



THE NEW TESTAMENT ON JESUS' RETURN

A WATCHFULNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, JUDGMENT, AND HOPE GUIDE

The Judgment Seat of Christ & The Great White Throne Judgment

"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) for Believers: Rewards & Losses

2 Corinthians 5:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

"Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

Romans 14:10-12

"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Colossians 3:23-24

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

2 John 1:8

"Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward."

2. The Great White Throne Judgment for Unbelievers & Eternal Fire

Revelation 20:11-12

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

Hebrews 9:27

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment..."

Revelation 20:15

"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

"...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power..."

Matthew 25:46

"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Heart of the Father: An Invitation to Eternal Life

The reality of divine judgment is a solemn truth found throughout the whole Bible. Because God is completely holy and perfectly just, He must ultimately deal with unrighteousness. Unforgiven sin carries real consequences that separate the sinner from our Creator now and forever. Yet, the overarching story of the Word of God reveals that judgment is never God's preferred desire. The Bible specifically says that He does not take pleasure in the destruction of the wicked, nor does He wish for anyone to die in sin (Ezekiel 33:11).

Instead, the scriptures offer a beautiful picture of God who is perfect in love and rich in mercy. As the Apostle Peter writes, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). God is patient and longs for restoration rather than retribution. He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4).

He made the path to this salvation amazingly simple! God did not demand that we climb the mountain of self-righteousness, something no one can do anyway. We cannot earn our way to eternal life. His grace reached down to us and called us to Himself through His Son. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

Our entire response to this gift of grace is the gift of faith. When He speaks to us, we only believe, repenting by faith. We cannot erase our own sins or become like Him without His grace freely given. Paul reminds us, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Salvation comes by acknowledging our sins, not by making all things right first. We can't do that anyway. It is His gift received simply by trusting in Jesus Christ - that He is who He says He is - that He took all our sins to the grave and rose again to give us life - eternal life! Look to Jesus and live!

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

THE NEW TESTAMENT TELLS US TO PREPARE FOR JESUS' RETURN!

Watchfulness, Accountability, Judgment, and Hope

JESUS: "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" — Mark 13:37

I hope this study guide serves as a practical resource for followers of Jesus who want to take seriously the New Testament call to live in watchful expectation of His return, as well as leading those who are not serious about living watchful lives to begin to do so.

Included below are key passages that focus on watchfulness, accountability, judgment, and hope—with each row pairing a key text and a straightforward focal point for personal reflection. As believers, we rest in the assurance of our salvation by grace through faith; but the Bible clearly tells us that the moment we have been redeemed and adopted into God's family through faith in Jesus Christ, we became His servants. "...old things have passed away; ...all things have become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

Even those of us who are in Christ will give an account at "the judgment seat of Christ," whether we managed our lives ourselves or we allowed Him to do so. Our loving heavenly Father is not threatening us but is clearly showing us that we belong to Him, and that He calls us to account for all that He's done for us as His children. (I colored a few to attract special attention.)

Each day is an opportunity to serve Him! What a blessing! What a privilege! What a wonderful Father!

