

**Reckoning**  
**Eternal Reckoning**  
**Joel 3:1-21**

**Time:** Christians believe that time is linear and all things in the universe have a beginning point, except God. We believe that God is infinite. He transcends both space & time.

*“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” Psalm 90:2*

**Eternity:** While God has no beginning or ending, we have a beginning and no ending. Your soul will live forever...somewhere! And our eternal state will be determined by God’s eternal reckoning...

**Two Eternal Results of God’s Reckoning:**

**I. Affliction for God’s Enemies**

*“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it. What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily. For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border. Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for the LORD has spoken. Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near: let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am a warrior.’ Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD. Let the nations stir themselves up and come up from the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake” Joel 3:1-16a*

God’s enemies will experience constant affliction.

*“...for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.” Joel 3:12b*

**Hell:** For those who have not been saved, “Hell is future eternal separation from God as the just punishment for man’s unbelief.”

*“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28*

**Mistaken View of Hell:** Many imagine God giving us time to make wise choices by the end of our lives and, if we don’t, he casts us into hell for all eternity.

**Accurate View of Hell:** Sin already separates us from the presence of God, but God has provided a lifeline out of this hell by sending his own Son to accept the consequences of our sin so we can be forgiven and justified by his grace! Humans can receive this grace by faith in the crucified, risen Christ.

*“There are only two kinds of people – those who say, ‘Thy will be done’ to God or those to whom God in the end says, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell choose it. Without that self-choice it wouldn’t be Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it.” C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce*

Hell is a real place where actual people will spend eternity separated from God, not because God is mean or life isn’t fair; it’s because of sin.

**II. Abundance for God’s People**

*“...But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it. And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a foundation shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Shittim. Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the LORD dwells in Zion.” Joel 3:16b-21*

*“But the LORD is a refuge to his people...” Joel 3:16b*

**Eternal Abundance:** While other people have eternal affliction awaiting them, the people of God will enjoy unprecedented abundance.

*“...mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water...shall be inhabited forever...for the LORD dwells in Zion.”*

**Mistaken Views of Heaven:** No angels on clouds, no missing our former lives on earth, and we will not know everything.

**Accurate View of Heaven:** We will recognize one another, work, and have the fullness of joy in the undimmed presence of God, no longer tempted by sin, and, for the first time, able to experience God’s best for us!

*“But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.’” 1 Cor 2:9*  
**The difference between the enemies of God and the people of God is not found in one being more sinful than the other, but in one mourning, confessing, and repenting of their sin while the other continues in it.**

*“For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.” Joel 2:13b*

*“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” Psalm 107:1*

*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16*

### **God’s Reckoning is Comprehensive, Repentance is our Right Response**

#### **Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:**

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *IVP Bible Background Commentary* – Craig Keener (1993)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – Walter Elwell & P.W. Comfort (2001)
- *Joel: Only One Thing is Wrong* – J.D. Greear (2015)
- *Locust Hordes and the Day of the Lord* – John Piper (1982)
- *Prophet of Judgment* – Joseph Parker (1902)
- *The Minor Prophets* – James Montgomery Boice (2006)
- *Who will God Save: The Message of Joel* – Mark Dever (2003)
- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* – Donald Whitney (1991)
- *The Reason for God* – Timothy Keller (2008)
- *The Great Divorce* – C.S. Lewis (1945)
- *Heaven* – Randy Alcorn (2004)