

Revelation 20:11-15 – The Great White Throne Judgment

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Great White Throne Judgment is aptly described as the “crack of doom.” It is the absolutely ultimate judgment of God on the wicked. But there are some significant differences between what other religions teach (even what other Christians teach) and what the Bible teaches. So let God’s Word speak to you today so you can see what this judgment is like, the purpose of this judgment, and the result of this judgment.

Our headings are:

The Scene of Judgment

The Standard for Judgment

The Summary of Judgment

Our goals are: That seeing the fairness and severity of God’s justice, **you will thank him for saving and protecting you from it,** and **you will work to ensure that no other person has to face God’s fair but severe judgment.**

The Scene

11 Then I saw a **great white throne** and **Him who sat on it**, from whose face the earth and the heaven **fled away**. And there was found no place for them.

1. The Great White Throne John saw represents the purity and fairness of the judgment that comes to those in front of it.

2. The “greatness” of this throne represents the fact that it is a final judgment on all mankind.

This is not a local or municipal court. There is no other appeal after this!

3. Jesus is the one sitting on the Great White Throne.

He was pictured earlier as sitting on a white cloud (Revelation 14:14) and a white horse (Revelation 6:2) as he oversaw his people, but now he sits on a white throne of judgment.

He is the overseer of his people.

1Peter 2:25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

So it not surprising that he sits in judgment over those who threatened his sheep – his people. He must destroy them. And in fact, Jesus himself said that one of his future works was sitting as judge over the nations.

Matthew 25: 31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He **will sit on the throne of His glory.** 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 "**And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.**

Acts 10: 42 "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was **ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.**

Acts 17: 31 "because He has appointed a day on which **He will judge the world** in righteousness **by the Man whom He has ordained.** He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

2Timothy 4: 1 I charge you therefore before God and **the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing** and His kingdom:

4. Why is Christ the judge, and not Peter or other disciples, as many stories and other religions teach?

Christ was given the assignment of judging as a result of his work of restoring man to God and mediating for him. Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9-10. (See also the Apostles' Creed, Athanasian Creed, etc.).

John 5:26 "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted **the Son** to have life in Himself, 27 "and **has given Him authority to execute judgment** also, because He is the Son of Man.

5. Man without Christ cannot stand before God in judgment (at least not stand with safety) so he flees.

This is clearly an allusion to Psalm 114. Things that posed a threat to Israel from going into the Promise Land were destroyed: the Red Sea, the Jordan River, etc.

Psalm 114:1 When Israel went out of Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language, 2 Judah became His sanctuary, And Israel His dominion. **3 The sea saw it and fled; Jordan turned back.** 4 The mountains skipped like rams, The little **hills like lambs.** 5 What ails you, **O sea, that you fled? O Jordan, that you turned back?**

6. On the other hand, the Christian will not run from God's justice but will stand before the Lord without fear.

He knows his judgment is about reward – not condemnation or punishment. He knows that he already died in Christ (who took his full punishment) and now lives to inherit eternal blessings in heaven. Rejoice!

John 5: 24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, **but has passed from death into life.**

7. Lessons:

a. Everyone will have to stand before the Lord in judgment...whether he believes in Christ or not. So if someone says, "That is your belief, not mine," you must have pity on his soul and still pursue him. **Denying a truth doesn't make it a lie.**

b. If anyone denies that Christ will judge the world he is a heretic 异教徒 – not a true Christian.

The Standard for Judgment

12 And I saw the **dead, small and great**, standing before God, and **books were opened**. And another book was opened, which is the **Book of Life**. And the dead were judged **according to their works**, by the things which were written in the books.

1. Christ's Great White Throne judgment will not be haphazard, but orderly.

a. All the activities of men from all eras are recorded. No one gets privilege because he is rich or famous, or if he were poor and destitute. There is no favoritism in either direction. **All men of all religions will have to face Jesus' judgment.**

b. Every transgression of God's law by the unbeliever is recorded.

c. But there is a special book – the Book of Life – in which the names of Christians are recorded. They are recorded there because you received the work of Christ (his life and his death) and your lives show evidence of that faith **in Christ's good works**. So you won't run from Christ on judgment day as the wicked. **Isn't that good news?**

13 The **sea gave up the dead** who were in it, and **Death and Hades delivered up the dead** who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

2. To show the inescapability of this judgment, John pointed out that even all those who died tragic deaths (maybe their bodies were burned in a fire and never properly disposed, or drowned, etc.) would also have to face judgment.