A CLARION CALL TO LIVE IN ANTICIPATION OF HIS RETURN

Passage	Watchful	Accountable	Judgment	Hope	Watch Point
Matthew 7:21-23		Yes	Yes		Mere profession but rejected at final judgment
Matthew 10:32-33		Yes	Yes		Confessing or denying Christ now determines His future acknowledgment
Matthew 12:36-37		Yes	Yes		Every idle word will be evaluated in judgment
Matthew 13:40-43			Yes	Yes	End-of-age separation; righteous shine in the kingdom
Matthew 16:27		Yes	Yes		Son of Man repays each according to works
Matthew 22:1-14	Yes	Yes	Yes		Wedding guests judged for lack of proper garment
Matthew 24:27-31			Yes	Yes	Visible coming of Son of Man; gathering of elect
Matthew 24:36-39	Yes		Yes		No one knows the hour, sudden judgment as in Noah's day
Matthew 24:42-44	Yes		Yes		Command to watch for Him to come as a thief
Matthew 24:45-51	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Faithful vs. evil servants at master's return
Matthew 25:1-13	Yes		Yes		Wise vs. foolish virgins; the door is shut on unprepared
Matthew 25:14-30		Yes	Yes	Yes	Stewardship of talents rewarded or condemned
Matthew 25:31-46		Yes	Yes	Yes	Sheep and goats judgment of nations
Mark 8:38		Yes	Yes		Shame for those ashamed of Christ at His coming
Mark 13:26-27			Yes	Yes	Son of Man comes with power; angels gather elect
Mark 13:32-37	Yes		Yes		Stay awake; the Master may come at any hour
Luke 9:26		Yes	Yes		Shame or glory at His coming
Luke 12:35-40	Yes		Yes	Yes	Servants ready with lamps burning; master comes unexpectedly
Luke 12:41-48	Yes	Yes	Yes		Greater light brings greater accountability at return
Luke 13:24-30	Yes	Yes	Yes		Narrow door eventually closed; latecomers excluded
Luke 17:22-30	Yes		Yes		Days of Son of Man sudden like days of Noah and Lot
Luke 19:11-27		Yes	Yes	Yes	Nobleman returns, rewards servants, destroys rebels
Luke 21:25-28			Yes	Yes	Cosmic signs Son of Man comes; redemption draws near

Passage	Watchful	Accountable	Judgment	Hope	Watch Point
Luke 21:34-36	Yes		Yes	Yes	Watch and pray to escape and stand before Son of Man
John 5:22-29		Yes	Yes	Yes	Son judges all; resurrection to life or condemnation
John 6:39-40, 44, 54				Yes	Believers raised at the last day
John 12:48			Yes		Christ's word judges in the last day
John 14:1-3				Yes	Jesus comes again to receive His own to Himself
Acts 1:9-11				Yes	Visible ascension guarantees visible return
Acts 3:19-21				Yes	Repentance linked to times of refreshing and restoration
Acts 10:42			Yes		Jesus ordained judge of living and dead
Acts 17:30-31			Yes		God appointed a day to judge by the risen Man
Romans 2:5-11, 16		Yes	Yes		Impartial judgment according to deeds
Romans 8:18-23				Yes	Future glory and redemption of the body
Romans 13:11-14	Yes		Yes	Yes	Take action when you see the day at hand
Romans 14:10-12		Yes	Yes		All must stand before God's judgment seat
1 Corinthians 1:7-8				Yes	Awaiting Christ's revelation; confirmed blameless
1 Corinthians 3:11-15		Yes	Yes	Yes	Testing of works by fire; reward or loss
1 Corinthians 4:5		Yes	Yes	Yes	The Lord reveals hidden things and gives praise
1 Corinthians 6:2-3		Yes	Yes	Yes	Saints judging the world and the angels
1 Corinthians 11:26				Yes	Proclaiming the Lord's death till He comes
1 Corinthians 15:20-28			Yes	Yes	Christ the firstfruits; then those who are His at His coming
1 Corinthians 15:51-54			Yes	Yes	Mystery: the living will be changed at the last trumpet
2 Corinthians 4:14				Yes	God raises us and presents us with Jesus
2 Corinthians 5:9-10		Yes	Yes		All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ
Galatians 6:7-9		Yes	Yes	Yes	Sowing and reaping unto corruption or eternal life
Ephesians 4:30			Yes	Yes	Sealed for the day of redemption
Ephesians 5:5-7		Yes	Yes		No inheritance for persistent immorality; wrath comes
Philippians 1:6, 10		Yes		Yes	God completes His work until the day of Christ
Philippians 3:20-21				Yes	Heavenly citizenship; waiting for the Savior
Colossians 1:22-23		Yes		Yes	Future presentation holy if they continue
Colossians 3:1-4				Yes	When Christ appears, believers appear in glory
Colossians 3:23-25		Yes	Yes	Yes	Lord rewards service and repays wrong
1 Thessalonians 1:9-10			Yes	Yes	Turned to God to wait for His Son from heaven
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20		Yes		Yes	Produce of our labor is our crown at Christ's coming
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13		Yes		Yes	Hearts established blameless at His coming
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18				Yes	Rapture and resurrection; comfort for the saints
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Yes		Yes	Yes	Day of the Lord as a thief; sons of light must be sober
1 Thessalonians 5:23		Yes		Yes	Spirit, soul, and body preserved blameless at His coming

