

JUDGMENT DAY—A TIME OF FEAR OR HOPE?

Note to the speaker:

Help audience to clear their minds of any misconceptions regarding Jehovah's righteous judgments. Move them to want to survive the coming day of judgment on this system and enjoy the glorious millennial Judgment Day thereafter

JUDGMENT DAY—DISPELLING THE MYTHS (4 min.)

There are many misconceptions regarding Judgment Day

Some think that everyone will stand before God's throne while a long list of past mistakes and sins is read aloud (*pe* 175)

This widespread myth regarding Judgment Day paints an unappealing picture of God, who "is love" (1Jo 4:8)

Feeling that God will never forget our mistakes does not endear him to us

The Bible, however, shows that Jehovah is a forgiving God who does not "remember" the sins of those whom he forgives (Jer 31:34; Ps 86:5; 103:8-14; *w*97 12/1 12-13)

Others think that God will not judge *anyone* adversely

Bible does not teach universal salvation (*w*76 343)

Jehovah, the righteous Judge, denounces the wicked (Ps 7:8-11)

Does not exempt the wicked from punishment (Ex 34:7; Ec 8:11)

To gain a balanced view, let us consider (1) Jehovah's past judgments, (2) the coming day of judgment, and (3) Judgment Day

There is a difference between the last two, as will be explained in this talk

DAYS OF JUDGMENT IN THE PAST—WHAT THEY TEACH US (12 min.)

To understand why it is necessary for Jehovah to bring adverse judgment, consider what happened before the Flood

Blasphemous false religion evidently began in days of Enosh, Adam's grandson (Ge 4:26; *it*-1 729)

The world had further degenerated by Enoch's day (Ge 5:22-24; Jude 14, 15)

Conditions got worse in Noah's day, during the 600 years before the Flood

Rebel angels, Nephilim, and wicked humans filled the earth with violence, ruining it (Ge 6:1, 2, 4, 11, 12)

Only a day of judgment from Jehovah could end such wickedness

Does Jehovah destroy good people along with bad?

Abraham expressed concern over the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 18:23)

Jehovah's answer shows that he had carefully read the hearts of those people (Ge 18:24-33; 1Ch 28:9)

As was true in Noah's case, a means of escape was given to righteous ones (Mt 24:38, 39; 2Pe 2:5, 7; *w*98 8/1 12-13)

Jehovah lovingly gives the wicked an opportunity to repent, as shown by the example of Nineveh (Eze 18:23, 32; Jon 3:4-10)

Jonah warned that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days

Ninevites repented, and Jehovah spared the city (Jon 4:11)

Jehovah sincerely wants wicked to change, to repent (Eze 33:11)

Jehovah's past judgments teach us that mercy is an integral part of divine justice (*it*-2 376-7)

God's provision of a ransom for mankind's salvation is the most striking example of this (Mt 20:28; Ro 5:18-21)

THIS SYSTEM OF THINGS NEARS ITS FINAL DAY OF JUDGMENT (10 min.)

Prior days of judgment served to 'set a pattern' for the final judgment against this wicked system of things (2Pe 2:6; 3:7)

Final day of judgment is called "the great day of Jehovah" (Zep 1:14-18)

The nations refuse to recognize Jehovah's sovereignty, so their destruction is inevitable (Ps 2:10-12; 110:5, 6)

Jehovah has appointed Jesus to lead the angelic attack against the nations of the earth (Re 19:11-15)

Do we need to dread this fear-inspiring day of judgment?

It is largely up to us (Read Zephaniah 2:2, 3)

Some may be frightened by the word "probably"

Uncertainty lies with humans; Jehovah never changes, always fulfills promises (Jos 23:14; Jas 1:17; *w*92 5/1 15-16)

If we learn from the pattern of earlier days of judgment, we may be assured of Jehovah's protection

Jesus told his followers how to act in the days leading up to the destruction of the Jewish system of things

Keep watchful and busy preaching (Mr 13:10, 37)

Obey Jesus' directions in order to survive (Lu 21:20-22)

If we apply those same principles, we will survive the day of Jehovah and live to see Judgment Day

WHAT IS JUDGMENT DAY? (15 min.)

Apostle Paul informed the Athenians of Judgment Day at Acts 17:31 (Read)

Jesus is a compassionate, impartial, humble Judge (Isa 11:2-4)

Relies on Jehovah's guidance in all judging (Joh 8:16)

Jesus' comments help us to understand when Judgment Day will begin

Spoke of Judgment Day, but did not mean the destruction of this wicked system of things (Mt 11:21, 22; 12:41, 42)

Rather, he associated Judgment Day with the resurrection

Judgment Day is associated with Christ's Millennial Reign, which begins after Armageddon

First, though, old 'heaven and earth'—today's ruling powers and those under their control—will have "fled away" (Re 20:11; 2Pe 3:12, 13)

Then, the dead are resurrected and judged (Re 20:12, 13)

Should not think that Judgment Day is limited to a 24-hour period

Those who judge with Christ rule for 1,000 years (Re 20:4)

So Judgment Day is a "day" of 1,000 years (2Pe 3:8)

Why so long? Answer lies in the way the dead are judged

Bible clearly shows that the basis for judging the dead *cannot* be their deeds before death (Ro 6:7, 23; *rs* 338)

Judgment relates to their deeds after resurrection

New "scrolls" provide basis for judgment, and these scrolls are opened *during* Judgment Day (Re 20:12; *pe* 181)

This explains why Judgment Day has to cover a long time period

Type of judgment depends on life course during Millennium

Many resurrected ones will obey divine instruction; others will refuse (Isa 26:9, 10; *re* 292, 300)

Those who rebel will be executed (Isa 65:20; Re 20:15)

As the 1,000 years progress, obedient humans will be raised to the perfect state once enjoyed by Adam and Eve

At the end of his 1,000-year reign, Jesus "hands over the kingdom to his God and Father" (1Co 15:24-28)

Afterward, there is a final test (Re 20:7-10)

For the resurrected ones who remain faithful to Jehovah, theirs turns out to be "a resurrection of life" (Joh 5:28, 29)

For those unfaithful, it turns out to be "a resurrection of [adverse] judgment"

The outcome depends on our love of Jehovah (*w*98 11/1 18)

WHY YOU CAN LOOK TO JUDGMENT DAY WITH HOPE (4 min.)

Judgment Day—as well as the coming day of judgment upon this wicked system—should inspire hope, not fear

If we die faithful during these last days, we have the sure hope of resurrection to see Judgment Day (Lu 23:43; Ac 24:15)

For many, there is hope of being part of the "great crowd," which survives Armageddon (Re 7:9, 14; Joh 11:26)

Jesus is "judge of the living and the dead" (Ac 10:42)

Will apply the same principles of merciful judgment to "the living"—those of the great crowd, who never experienced death or resurrection

For the faithful, Judgment Day will be a glorious time (Ps 96:12, 13)

Remember, this hope carries the highest guarantee (Ac 17:31)

How vital that we resolve to be there!

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)