the books of God. God will not judge us by what we think but by His laws found in the Bible. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48, "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." Every person needs to know what the Lord Jesus has taught in the Bible. These are inspired words and eternal words. They are the standard that will be used at the judgment.

Those who are saved by grace and are found to be righteousness will have their names written in the Lamb's book of life. These individuals will enjoy the blessing and the joy of their Lord; they will enter into the heavenly city to live with God forever. That is a place of love and light and glory. It will be free from every disease, and no one dies there. It will also be a righteous city. The apostle John said in Revelation 21:8, "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." God may put up with sin in this world, but there will be no sin in heaven.

Those who ignore the will of God or refuse to do God's will face God's judgment. The apostle Paul declared in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, "and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might." There comes a time when God has had enough of sin and this world, a time when he will punish those who will not acknowledge Him as God and those who will not obey the gospel. You can't reject keep on saying no to God.

God expects all people to repent. The apostle Paul by inspiration told the Athenians in Acts 17:30-31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." You can believe the judgment is real, because Jesus is Lord and really rose from the dead. If He arose from the dead, then there is life after death. If there is life after death, then we are accountable for what we believe and how we live. The judgment should make us think seriously.

We will be judged by our thoughts, by our actions, and by our words. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 12:36-37, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified,

and by your words you will be condemned.” More than a few times, I have heard people talk like they never knew there was a judgment coming. We need to think twice about how we live and how we talk. We’ll be judged for gossip, lies, complaining, name-calling, dirty jokes, and taking the name of the Lord in vain. It may be popular to use rude and off-color language, but God isn’t impressed. We need to talk with respect toward God, if we wish to live with him forever.

Someone says, “Phil, I don’t like all this talk about being lost.” You know what? I don’t either. When I became a preacher of the gospel, I learned that I had to preach the whole counsel of God. Some preachers only tell you what they think you want to hear. A faithful gospel preacher has to tell you all the things you need to hear. If there is a hell (and Jesus said there is), then wouldn’t I be cruel not to tell you about it? If hell is real, then if I care about you, I must warn you about it! I don’t speak of hell to scare you, but because I care about your soul. I don’t want you or anyone to be lost eternally. I want you to go to heaven, but hell is real for those who will not believe or will not repent. I can’t sit silent and not speak out against sin. I must keep on preaching about leaving sin and coming to Christ.

Because of God’s grace and his faith, Paul felt confident to put his soul in God’s hands until that day. He said in 2 Timothy 1:12, “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.” What is it we have entrusted to Him until that day? Well, we’ve entrusted our souls to Him. Our souls are the most precious things we have, and the only thing we’ll take to eternity. When the faithful arrive, He will give them a crown. That, my friend, will be the most exciting thing any Christian will ever experience!

What kind of crown will we receive from the Lord? It will be a crown of righteousness, that is a crown awarded from God, declaring that we are right in His sight. The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:6-8, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” This crown is “laid up” just for Paul, and there’s one laid up for every person who has loved his appearing, who has faithfully served Him.

This crown of righteousness is also a crown of life. When people have remained faithful to God, God will bless them. The Bible says in James 1:12, “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” The crown of life is life itself—not just any life but eternal life! Eternal life is not merely existing forever. The Lord said in John 10:10, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” To have eternal life means to live in the joy, the favor, the comfort, and the presence God without end. Once we go to heaven, we’ll live with God forever.

Being saved by grace matters. We can’t go to heaven apart from the grace of God. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:5-7, “even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness

toward us in Christ Jesus.” God is preparing heaven for you, to show you all the glory and kindness and greatness of a relationship with God. Paul said in Romans 8:18, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Nothing could be greater than going to heaven and sharing in the goodness and the glory of God!

Jesus is coming again one day for His people to bless and glorify them. The Bible says in 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12 he is coming “on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” My friend, will you be worthy on that day of that high calling? Will God be glorified by the life that you have lived? When he comes will you be glad or will you be sad over the life that you have lived?

On that day, the righteous judge will award crowns to those who have loved his appearing, to those who are faithful. On that day all will be settled forever. There won’t be any second chances. No one will turn back the clock. God will judge each person according to his works. Worldly things won’t matter on that day. What you own, what you drive, where you work, or what your hobbies are won’t matter. The question that matters is “were we faithful, loving, and obedient?” Whether we carried our cross for Christ will matter on that day. Whether we are “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13), or whether we hate to face that day will matter. Our hearts and lives and words will matter on that day! The Bible says in 1 Cor. 9:24-27, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” Paul did not want to be disqualified by being lazy or by living in rebellion to the Father.

I hope you too won’t take your salvation for granted but will live responsibly. If you are a Christian who loves the Lord and is planning to go to heaven, live in righteousness and love. Never compromise your faith. If you believe in Christ, you need to obey the gospel. You do this by repenting of your sins, confessing your faith before others, and by being baptized. When you are baptized in water, you die to sin and to the world and are raised to walk in newness of life. It is in baptism that your sins are washed away, you are born again, and the Lord adds you to his church. Baptism is the time the grace of God saves us and washes us in the blood of Christ. Once you obey the gospel, live faithfully to the Lord for the rest of your life. Those who have lived faithfully will naturally look forward to His appearing. They are the ones who will receive the crown of righteousness. We all want that for you. There’ll never be anything greater than to receive that crown on that day from the Lord. Won’t you do what God asks? Won’t you show Him you love Him by starting that Christian journey today?

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