

Advent 2 – Judgement

Introduction

- The first judgement God makes is upon the goodness of his creation and the ‘very goodness’ of humanity (Genesis 1.4; Genesis 1.31)
- The second is his judgement on the sin of humanity and has consequences (Genesis 3.14-24)
- Throughout OT, judgement is seen as reward or punishment for human actions (harvest or famine, security or exile etc)
- This view prominent in BCP, cf Prayer in time of Dearth and Famine:
“O God, merciful Father, who in the time of Elisha the prophet, didst suddenly in Samaria turn great scarcity and dearth into plenty and cheapness: Have mercy on us, that we who are now for our sins punished with like adversity...”
- Danger to assume exact cause and effect – if “b” happens, you must be guilty of “a”; or indeed if you are blessed, God is certainly pleased with you. See John 9.1-3: “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” Jesus replied “neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s work might be revealed in him.”
- But, sin does have consequences, cf 1 Corinthians 11.30, where some Christians are falling ill or dying because of abuse of the Lord’s Supper.
- For Christians, earthly judgement is for our own good – as a Father disciplines his children (Hebrews 12.7-11), or a vinedresser prunes vines (John 15.2)

Final judgement

Romans 14.10-12

All will stand before the judgement seat of God.

1 Corinthians 4.5

This great judgement will be when Christ returns

Acts 10.43

Judgement will be according to response to Christ.

Matthew 25.31-46

“Works” or actions are taken as evidence of faith

Is God being fair?

- Yes – it is God who defines fair in the first place, not us!
- All humans deserve to be found guilty – we are all sinners (Romans 3.10 – *“There is no one who is righteous, not even one”* cf Romans 3.23). But God in

his mercy has provided a way for all people to be declared “not guilty” and to enter into his presence (Romans 3.21-26)

- He allows us the freedom to choose our response to Jesus and our eternal destiny (John 3.19-21)

Judgement upon Christians

1 Corinthians 3.10-15

- The “work” of Christians will be tested (13)
- This testing will not determine their ultimate destiny (15)
- But it will determine their reward (14)

What will the reward be?

- Not arbitrary
- Not a better place in heaven
- But just consequences for actions (like practicing and instrument – the skills and talents necessary for life reigning in the New Heaven and New Earth)