

THE VERDICT

- Standing firm on the premise that God has called us to move beyond trying to stay free from sin and become anchored in our ability to lovingly and intelligently **DEFEND THE FAITH**.
- Today, let's establish **The Case for Heaven, Hell, and Judgment**
- **NOTE:** One of the primary reasons some people struggle with believing that there is a God and that He is who the Bible describes Him to be is because they say, *"How can a God who loves the world, send people to a place called hell?"*

Week #5 – The Case for Heaven, Hell, and Judgment: Does Eternity Really Matter?

Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV) – And as it is appointed for men to die ONCE, but after this the judgment

- This verse has messed up the theology of so many people because they keyed in on the wrong thing.
- If you read the verse in context, it's emphasizing that Jesus doesn't have to sacrifice His blood for us OFTEN like the priests did in the Old Testament. Instead, He did it ONCE. And in the same way, we don't die many times (reincarnation). We are appointed to die ONCE and afterwards comes judgment. But we don't have a set appointment day/time to die.
- **Hebrews 9:27 (NIV) – Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment**
- **QUOTE:** *It's imperative that we live our lives with an urgent understanding that Heaven and Hell are REAL and ETERNAL!*

Four Realities

HEAVEN IS A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE

John 14:2, 3 (NLT) – There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.

- Paul mentions being caught up to the "third Heaven." The Bible describes three different heavens. The first heaven is the sky. The second heaven is outer space. The third heaven is God's home.
- **Revelation 21:4 (GNT) – And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the first things are passed.**
- **QUOTE:** *Heaven is not our final home. We will live on the Earth the way God originally intended, but under the rule of the Last Adam...not the First Adam.*

HELL IS A PREPARED PLACE FOR AN UNPREPARED PEOPLE

Matthew 10:28 (NIV) – Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in HELL.

- Lots of modern-day Christians struggle with the concept of hell – a place of eternal separation from God and eternal torment. Truth is, Jesus actually mentioned hell more than he mentioned heaven.
- **Mark 9:43 – 48 (NLT) If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of HELL with two hands... where the maggots never die, and the fire never goes out.**
- **Matthew 13:41, 42 (NLT) – The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. And the angels will throw them into the FIERY FURNACE, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

- **Revelation 20:14, 15 (ESV)** – *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.*
- If we accept that there is a God, and if we believe the Bible is His book, and if we consent that Jesus is His Son and He is the only way to relationship with God, then we must accept that when we die, we will either be eternally with God or eternally separated from God.
- **QUOTE (C.S. Lewis):** *There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’*
- **QUOTE (George Davis):** *Every one of us will live eternally. The only question is, “will it be smoking or non-smoking?”*

GOD DOESN'T SEND PEOPLE TO HELL. THEY CHOOSE IT: Intentionally or by default.

- Adam’s sin put everyone’s eternal account on the default choice of: ***Give us what the god of this world is getting.***
- **NOTE:** If we do nothing but live our lives and enjoy the joys of earth, our default setting is HELL.
- **QUOTE:** *God never intended for humans to end up in hell and it breaks His heart whenever they do.*
- **Matthew 25:41 (NLT)** – *Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS.*

THE BIBLE DESCRIBES TWO JUDGMENTS THAT HAPPEN IN THE END

1. The Great White Throne Judgment

- **Revelation 20:11 – 15 (NIV)** *Then I saw a GREAT WHITE THRONE and him who was seated on it... The DEAD WERE JUDGED according to what they had done as recorded in the books... Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.*
- This judgment happens after the 1,000-year reign of Christ and is for ***unbelievers who rejected Jesus.***
- **NOTE:** It’s not a trial of guilt or innocence. That’s determined at our last breath. It’s one last verification that the person’s name is not in the Book of Life. Then, the massive volume of books that describe what they did on earth are opened and read. The moment ONE SIN is found, it’s enough to confirm their default to hell. This judgment is the official sentencing of those whose names were not found in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

2. The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema Seat)

- **II Corinthians 5:10 (NIV)** – *For WE MUST ALL APPEAR before the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*
- This judgment happens after the rapture and is for ***believers in Jesus Christ*** – those who have been saved by grace through faith.
- It’s a trial to evaluate the quality of a believer’s life, motives, and works done for Christ. It’s a trial to hand out rewards, eternal crowns, assignments, and positions of honor in the Kingdom of God.
- **NOTE:** In a New Testament context, the “bema seat” (or judgment seat) refers to a raised platform where judges or authorities sat to make pronouncements or award prizes, particularly in the context of athletic competitions and trials. Think of the pageantry of an Olympic Games’ closing ceremony with awards being handed out for those who served God faithfully and obeyed His commands, even when it was not convenient.