The Final Judgment:
As you think about the idea of what we typically refer to as Hell? How would you describe it?

Are there some concepts of Hell that disturb you?

Why do think God might have created such a place?

It is important to not confuse the place of eternal judgment with the waiting places for judgment.

Waiting places until judgment:

**Sheol** (Old Testament Hebrew)

*Psalm 6:5 (NIV)*

No one remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave [Sheol]?

**Hades** (New Testament Greek)

*Mathew 11:23 (NIV)*

And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths [Hades].

Sheol and Hades were general references to the place of the dead. Scripture did not differentiate between the righteous and unrighteous in this regard. Until the time of Christ, people who died went to waiting places. Since the resurrection of Jesus, believers go immediately to be with Christ in heaven when they die.

Place of Temporary Judgment for the Fallen Angels:

**Tartarus** (Pits of Gloom)

*2 Peter 2:4 (NIV)*

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

**The Abyss**

*Luke 8:30-31 (NIV)*

30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.
Tartarus, or the Abyss, seem to be a place specifically reserved for a portion of Satan’s army who await judgment.

The word “Hell” does not actually occur in the Bible in the Greek or Hebrew language. It is an old English word referring to the place or realm of the dead. The place of future judgment is described by a variety of words as described below.

**Gehenna:** This term originally referred to a valley where child sacrifices were offered. It became symbolic of God’s future fiery judgment and punishment of sin.

*Jeremiah 7:31 (NIV)*

> They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind.

*Matthew 23:33 (NLT)*

> Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell [Gehenna]?

Below are some additional descriptions of the judgment to come. Read each set of passages and write some summary words in the right column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daniel 12:2 (NIV)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.</td>
<td>Eternal contempt&lt;br&gt;Eternal punishment&lt;br&gt;Eternal torment</td>
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<td><strong>Matthew 25:46 (NIV)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.</td>
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<td><strong>Revelation 20:10 (NIV)</strong>&lt;br&gt;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.</td>
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**TEACHER’S NOTE:**

Some teach that the Greek word translated “forever and ever” implies that it is only for one “age” of many ages. In other words, judgment is not eternal - just for a time. The struggle with this view is that the same term is used in reference to God’s unending right to receive worship and also the salvation of believers.
See the verses below:

**1 Timothy 1:17 (NIV)**
Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Revelation 5:13 (NIV)**
Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

**Matthew 25:46 (NIV)**
Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

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<tr>
<td>Matthew 25:41 (NIV)</td>
<td>Eternal fire</td>
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<td>Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”</td>
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<td>Revelation 20:14-15 (NIV)</td>
<td>Everlasting destruction</td>
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<td>14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.</td>
<td>Separation from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Thessalonians 1:9 (NIV)</td>
<td>Everlasting destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power</td>
<td>Separation from God</td>
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<td>Matthew 13:49-50 (NIV)</td>
<td>Great furnace</td>
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<td>49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</td>
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<td>Revelation 14:10 (NIV)</td>
<td>Torment</td>
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<td>he [the beast], too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.</td>
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Matthew 8:12 (NIV)
But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

2 Peter 2:17 (NIV)
These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

What are some of Jesus’ parables or analogies you can think of that strike home the reality of the coming judgment?

Examples:

Good tree/Bad tree:
Matthew 7:18-19 (NIV)

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Wheat and the Tares
Matthew 13:30 (NIV)
Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”

Good fish, Bad fish
Matthew 13:48-50 (NIV)

48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. 49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Improperly dressed guest at the wedding banquet
Matthew 22:13 (NIV)
Then the king told the attendants, “Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Parable of the talents
Matthew 25:30 (NIV)

And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Sheep and Goats
Matthew 25:46 (NIV)
Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.
Why do you think so many of Jesus’ parables talked about judgment at the end?

How should a deeper understanding of judgment impact us?

How do you respond to the statement that a loving God would never send someone to judgment?

What do the following verses reveal about the love of God?

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV)
This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)
The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

John 3:16-18 (NIV)
16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

God desires that no one should experience judgement.
   He paid the price for our sin.
   He conquered death.
   He offers us forgiveness and a place in his family
   He gives us life eternal with him
   He expresses the full extent of his love toward us.

The only thing God does not do is force us to embrace him and receive his forgiveness.

When all is said and done he respects the integrity of our choice to face judgment on our own, but this deeply grieves him.
John 5:39-40 (NIV)
39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

If this terrible fate awaits those who refuse to come to Jesus, why don’t more people turn to him?

If this terrible fate awaits people, why are we not more motivated to reach out to people?

Why are we so uncomfortable talking about the coming judgment?

Why is preaching fear not a great means of turning people to God?
Just because someone fears judgment does not mean that they love God. True faith requires a sincere repentance and a love for God. Without an authentic "relationship" there is no salvation.

What role should an awareness of judgment play when reaching out to people?
Jesus clearly let people know what was at stake. Many of his parables indicated the type of future that was waiting for those who rejected God. But the focus of Jesus preaching was to proclaim the kingdom of God through his presence. He called people to himself and encouraged them to embrace a relationship with him as their Lord.

Our role is to point people to Jesus. Part of this will be to explain the big picture including judgment, but when all is said and done, we would prefer people to run in adoration “to” Jesus as opposed to running “from” the fires of judgment.

As you go through your week, try to look at people with the eternal perspective in mind. If you consider the reality of judgment, how might that spur you to action this week?