

ICG Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson Nineteen – Judgment

DOCTORAL STATEMENT

The time of one's judgment is the time of his opportunity for salvation, extending from one's calling by God until his death (or the resurrection). During this judgment period a person's mind is opened to understand God's way, and his actions and attitudes are being evaluated by God in the light of His way of life and His law. All human beings from all time shall have a full opportunity for salvation either now (for the Church), or during the one thousand year reign of Christ on earth, or in the Great White Throne Judgment. Those who shall qualify for God's Kingdom—the overwhelming majority—shall inherit eternal life, and those who deliberately reject God's way shall be consumed in the lake of fire.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

One of the most awesome truths of God is that all mankind from all time shall have an opportunity for salvation—the attainment of eternal life in the family of God. No human being is doomed forever simply because he has never heard of Christ's name or never really understood God's purpose and plan. God makes it adequately plain that He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). He intends to give everyone a chance to know and understand His truth and to have the opportunity to be with Him in His glorious Kingdom (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4).

Combined with this thrilling truth that all men shall have an opportunity for salvation is the fact that all men will not receive this opportunity at the same time. The time during which each individual is receiving his chance is the time of judgment. The term "judgment," as used in this context, is not restricted to passing sentence. It rather implies *a process*, a period of time during which a person's mind is opened to understand God's plan, and during which his actions are under daily scrutiny by God in the light of that understanding. God is intimately concerned with His children, and works in their lives to produce the best ultimate results. The parable of the tares of the field shows that Christians start out as seeds and must *grow* until the harvest (Matthew 13:36-43). Of course, this judgment process shall in most people's lives cover a period of many years. It is only at the end of this period that God shall make the decision of whether or not that person shall enter His Kingdom at the resurrection.

But judgment involves more than just making a "yes" or "no" decision, more than the simple determination of whether a person shall be granted salvation; for, indeed, the overwhelming majority shall make it. Judgment also involves the *reward* that God shall give to each person who qualifies. There are different positions and responsibilities in God's family. As Jesus related in the parable of the pounds (Luke. 19:12-27), the servants who used their pounds profitably were all given positions of rulership, but the *level or degree* of their position was directly proportional to how much they had accomplished. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) shows that God rewards each person according to what he accomplished in relationship to what he had to start with. The servant who started with two talents and made two received the same reward as the servant who started with five and made five.

God has divided His plan into three great judgment periods, each of which deals specifically with a different classification of persons. The first period of judgment began at the creation of man and shall continue until the return of Jesus Christ. During this era, God has not chosen to call the vast majority of persons, but rather a small group—"the elect" (Romans 8:28 ff). These "elect" have had their minds opened to understand God's truth and have been given God's Holy Spirit in this age. For these persons—who compose the Church or "house of God"—the period of judgment is *now*. "For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of

God" (1 Peter 4:17). Those whom God has called now are not called because of an inner desire to serve God, but by virtue of God's mercy (Romans 9:15-16).

God has not called the masses now because He wants man to learn by experience that his way apart from God is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12). Those whom He does call now are called for the express purpose of preaching the gospel to the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20) and to prepare to become rulers in God's millennial Kingdom (Revelation.).

All those who have qualified for God's Kingdom from Adam's time to the return of Christ shall be resurrected at return. The end of this first judgment period is thus marked by the first resurrection (Revelation. 20:5-6).

During His thousand-year reign, Christ and the saints shall reestablish God's government on earth (Micah. 4:1-4) and shall reconstruct society so that in every way it conforms to God's holy laws. God shall also pour out His Spirit upon all those who will be alive during this time, and shall open their minds to understand the gospel and give them a chance for salvation. The millennium thus marks the second great judgment period of God, the time when the human beings who live on into the new age (from the present age) and those subsequently born as their offspring shall have their opportunity for salvation.

After the thousand-year period, there is, the "Great White Throne" judgment. This spectacular event epitomizes the time when all who have ever lived and died without having had a chance for salvation, never having heard about Jesus Christ and the plan of God, or never having had their eyes opened to truly understand the gospel—shall be resurrected from the dead to physical life (Revelation 20:11 ff). This time their minds shall be opened to a full understanding of God's laws and His truth.

"Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves ... And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken, and I have done it, says the Lord" (Ezekiel 37:12-14).

This third judgment period is the greatest of the three because it includes the innumerable multitudes of all humanity who have lived and died in ignorance of God's way.

