



Good news of judgement

Sweet relief

It sounds ominous, but it's in the Old Testament: The Lord "will judge the earth from one end to the other." 1 Samuel 2:10 (NIRV). It's in the New Testament, too: "God will judge the earth and everything in it." 2 Peter 3:10 (NIRV). Nonbelievers may not like this, because they might feel judged. Believers may not like it either, because they might feel judgmental. *But in biblical thinking, judgement is good news!* Think terrorism. Genocide. Persecution. Atrocities. Slavery. Abuse. Corruption. Brutality. Feel angry? Want justice? Demand accountability? So does God—you share his heart. For all who've been victimised, justice is sweet relief. It's nature's cry from the human spirit. Justice in human courts is sometimes elusive. Praise God for his work of judgement—fair and faithful 100 per cent.

Huge blessings

Would you like to live in a place where warlords force allegiance, or where drug lords take control? No! That's why you believe in the rule of law. Would you like to raise children who follow inclinations, with no consequences? Never! That's why you appreciate natural justice. God has designed things well. "I am the LORD your God. Listen carefully to my voice. Do what is right in my eyes. Pay attention to my commands. Obey all of my rules.... I am the LORD who heals you." Exodus 15:26 (NIRV). Here is the character of God, the nature of life. Want happiness and healing? Build into your life what you want out of it. The laws of God and his justice are huge blessings. "Oh, how I love Thy law!" The Almighty's judgement for Earth is not the bad news we dread. It's the good news we need.

In favour

An evil power wages war against people of the light. The war is going well—for the dark side. It looks as though the people of God will go down in defeat. But wait! There's a stirring. In a moment, the Ancient of Days steps into action; he convenes his court. Evil comes into account. A trial proceeds. Heaven and Earth stand to attention for the verdict. The Judge of the universe makes his pronouncement—*I find in favour of the holy people of the Most High*. Hallelujah! God-followers receive back the possession seemingly taken from them—the Kingdom of Heaven. Daniel 7:21–22. Final judgement is not just good news, it's great news. *I find in favour*. This is why believers march to judgement with joy. We don't live on pins and needles. We know the verdict—it's 100 per cent in our favour. Praise God!

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Verdict now

“Those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.” John 5:24 (NLT). A landmark declaration from Jesus—who also made it clear that if we choose to reject his provision, things will not turn out well for us on judgement day. John 12:48. So here we have it, total truth on our status. A day of judgement is coming. But a positive verdict is already pronounced for all who listen to Jesus and put faith in Father-God. “Have eternal life ... never be condemned ... already passed from death to life.” It doesn’t get better than this. Live with peace now! Then, at the end, proceed to judgement with joy. This is the Good News, and you can stake your life on it.

Penalty removed

In Romans 1 and 2, the apostle Paul declares there is behaviour that’s flat-out contrary to God and humanity. In the day of final judgement, this behaviour will be exposed and punished. This is the kind of truth that’s hard to tell, but *not* telling it is a more damning course to take. Final judgement is not only hard for us; it’s hard for God—which is why he is “wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient,” doing his best to turn us from our sins. Romans 2:4 (NLT). Then Paul gives the solution: God “declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” Romans 3:24 (NLT). Freed from the penalty! “So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1 (NLT). Good news of judgement—here it is, ready for you in this moment.

History’s dock

The accused has a long history. Questions, suspicions, charges, allegations, indictments. Beginning in Eden—no, even before. Continuing through centuries of struggle, failure, pain. In a wilderness. In courts. At a crucifixion. From nonbelievers, believers, philosophers, scientists, academics, and the devil. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”—a question surging initially from his favoured king; later from his own flesh and blood. Who is this accused? Who stands in history’s dock? Look! It is God himself. He is on trial. Given his claims, has he been faithful? Has he been true? Has he even *been*? The judgement is set, the books are opened. The verdict arrives: “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!” Revelation 16:7 (NRSV). God is vindicated. And we are saved. Magnificent news.

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