

Weekly Newsletter

24th February 2026



Holyrood
Church

Reflection: The Joy of Judgment Day

By Joe Barnard

Rightly so, when we think of Judgment Day the mood grows heavy. Few things induce a spirit of sobriety more readily than thinking about the awful (I use the word in its old sense) return of Christ.

But we need to be careful not have a one-sided understanding of what will happen on that tremendous day. Will there be weeping and gnashing of teeth? Yes, there will. But we have multiple reasons to believe that there will also be celebration, deep sighs of relief, and even shouts of joy. What, for some, will be a day of shame will, for others, be a day of honour.

Let me list some of the reason why those securely in Christ should longingly hope for Judgment Day.

One reason is that Judgement Day will be the final judgment of evil. No one can complain about the problem of suffering, or the problem of evil, and then feel an aversion to the return of Jesus. We are all sensitive to the fact that there is too much evil going unpunished in our world. That will change when Christ sets up his throne on earth. The scales of justice will finally be put in perfect balance.

Another is that the Day of the Lord will be the liberation of creation. It's worth noting that, although human beings may fear the advent of Christ, the rest of creation is filled with excitement. Psalm 96 pictures this beautifully. The Psalmist says,

“Let the heavens be glad, and let earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth.”

I love the happy thought of trees singing as they feel in the core of their trunks that finally the earth will be set right.

Furthermore, that great day will be an awesome realisation of the preciousness of grace. Let's be honest: none of us appreciates adequately what Jesus did for us on the cross. The reality of substitutionary atonement will be all the more amazing as we are confronted with the just consequences of sin. Old hymns will take new meaning as we consider with greater insight the refrain “Jehovah Tsidkenu”.

But this is not all. Judgment Day will also be a day on which faith is vindicated. Following Jesus is not easy. Jesus himself said so much. It's a daily struggle to take up a cross, to live separate from the world, and to be steadfast in faith. To follow the path of the beatitudes – being poor in spirit, mourning, meekness, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, being pure in heart, and peace-making – wins you no accolades when you're living in Vanity Fair. Yet, Judgment Day will reveal that all pains were worthwhile. We will discover the truth of Jesus' statement, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” There will be no joy like the joy of gaining entrance into the New Jerusalem.





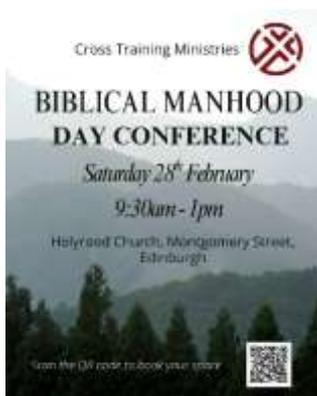
In addition, that Day will be a day of rewards. A lot of Christians feel discomfort when talking about heavenly treasures, rewards, or crowns. I find this worrisome. It's never good to be more pious than an apostle, and it's not a sign of sanctity to dismiss the teaching of Jesus. Jesus was happy to hold forth before us the promise of rewards; Paul has no scruples against imaging the day on which Christ will gift him – and us – a crown of righteousness (c.f. 2 Tim. 4:6-8). Therefore, we ought to feel no shame in picturing the return of Christ as a day on which faith will be confirmed and the wounds we bore in this world on behalf of Christ will be publicly honoured.

But, most importantly, the Day of the Lord will be the day on which we finally see Jesus. Is this not the deepest longing of a Christian's heart? Peter says, "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory." We need to remember that Jesus' arrival will be the arrival of the groom, *our groom*. If he is coming to judge the world, he is doing so – not as an end in itself – but as a prelude to something greater. Once evil is fully dealt with, the great wedding feast of the Lamb can begin. We cannot enter into the joy of the Lord until all of Christ's enemies are put under his feet.

There is a final reason to rejoice in thinking about that Final Day. Paul writes that, when Christ descends from heaven, the dead in Christ will come with him. And what a glorious thought that is. The return of Christ will be the reunion of believers. The people of God will finally be complete as we step into the beginning of a new age of creation, one without death, corruption, and sin.

Reflecting on the Day of the Lord should undoubtedly inspire a sense of holy fear. We should live more focused, chaste, and diligent lives knowing that the day will come like a thief in the night. At the same time, holy fear is not opposed to holy longing. No thought should be as exhilarating than the prospect of one day meeting Jesus face-to-face. This is the highest hope any human being could ever have, for to see Christ is to see God.

Biblical Manhood Conference – this Saturday



What does it mean to be a man? There are many voices today seeking to call men in different directions. Amidst the confusion many men are seeking Biblical clarity to step up to their God given calling.

Cross Training Ministries are organising a half day conference on the **28th of February (from 9.30am to 1pm)** on the topic of Biblical manhood. We'll spend time thinking together about the gift of masculinity, the calling of manhood, and the importance of Christian brotherhood. Go [here](#) to sign up or speak to Joe for more details.





Raj Family – Joining the Church

We're delighted that Raj, Christy and Kezia are joining the church this **Sunday (1st March)**. The family are providing light refreshments (sandwiches, cakes etc) after the morning service. Everyone is warmly invited to stay behind and enjoy food and fellowship together.

The Pursuit – New Sunday Evening Series

Join us this Sunday evening as Jon Gemmell begins **The Pursuit**, a journey through Ecclesiastes, starting 6pm. Jon writes 'This enigmatically unique portion of Scripture meets us in the real world, not the imaginary one. The world where plans fail. Where bodies age. Where answers do not always come neatly. And yet where God reigns, perfectly and unthreatened.

The Pursuit will help us stop chasing the wind and start fearing the Lord. Which, it turns out, is where real life begins.' Come and join us!



Meal and Prayer Meeting

Our next Wednesday night meal and prayer meeting will be on **4 March**. Come from 5.45pm, food will be served at 6pm and we'll pray together from 7-8pm. We're looking forward to Sam Orr from Redeemer Church in Colinton joining us to share about the work there.

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Home Groups across the city. Contact liz@holyroodchurch.org for more details.
- Thursday:
 - Women's Bible Study from 10.30am-11.30am
 - Session Meeting at 7pm in the church
- Friday: Holyrood Youth 7-9pm in the church
- Saturday: Biblical Manhood Conference from 9.30am to 1pm
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am

