

Here Comes the Judge: The Final Summons

Acts 17:30-31

The word “judge” comes from a Greek verb which means to divide or to separate. In everyday language it means to render a verdict on the behavior of another person. Judgment in one form or another is inescapable in this life. The Bible tells us that it is also inescapable in the next: *“It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”*. We are “appointed” to die and we are “appointed” to face God’s judgment. No one can escape death and no one can escape the day of final judgment.

With that as background, we turn now to consider our text—Acts 17:31. From this one verse we discover five fundamental facts about the final judgment.

I. The Certainty of the Final Judgment

“For He has fixed a day.” God has set a certain day—known only to Him—a specific moment in time when the final judgment will begin.

II. The Scope of the Final Judgment

“When He will judge the world.” Note that the word for “world” is not the normal Greek word *kosmos*. It’s another word that means “the whole inhabited earth.” Thus the final judgment will be absolutely universal.

III. The Standard of the Final Judgment

“With righteousness.” Some translations use the word “justice” but the meaning is the same. God’s standard of judgment will be His own absolute justice.

IV. The Judge at the Final Judgment

“By the Man He has appointed.” Paul uses two phrases to describe Christ, both worth noticing: 1) He calls Him “the man,” 2) And He is not just any man, He is the man God appointed—meaning He is divinely ordained to this task.

V. The Guarantee of a Final Judgment

“He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.” How do we know there will be a final judgment and how do we know that Jesus will be the judge? Paul responds by pointing to the empty tomb.

Some Final Thoughts

1) I believe the doctrine of a coming final judgment must be rediscovered in our day. 2) Sinners need to hear that they will answer to a Righteous Judge. 3) Christians must believe this truth—and proclaim it boldly. 4) No one can survive the final judgment in his own righteousness.

The time for action is now. No one can escape the final judgment. We will all stand before Jesus Christ. What will happen to you then? The answer is: it depends on what happens to you now.