Passage	Accountable			Hope	Watch Point
	Watchful		Judgment		
2 Thessalonians 1:6-10		Yes	Yes	Yes	Relief for afflicted; vengeance on unbelievers at revelation
2 Thessalonians 2:1-2			Yes	Yes	Our gathering unto Him after apostasy and the Antichrist
2 Thessalonians 2:8			Yes		Destruction of lawless one by brightness of His coming
1 Timothy 6:13-15	Yes	Yes		Yes	Keeping commandments until Christ's appearing
2 Timothy 1:12, 18		Yes	Yes	Yes	Fully confident in God as we approach that Day
2 Timothy 4:1		Yes	Yes	Yes	Christ judges living and dead at appearing and kingdom
2 Timothy 4:8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Crown for all who love His appearing
Titus 2:11-13	Yes	Yes		Yes	Blessed hope and glorious appearing
Hebrews 4:13		Yes	Yes		All is naked before Him to whom we must give account
Hebrews 9:27-28		Yes	Yes	Yes	Once to die, then judgment; Christ's second appearing
Hebrews 10:25	Yes			Yes	Exhortation increases as Day approaches
Hebrews 10:26-31		Yes	Yes		Fearful expectation of judgment for deliberate sin
Hebrews 12:25-29	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Refusing heavenly voice risks greater judgment; kingdom unshaken
James 2:12-13		Yes	Yes		Judgment by law of liberty; judgment for the merciless
James 3:1		Yes	Yes		Teachers receive stricter judgment
James 5:7-9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Patience until coming; Judge at the door; no grumbling
1 Peter 1:5				Yes	Kept for salvation ready to be revealed in last time
1 Peter 1:13	Yes			Yes	Gird minds; hope fully on grace at Christ's revelation
1 Peter 4:5		Yes	Yes		Persecutors will give account to Judge of living and dead
1 Peter 4:7	Yes			Yes	End of all things at hand; be serious and watchful
1 Peter 5:4		Yes		Yes	Chief Shepherd appears; crown for faithful elders
2 Peter 1:10-11		Yes	Yes	Yes	Diligence confirms calling/sure entrance into the kingdom
2 Peter 3:3-4			Yes		Scoffers deny the promise of His coming
2 Peter 3:7			Yes		Present heavens and earth are reserved for fire
2 Peter 3:10-13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Thief-like day; elements melt; new heavens and earth
2 Peter 3:14	Yes	Yes		Yes	Be diligent to be found in peace, without spot
1 John 2:28	Yes	Yes		Yes	Abiding gives confidence and no shame at His coming
1 John 3:2-3				Yes	We shall be like Him; hope purifies now
Jude 14-15		Yes	Yes		Lord comes with holy ones to execute judgment
Revelation 1:7			Yes		Coming with clouds; every eye sees; tribes wail
Revelation 2:5	Yes	Yes	Yes		Removal of lampstand if no repentance
Revelation 2:16	Yes	Yes	Yes		Coming quickly to fight with sword of mouth
Revelation 2:25-26	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Hold fast till I come; authority over nations
Revelation 3:3	Yes	Yes	Yes		If not watchful, He comes as a thief
Revelation 3:11	Yes	Yes		Yes	Coming quickly; hold fast; guard your crown

Passage	Accountable		Hope		Watch Point
	Watchful	Judgment			
Revelation 16:15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Blessed watcher who keeps garments pure
Revelation 19:11-16			Yes	Yes	Conquering King, Second Coming judges and rule nations
Revelation 20:11-15		Yes	Yes		Great white throne judgment; thrown into the lake of fire
Revelation 22:7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Coming quickly; blessed are those who keep this book
Revelation 22:12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Coming quickly with rewards according to our works
Revelation 22:20	Yes			Yes	Surely I am coming quickly; we cry, Amen!

After we've trusted Jesus as our Savior, He will test and mature our faith.

I Peter 1:3-9

A Tested Faith

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4. to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
5. who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
6. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,
7. that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
8. whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
9. receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

II Peter 1:5-11

A Matured Faith

5. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
6. to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,
7. to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.
8. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.
10. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;
11. for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He is the King of glory."
Psalm 24:7-10