

The Bible says *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment* (Heb. 9:27).

### How will you be judged?

The Bible says, God *shall judge the world in righteousness* (Psa. 9:8). See also Rev. 19:11; 20:13; Heb. 10:30. Will He find you righteous?

### By what standard?

Listen with your God-given conscience to some of the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20:3-17).

(6) ***Thou shalt not bear false witness***: have you ever told a lie? Have you misrepresented the truth, or deceived someone? Regardless of how harmless you might consider lying, you've offended a holy God. God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2).

(8) ***Thou shalt not steal***: regardless of its value, have you ever taken anything that wasn't yours, even for a short time, or "borrowed" without permission? Have you ever stolen from your job, parents, or siblings? Have you ever cheated on a test, downloaded illegally, or been selfish?

(3) ***Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain***: have you ever used God's name as a curse word? Have you always respected and honored the name of Him who gave you life, and used His name with all carefulness and caution?

(7) ***Thou shalt not commit adultery***: God also forbids any sex outside of marriage. Jesus said that *whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart* (Mat. 5:28). Remember, God knows your every thought (Rom. 2:16,17). If you've broken just these four commandments, you are a lying, thieving, blaspheming, adulterer at heart in

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God's eyes. Now, with a tender conscience, consider some other crimes against God: idolatry (Have you loved God above all else, and always made him your first and only priority? God deserves all glory); covetousness (Have you jealously desired what belongs to others?); hatred (to God, hatred is murder), greed (Have you loved money more than God?); gossip; cursing; drunkenness; rebellion; unbelief; pride; boasting; favoritism; disobedience to parents and authorities; and unthankfulness—Have you been unthankful to the God Who gives you every breath? Any unclean thought, word, or deed is evil in the sight of a perfect and holy God. See Ecc. 12:14; Jam. 2:10.

### How do you stand?

If you're honest, you'll admit you're guilty. But you might say, "I've done many good works to make up for my mistakes," or "God is forgiving, and He will simply overlook my sins." The Bible tells of our own nature: *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness* (Pro. 20:6). Examine yourself. Are you innocent and just before God? Has your life been in perfect compliance with God's Law? Are you good by **God's standard** of goodness? *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble* (Jam. 4:6). We must humble ourselves before God, and give Him all the glory. Have you boasted in your heart, or created a false god to suit yourself (perhaps one who will ignore sins)? Have you tried to create your own standard of goodness?

*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death* (Pro. 14:12). We must look to the God of the Bible and His perfect standard, and not our own selfish ways.

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*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil* (Ecc 12:13,14). See Jude 14,15, Rev. 15:4; 21:8.

### Is God just?

Imagine you stand before a judge in court, and have stolen a car. The judge bangs the gavel and says, "You're guilty of grand theft auto. The penalty is \$100,000 or ten years in jail." Assuming you don't have a hundred thousand dollars, you are in big trouble—they have it all on videotape, and they know you're guilty. You tell the judge you're sorry, and won't do it again: "Judge, I repent!" you say—but he won't buy it. "But judge, I've done so many good things, and given to charity!" And the judge replies, "Good for you. But I would be a bad judge if I didn't punish criminals. The price must be paid." As you fall before the judge in desperation, realizing there is nothing you can do, the judge suddenly steps down. He writes you a check for \$100,000, and says "You're guilty. But I love you so much, I'm going to pay the fine for you." Once the payment is made, you are free to go, since the demands of justice have been met. Also, notice that the gift is not automatic—you must sign the check. What if you don't sign the check? It is never accepted, the fine goes unpaid, and you must pay your own penalty. You deserved the punishment, the judge paid your penalty, and you decided to take it upon yourself anyway—how foolish! Yet many do the same with God, and force Him to give them what they deserve—Hell.

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If a good judge on earth must punish sin, how much more must God? The Bible says, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right* (Gen. 18:25)? God is your Judge, yet unlike a judge in a courtroom, God is perfect and will always judge a righteous judgment, and so He cannot turn a blind eye to injustice, and let lawbreakers go free. Consider: Should God judge murderers—men like Hitler? Yet the Bible says *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer* (1Jn. 3:15). Should He judge adulterers and thieves? Liars? Because He is good, He must punish sin. And the punishment is a lot more than jail time—it's an eternity in Hell: *So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Mat. 13:48,49). Standing alone before God, in your sins, you are hopeless.

### But there is good news!

The Ten Commandments aren't how we get to Heaven—that's the good news: *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God* (Rom. 3:19). The Law leaves us helpless—we have all broken it miserably. All but One. The Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself in the flesh, and our Judge, came down to be our Saviour. He fulfilled the Law, being perfect in thought, word, and deed, yet tempted as we are. He was slain for our sins, *that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man* (Heb. 2:9). He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2Co. 5:21).

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*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: ... Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed* (1Pe 2:22,24). Jesus paid your sin debt in full, once and for all (see Isa. 53:6; Rom. 6:23), and then He rose from the grave three days later.

God's forgiveness is only through Jesus's finished work. Your sins have offended a holy God, and have crucified His Son, and He commands you to repent (Acts 17:30,31)—humble yourself and turn to God, confessing and forsaking your sins (Pro. 28:13)—and to believe (Acts 16:31)—not just mental assent (Jam. 2:19), but a complete faith and trust in Jesus alone for salvation (Mat. 12:21).

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil* (John 3:16-19). See also Psa. 51; Isa. 6:3,5, 55:6,7; Luke 13:3; and Heb. 2:3.

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