Although God wants all to come to the knowledge of His truth and earnestly desires that all obtain salvation, it is nevertheless true that some few shall totally reject God and lose out on eternal life. Those who have adamantly rejected this truth—those who have committed the unpardonable sin by not asking God to pardon their sins—shall be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). These individuals are those who would never repent of their sins and shall therefore be put out of their misery by a merciful God. It would be cruel punishment for God to make a rebellious person live forever under His government when that individual has permanently rejected God's government in his life by his actions and attitudes.

God's fairness, concern and love for mankind is exemplified by the three judgment periods outlined above. His plan for salvation includes ample opportunity for all those who have ever lived and died to live a full physical life under God's laws, and then to qualify to enter His Kingdom, and, ultimately, to gain eternal life as full members of His divine family.

Summary:

READ THESE SCRIPTURES FROM YOUR OWN BIBLE:

2 Peter 3:9 – God is not willing that any perish.

1 Timothy 2:4 – God wants all men to be saved and know truth.

Matthew 13: 36-43 – Parable of the tares (Judgment).

Luke 19:12-27 – Parable of the pounds (speaking to reward in God's Kingdom).

Matthew 25:14-30 – Parable of the talents (speaking to reward in God's Kingdom).

Romans 8:28 – The elect.

1 Peter 4:17 – Judgment is now for the Church of God.

Proverbs 14:12 – Any way without God results in death.

Micah 4:1-4 – Christ will establish His government on earth at His return.

Revelation 20:11 – White Throne Judgment.

Ezekiel 37:12-14 – The Second Resurrection.

Revelation 20:14 – The Lake of Fire

Questions:

1] Not every person who has ever been born will have an opportunity for salvation. True or False?

2] Sadly, those who lived out their lives never hearing the name of Jesus Christ will not have an opportunity for salvation. True or False?

3] Actually, everyone who has ever lived will have their opportunity to know all truth, enter the Salvation Process and, if successful there, enter the Kingdom of God with eternal life. True or False?

4] All of mankind receives the opportunity at salvation at the same time. True or False?

5] Judgment is...

- a) a sentence [to life or death]
- b) a process
- c) a period of time in which a person's mind is opened to understand the plan of God
- d) a period of time in which one's actions are under daily scrutiny by God
- e) all of the above

6] For most people this period of judgment covers a period of many years. True or False?

7] When does God make a decision whether or not a person shall enter His Kingdom?

- a) soon after He calls you to a judgment period
- b) sometime during the judgment period
- c) at the end of the judgment period
- d) any of the above

8] Judgment and reward are the same thing. True or False?

9] How many judgment periods does God have in His salvation plan?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

10] The first judgment period began with the creation of man and will end at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. True or False?

11] The judgment period for the present day Church of God is *now*. True or False?

12] Those God is calling now are for the express purpose of...

- a) preaching the gospel to the world as a witness
- b) to prepare to become rulers in God's millennial Kingdom
- c) both
- d) neither

13] Those who have qualified for God's Kingdom from Adam to the return of Christ shall be resurrected as spirit beings...

- a) soon after their death
- b) at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth
- c) during the 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth
- d) at the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ

14] The second period of judgment will be...

- a) 100 years in length
- b) 500 years in length
- c) 1,000 years in length

15] The millennial reign of Christ marks the second period of judgment. True or False?

16] Offspring will continue to be born during the 1,000-year reign of Christ. True or False?

17] The third judgment period is known as...

- a) the First Resurrection
- b) the millennium
- c) the White Throne Judgment
- d) all of the above

18] The White Throne Judgment is also known as the Second Resurrection. True or False?

19] The Second Resurrection is for all those people who lived and died without having their opportunity at salvation, never having heard about Jesus Christ or the plan of God. True or False?

20] Those resurrected in the White Throne Judgment or Second Resurrection are resurrected to...

- a) physical life – a physical body
- b) spiritual life – a spirit body

21] The longest judgment period, in terms of numbers of people involved, is the...

- a) first judgment period – creation of man to the return of Christ
- b) second judgment period – 1,000-year reign of Christ
- c) third judgment period – approximately 100-year period after the millennium

22] God wants...

- a) all to come to the knowledge of God and obtain salvation
- b) to remain unconcerned one way or the other
- c) to pour down His wrath upon all of mankind

23] Not everyone offered the opportunity at salvation will accept it. True or False?

24] The three judgment periods exemplify the...

- a) wrath and harshness of God toward mankind.
- b) fairness, concern and love of God toward mankind
- c) lack of specific concern toward mankind