

"The Great White Throne Judgment"

Revelation 20:11-15

Introduction: This morning in our study of the book of Revelation we have come to the most frightening scenes in the book. What is before us is more frightening than the Seal, Trumpet and the Bowl Judgments. The passage before us deals with the judgment of the unsaved after the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Daniel spoke of this judgment.

Daniel 12:1-2

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

² *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Notice Revelation 20:4-6

When we studied this, we looked at how the FIRST Resurrection has six parts. The SECOND Resurrection has only one part and it will take place after the 1000 reign of Jesus Christ. In Daniel 12:2 there is a 1000-year gap between the two resurrections which he mentions, and the second resurrection will take place at the Great White Throne Judgment.

In Hebrews we read the following words:

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

The Bible is very clear that every person has been appointed a day to die and every person will stand at a judgment. Now we who are believers will NOT be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. This is not a universal judgment.

A. The Believer's Judgment

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Now at this judgment we will NOT be judged for our sin!

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Our sins were judged at the cross and so ours sin will never be judged again. But for those who have rejected Jesus Christ it will be much different.

I. The Scene

Notice Revelation 20:11

We are told very little about the scene here but there are 3 words that John uses to describe what he sees.

Great, White, Throne. Listen to the words of Newell on these 3 words.

"Weigh each word. Great, —it is the Infinite before whom the finite must stand; White, — it is the unveiled, undimmed blaze of the divine holiness and purity and justice; Throne, — it is majesty unlimited, in which inheres utter right to dispose of the destiny of creatures. Before such a throne, creatures cannot stand; but they shall stand—even the lost!"

This is a very frightening scene.

Notice Revelation 20:11 again.

This is such a terrible scene that the heavens and the earth flee away. Peter foretold of this event.

2 Peter 3:7, 10-11

⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

What Peter is writing about is real global warming. Jesus also spoke of this day.

Matthew 24:35

³⁵ *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

Listen to the words of Barnhouse on the destruction of the earth.

"It is not that they [the earth and heaven] are to be purified and rehabilitated, but that the reverse of creation is to take place. They are to be uncreated. As they came from nothing at the word of God, they are to be sucked back into nothingness by the same word of God. Science may say that matter cannot be made, and that matter cannot be destroyed, but such an attitude does not believe in the God of creation."

II. The Subjects

Notice Revelation 20:12-13

Here we see the subjects are the dead. This is not those who are physically dead but those who are spiritually dead. These individuals will be resurrected and brought before the Great White Throne. They will have nothing to hide behind for the heavens and the earth will be gone. This judgment takes places somewhere in the space outside of the eternal state.

Now we are told in verse 13 that the sea will give up the dead and death and hell will give up the dead which are in them. What does this mean?

Let us consider each of these terms and then we will see clearly what is happening here.

1. **Hell** - This is the holding place of the souls of those who have died without Jesus Christ.

Luke 16:19-26

¹⁹ *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*

²⁰ *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*

²¹ *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

²² *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*

²³ *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

These verses help us to see that when an unsaved person dies they do not enter purgatory, but they immediately go into hell. This is the holding place of the unsaved soul.

2. **Death** - This is a reference to the grave. The rich man which Jesus spoke of was BURIED. He was, like people today, placed in the ground.

Now when John tells us that DEATH gave up the dead he is speaking of all those who were buried in the earth or were cremated and had their ashes scattered over the earth, all these people will have their bodies resurrected and united back with their soul.

3. **The Sea** - This refers to the bodies of those who have been buried at sea. They too will have their bodies resurrected and united back with their soul.

This will even include all the billions who drowned in the flood of Noah's day. ALL the unsaved from the creation of the world through the Kingdom will stand before God on this day.

III. The Books

Notice Revelation 20:11-12

There are multiple books that will be opened at the Great White Throne.

1. **The Book of Sin.**

God keeps a record of every sin that has been committed and that even includes the secret sins of a person's life.

Romans 2:16

¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Now let me show you how we know that God keeps a record of sins.

Hebrews 10:16-17

¹⁶ *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;*

¹⁷ **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**

These verses are telling of what happens when someone gets saved. God forgives, and He forgets their sin.

Psalm 103:12

¹² *As far as the east is from the west, **so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.***

Isaiah 38:17

¹⁷ *Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: **for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.***

Isaiah 43:25

²⁵ *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, **and will not remember thy sins.***

Micah 7:18-19

¹⁸ *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*

¹⁹ *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; **and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.***

This is what happens when a sinner is JUSTIFIED. God removes our sin from our account and He places the righteousness of Jesus Christ on our account.

Romans 3:22-24

²² *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe:** for there is no difference:*

²³ *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

²⁴ *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

Now this Truth applies to the believer, but the opposite is true for the unbeliever. He puts away the sins of the believer, but God keeps record of the sins of the unbeliever, even the secret sins. It will be at the Great White Throne that all of the sins you have ever committed (if you die unsaved) will be brought out in the open and you will be judged for every sin.

There will be no good works in your life that will erase the sin. As a matter of fact, an unsaved person cannot do anything that is righteous. Someone may say, "What about the good works that people do?" There are no good works. What we see as good works in the life of an unbeliever are done with the wrong motives. Either personal gain or personal gratification. This means they are done for sinful reasons. Listen to the words of one writer:

"The unsaved man can, through common grace, love his family and he may be a good citizen. He may give a million dollars to build a hospital. . . If a drunkard, he may abstain from drink for utilitarian purposes, but he cannot do it out of love for God. All of his common virtues or good works have a fatal defect in that his motives which prompt them are not to glorify God, — a defect so vital that it throws any element of goodness as to man wholly into the shade."

But getting back to the point, if you die in your sins each and every sin will be exposed at this Great White Throne.

2. The Book of Life.

This book will be there to show to the unsaved that it was God's will that they would be saved but by PERSONAL choice they rejected God's offer of eternal life. Let me refresh your mind about something.

Revelation 3:1a, 5

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write;

⁵ He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

So many people struggle with this and it has been twisted by people and used to teach you can lose your salvation. But the opposite is actually true. The OVERCOMER is the person who has been saved. So, here in this verse there is a promise that our names will never be blotted out. Now what we need to understand is that God has recorded everyone's name in the book of life but when they die without Christ their name is blotted out.

Can you imagine the unbelievers at the Great White Throne when it is revealed to them that their name was in the book but because of their choice to reject Christ it was removed?

3. The Book of Light.

I personally believe there will be another book at this judgment that I call the BOOK OF LIGHT. We must understand that in heaven there are different degrees of rewards and so in the Lake of Fire there will be different degrees of suffering. These degrees will be determined by two things.

1. The sins they committed.
2. The Truth they were exposed to.

Luke 12:42-48

⁴² *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?*

⁴³ *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

⁴⁴ *Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

⁴⁵ *But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;*

⁴⁶ *The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

⁴⁷ *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

⁴⁸ *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

IV. The Sentence

Notice Revelation 20:14-15

Conclusion: I want to end this today with a verse from Romans.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word WAGES mean payment or earnings. The sentence upon the unbelievers at the Great White Throne is something they will have earned because of their works.

This is a law of God that cannot be escaped without Jesus Christ. Sin brings death. It is a law like gravity. If you jump from a plane without a parachute you will die because of the law of gravity. There is a law with God that sin will bring death/eternal separation from God.