



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“The Final Judgement and Eternal Punishment”

Lesson 21 – Necessity of the Final Judgement and Hell

August 20, 2017

I. **Lesson Starter:**

Last week we looked at the Nature of the Final Judgement, with an emphasis on believers rewards. Today we will be continuing our review of the Final Judgement looking at the necessity of the Final Judgement and Hell.

II. **Nature of the Final Judgment**

1. **Necessity of the Final Judgement and Justice**

Since when believers die, they go immediately into the presence of God, and when unbelievers die they pass into a state of separation from God and the endurance of punishment, we have to wonder why has God established the Final Judgement at all? Isn't everything already settled and done?

The final judgement is not for God to know the condition of our heart or the pattern of our lives, but will serve the following purpose:

To display before all creatures of all times the declarative glory of God in a formal act that magnifies His holiness, righteousness, grace and mercy. It will be public as well as compared to death which is individual. It will also pertain to the body, soul and spirit of all people.

Romans 3:11

¹¹ For God does not show favoritism

Romans 3:19

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

The whole world will be held accountable and no one will be able to complain about being treated unfairly. One of the great blessings in the final judgement will be the saints and angels demonstrated by the tens of millions, as show in Revelation 19:1-2:

I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying, Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgements are true and just.

2. **Unbelievers and Hell**

The doctrine defines it as “Hell is a place of **eternal conscious punishment** for the wicked”. Scripture teaches us that **this is an actual place**. Multiple scriptural indications are that there will be consciousness of punishment after the Final Judgement.

Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41)

Those condemned will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matt 25:46)

These scriptures say that both states will be for eternity without end. Jesus refers to Hell as the “unquenchable fire” in Mark 9:43 and a place “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” in Mark 9:48. The story of the Rich man and Lazarus also indicates a horrible consciousness of punishment:

Luke 16:22-24

The rich man also dies and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom, and he called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy upon me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame".

Rev 20:10

¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

3. Beware of the Doctrine of Annihilationism and its Doctrinal Implications

This doctrine or belief teaches that after the wicked have suffered penalty of God's wrath for a period of time, He then annihilates them so that they no longer exist. The punishment will be conscious, but not eternal. Support that is often used:

- Scriptural references to the destruction of the wicked (Phil 3:19, 1 Thess 5:3, 2 Thess 1:9, Peter 3:7)
- The "apparent" inconsistency of eternal punishment and the "love of God"
- The apparent "injustice" of disproportion between sins committed in time and eternal punishment
- The continuing presence of evil creatures in God's universe

This kind of reasoning may lead people to adopt another kind of Annihilationism, which is no conscious suffering at all. The only punishment for sin is that they cease to exist at physical death.

The argument that eternal punishment is unfair, wrongly assumes several key doctrinal points:

1. We know the extent of the evil done when sinners rebel against God. We constantly downplay and do not understand the heinous act and degree of our sin and the holiness of God
2. Does the shorter suffering or no suffering "pay for the unbelievers sins"? If it does not, then God's justice is not fulfilled and if it does, then the unbeliever should be allowed in Heaven, in either case it is incorrect

By punishing evil, God claims victory and triumph for His justice, righteousness and power

While some would like to believe that Annihilationism is kinder, nicer and a more "attractive option" for the unbelievers, it is the forcefulness of the scriptures that show this doctrine is incorrect and that God does punish sin with eternal conscious punishment.

As Christians we should be moved with deep sorrow as we contemplate the doctrine of Hell. Paul tells us in Romans 9:2, "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart" concerning unbelievers.

Revelations 19:1-4

¹ After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." ³ And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever." ⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!"

Since God has given us a degree of His own love for people created in his image, it may be hard to accept that we would sing praises as some are thrown into the eternal lake of fire and punishment. The 24 elders and the four living creatures surely did not have "wrong moral judgement" when they praised God for executing justice! Eternal punishment is true and just. God's holiness and being sinless bring us joy and happiness in heaven.

Study material is primarily taken from Systematic Theology by Wayne Gruden, Chapter 41-43, 56, 57; The Broadman Bible Commentary by the Southern Baptist Convention and Unger's Bible Dictionary.