The expression “the sea gave up the dead” would have taken the Jewish mind back to Pharaoh and his army drowning in the Red Sea. **Though they died in judgment, they would still be judged and condemned eternally for their sin.**

Exodus 15: 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has **cast into the sea**; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. **5** The depths have covered them; They **sank to the bottom like a stone**.

Also, there were untold men who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea and were never found. So all men will be judged!

3. But notice that the wicked are condemned by their works...works that were not always “evil” in the sense of direct intentional breaking of God's law.

Some wicked men may have done what seemed good to them and to others (helping earthquake victims, or starving children), but because their works were **not done from faith** and for **Christ's glory**, their works became the basis of their condemnation. This is consistent with the language of Scripture.

Psalm 62:12 Also to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.

4. What about the righteous and your good works that you do?

a. You are not saved by your good works, but by Christ's. See above.

b. You do good works because you are saved and they form the basis for your rewards in heaven.

James 2:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." **Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.**

2Corinthians 5: 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **that each one may receive** the things done in the body, **according to what he has done**, whether good or bad.

5. Lessons:

a. The Jews cannot claim a right to heaven by their birth or circumcision. They can only do so by their faith in Jesus...the same claim you make. We started this short series so this point could be made clear. I hope it is clear.

b. Men may have freedom to have different beliefs in this world, but they won't have freedom to pick a different judgment. All men from every culture, creed, and religion will have to answer to the one true God of heaven and earth. The Hindus and the Muslims will be judged by Jesus.

c. Even those who died tragic deaths will be judged. Ever hear the expression: He can't go to hell twice? The answer: Yes, he can! **A rough life on earth does not mean a rich life after. A redeemed life on earth means a rich life after.**

d. Look how wrong the SDA's and Jehovah's Witnesses are...there is no annihilation.

e. Every good work you do is recorded and will be presented on your behalf on Judgment Day! What does your bank account look like in heaven?

The Summary of Judgment

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

1. Ultimately, death and the grave will be destroyed – symbolically cast into the eternal lake of fire to show there will be no more dying in the world.

Death becomes impotent. **This "lake of fire" - which is hell, is called the 2nd death.**

1Corinthians 15: 26 The **last enemy that will be destroyed is death.**

In the 1st death, the body and soul died because of Adam's sin, but there is hope of salvation from that death. The 2nd death is destruction of the body and soul in hell and from this there is no hope of salvation.

2. Those whose name are not found in the Book of Life will promptly be cast forever in this lake of fire.

Jesus had previously warned of this in his usual figurative way.

John 15: 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and **throw them into the fire**, and they are burned.

But along with the fire is the tortured conscience...guilty for rejecting the only hope it had. There is no life without Christ. This is why it is important that you daily draw from Christ's Spirit and from Christ's Word. (Read your Bible and pray everyday if you want to grow.)

3. Lessons:

a. The destruction of death and hell is a victory for the Christian. This is ultimate proof that there is no God but Jehovah God (your Father) and Jehovah God has all power – even power to control death.

b. Do you realize the terror that those in hell will face...a terror that will continue for eternity?

c. If you really believe this, you will start to invite people to hear the message of Jesus! You won't be able to remain silent when you **hear the screams of the terror** of those in hell!

Conclusion:

God sits on the Great White Throne to judge fairly all men – regardless of how high they were, how small they were, from whatever time they lived, and however tragic their lives might have been. He **will condemn to hell for eternity all those who are guilty** of breaking the smallest of his laws and have not repented through Jesus Christ. **This destruction of the wicked is for the glory of God and for the security of Christians.**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Are you ready for the Great White Throne judgment? Is your life filled with the good works of Jesus, his life and death? Are you filled with enough good works as evidence of a real and living faith?

2. Seeing the severity and finality of God's judgment on the wicked, will you endeavor today to work to see the lost saved by the blood of Jesus Christ? I pray that you will.

3. Do you thank and praise the Lord for his salvation to you? Are you here today with that goal in mind? I hope you are.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you are not ready to face the Great White Throne of Christ. May you become ready today! Ask God to make you his child on account of Christ. You will be able to plead his righteousness as your righteousness and his death as your death on that great judgment day. If you don't, you will be one of those condemned in eternity in hell.