

A GREAT WHITE THRONE

Revelation 20:11-15

THE FIVE VERSES of the passage, tell us about the final judgment. They speak about that terrible day every lost sinner, who dies without Christ, will have in God's court.

THE THRONE

The Great White Throne is not the throne of GOD the Sovereign, but that of GOD the Judge. The throne is not regal but judicial. The throne is not permanently set up, but temporally, and for a special purpose (Walter Scott).

Isaiah had a vision of the Lord on His throne. In it he beheld an altar of sacrifice beside it; that altar met and answered the righteous claims made by the throne.

The throne, in the innermost room of the tabernacle, which the High Priest was accustomed to, was called the mercy seat. It had blood—the witness of death—sprinkled upon it. The blood applied made the throne— a throne of mercy.

But the throne before us is great and white, and there is neither altar nor blood. There is no hope for salvation here. There is no mercy to be found here.

It is called great – this word refers to “its power.” When judgment is rendered from this throne, there is no appeal to a higher court, for there is no higher court in the entire universe!

It is called white – this speaks of “the purity” of this court. All human courts are tainted by sin, prejudice and fallibility. But not this one! The color white, can also be understood as, the white heat of GOD's wrath manifested.

THE JUDGE

The Judge who occupies this seat is infallible. He cannot be tainted by sin or prejudice, but He renders judgment in accordance to His perfect holiness, righteousness and justice. His awesome appearance is described for us by the prophet Daniel, Dan. 7:9-10.

The One on this throne is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22).* The passage goes on to say, *“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.”*

THE SETTING

The presence of the Judge is so terrible and powerful that even the heavens and the earth flee from before Him (v11). No place was found for them. The setting is unique. There are no surroundings, simply an appalling emptiness. Unconceivable nothingness, all around.

When God’s day for settling accounts comes, He will unleash the energy of the atom that He holds together by His mighty power and the atmospheric heavens and the earth will dissolve under great heat (2Pet. 3:10).

The late Baptist preacher Adrian Rogers comment on the verse is: *God says the earth is stored with fire. The atomic nature of the universe is such that everything has molecular fire in it. The atmosphere is stored with fire. Paper is stored with fire. Clothes are stored with fire. Carpets are stored with fire. The chair you sit on is stored with fire. Everything is packed with fire. The core of the earth is packed with fire.*

Unbelieving evolutionists claim that the cosmos began with a “big bang.” The bible teaches the exact opposite. The earth will end with a “big bang.”

Between the passing away of the millennial scene and the introduction of the eternal state, the Great White Throne is set up. The white throne judgment is held on a unique, one-of-a-kind day! The Day of the Lord has past; the Day of God is about to begin.

THE ACCUSED

Here we are told that those appearing before the throne are the “*dead*”. This proves that there will not be a single born-again believer in the group. Why? The Bible tells us that we who have trusted Jesus as our Savior have “*passed from death unto life*”, John 5:24.

The term *dead* here has a twofold signification. First, it refers to those who had actually died physically. Second, they had “*died in their sins*” because of their unbelief. In nature, they were both physically and spiritually dead.

This is the resurrection of the mass of humanity called the unjust, the lost, the wicked, the ungodly (Acts 24:15). In Scripture, we find no ground for the widespread notion of a general resurrection and a general judgment. This here is known as the 2nd resurrection. The 1st resurrection, which consists of believers only, occurs 1000 years earlier. *Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection* (v6).

The sea will give up those who died there. The cemeteries will give up the bodies, and hell will give up the souls (v13). From that day onward the Sea, Death and Hell will be no more. Death and hell will be cast into the everlasting lake of fire.

Souls come out one by one, out of that darkness of Hades and torment, and they stand before God to be sentenced in absolute silence.

No one is forgotten by God. All classes of sinners, the great and the small are there, from all ranks of men in the church and in the world. The highest and most responsible, down to the least, are assembled and gathered round the throne. And each will be judged individually.

There is nowhere for anyone to hide. They will stand before the Christ, the one who they did not care for and rejected, and they will stand before Him in paralyzing fear.

THE BOOKS

I don't know all the books that will be used that day, but I am sure of a few that will be opened.

- The Bible (consisting of 66 books). Jesus Himself reminded us that we would be judged out of His Word - John 12:48. *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*

- **The Book of Deeds - The ground of judgment is that of works, of deeds (vv 12-13).**

In Heaven, records are being maintained of the deeds of all men. Whoever you may be, your biography is written. And it's filed in Heaven's library. The perfect hand of God has recorded every detail, every secret thing of your life.

For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light (Luke 8:17). For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil (Eccl. 12:14).

In Matthew 12:36 the Lord Jesus said, *“And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they shall render account concerning it in the Day of Judgment.”*

Every deed, both good and evil will be mentioned. Every sin of the unbeliever will be read aloud: Sins of commission, sins of omission, obvious sins, secret sins, sins of the heart and sins of the mind. All will be brought out into the open on that day.

Men will stand stripped of all their pretenses and will appear as they really are. No one will hide behind excuses, ignorance and false professions.

Bible makes it clear that no one is ever saved by doing good works. Our best works, without Christ, are like menstrual cloths to God (Isa. 64:6).

What saves us from our sins is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He paid for our sins. We don't do good works to be saved. We do good works because we are saved.

- **The Book of Life. There is a *book of life*, or a *book of the living*.**

Every name of every person who would ever be born was in this book, Rev. 3:5; Rev. 17:8. When a sinner dies without trusting Christ as his Savior, their name is removed (blotted) from this book. While your name remains, there is hope for you, but when you die, or you reject Jesus for the last time, you are numbered with the eternally dead and there is no more opportunity for you to be saved.

- The Lamb's Book of Life - This book contains the names of those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus. Rejoice, *"because your names are written in heaven,"* Luke 10:20. At the Great White Throne Judgment, the Lamb's book of life and the book of life will match perfectly!

THE JUDGMENT

The judgment will be final. The sentence from this throne is binding and eternal. The purpose of the White Throne Judgment is not to find out if a sinner is guilty or not. It is not a trial. All those who stand there are already guilty, because of their unbelief.

The Bible says, in John 3:18 *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

No bribing, no appeals, no leniency, no pardons. This will be the last day any of these sinners ever see. They will never see the light of day again. This will be the end of the road for them, for they are forever consigned to the Lake of Fire to suffer torment for eternity.

V15— And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Imagine the horror of hearing Jesus say the words that will condemn you to eternal torment! Imagine hearing Him say, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"*, Matt. 25:41.

There will be no end to the torment, no end to the flames, to the awful nature of what the sinner will face (Rev.20:10; Matt. 25:46). It will be eternal banishment from the face of the One who sits on the throne.

Over the portals of that place are inscribed the words, *"Abandon hope, you who enter here."*

As the cross stands as the great equalizer among people of faith on the road to salvation, so the Great White Throne Judgment is the equalizer among those on their way to eternal damnation.

Every person that has ever lived is going to meet Jesus Christ, the Son of God personally. It is unavoidable. Either you meet him at Calvary as Savior and Lord, in this life, or you will meet up with Him at the Great White Throne as Judge and Lord.

“How shall ye escape if ye neglect so great salvation?” Hebrews 2:2-4.

If you have never been saved, you need to come to Jesus. You need to be saved today. I plead with you, settled your debt of sin, out of court. Settle it today. Before it's too late. Believe in Jesus Christ the Lord; accept His free payment for your sins, so you won't have to perish.