

## **Revelation 20:11-15**

### **The Day of Judgment**

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation chapter 20. We're going to read together the entire chapter, but of course the focus of our study today is going to be on verses 11 to 15. Revelation chapter 20, beginning at verse 1:

“<sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

“<sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

“<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, <sup>8</sup> and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

“<sup>11</sup> And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. <sup>14</sup> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Now the fact that there will be a final day of judgment for all of humanity is a prominent teaching in the Scriptures. Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” This passage and many others like it make it exceedingly clear that there will be a single, final day of judgment at the end of this age when Christ returns. It is important to

understand that there is only one final judgment, at which every human that has ever lived will be judged. The Bible always speaks of the future judgment as a single event. It teaches us to look forward to the *day* of judgment, not the days of judgment. The day of judgment is always stated in the singular. It is never stated in the plural.

For example, Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 that “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the *day* of judgment.” Paul says of God in Acts 17:31 that “he hath appointed a *day*, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.” Numerous other passages use identical language, clearly showing that there is a single day of judgment, and there are no others.

The Bible is also clear that both the believers and the unbelievers will appear together before God at the same time to be judged all at once. This is taught in numerous passages. For example, in Matthew 25, verses 31 to 46; in Romans chapter 2, verses 5 through 11; and in Revelation chapter 11, verses 17 and 18, we see both the saved and the unsaved appearing together at the same time before Christ on the day of judgment.

All of these rebut the dispensational teaching that there will be three separate judgments. Dispensationalists say that there will be a judgment of believers at the rapture, to apportion rewards to each of them; and then seven years later at the second coming, there will be a judgment of the nations, to determine which of them are worthy to enter the millennial kingdom; and then, a thousand years after that, at the end of the Millennium, they say there will then be a judgment of all the unbelievers whoever lived.

This teaching of three separate judgments separated by the chronology of time is false. It is false because the Dispensationalists separate events in time, that actually all occur all together at the same time. The end of the Millennium, which is the age we are currently living in, and the rapture of the saints, and the second coming of Christ, all occur at the same time. The Millennium is going to end, the rapture is going to occur, and the second coming is going to happen all at the same time—all at the end of this age. So there cannot be three separate judgments for events that all occur at the same time. At the end of this age, there is one single judgment in which all men are judged, some of whom enter into eternal life in the new earth, and some of whom enter eternal death in the lake of fire.

Now the reason for this final judgment is to vindicate the justice of God, it is to vindicate the people of God, and it is to vanquish the enemies of God.

People always ask, How can God be just when there is so much evil in the world? Well that charge would be valid if the evil in the world was never justly dealt with and punished in the end. But the final judgment is the vindication of God as being just, because at the final judgment, every wrong is properly punished, and every evil receives its just recompense, and every good deed is properly rewarded.

And so God will perfectly balance the scales of justice on the last day, and the charge of God being unjust will be forever laid to rest. Just because we don't see perfect justice now, doesn't mean that God is unjust, because He will bring perfect justice in the end on the day of judgment.

Furthermore, in this life, believers suffer a tremendous amount of persecution, and scorn, and mockery, and rejection. Society treats believers as being evil, and it views them with contempt. Believers suffer many injustices for the name of Christ, and they suffer many injustices because of their loyalty to Him. Jesus promised the believers reward for their loyalty to Him. He said in Matthew chapter 5, verses 10 to 12, “<sup>10</sup> Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.”

And so the day of judgment is when Christ fulfills all those promises to believers, and shows the wicked world that these believers are indeed the blessed ones and the rewarded ones, and that the world's treatment of them and the world's assessment of them was completely wrong. On the day of judgment, Christ vindicates His people before the whole world, and He richly rewards His people for their service to Him before the whole world.

Finally, on the day of judgment, God will vanquish all of His enemies and punish them forever in the lake of fire for all the evil that they have done towards His name and towards His people. God has said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,” and this is the day of repayment, and this is the day of vengeance. The Bible's description of the day of judgment tells us that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God, but it also tells us that it is a wonderful thing to be received in the arms of a loving God. And the difference between facing an angry God on the day of judgment and facing a loving God on the day of judgment is the difference between rebelling against and rejecting Christ, or repenting of sin and receiving Christ as the Lord and the Savior of your life.

The subject of the day of judgment is a very serious and sobering matter to contemplate. It demands our most serious thought and self-examination as to what our outcome will be on that day. So, as we look at our passage today in verses 11 to 15, it demands our utmost attention, and it demands our most careful personal reflection as to what *our* outcome will be on that great day. There is nothing you will do in this life, and I mean absolutely nothing, that is more important than to be prepared to face God on the day of judgment. Nothing else matters beside that.

The day of judgment is real. We will all meet there. Our eternal destiny will be declared there, and there will be no appeal. What is described here in Revelation 20, verses 11 to 15, is exactly what we will see, and it is exactly what we will experience, and therefore, we need to take it very, very seriously—more seriously than you take anything else in life.

Well then, let us examine the passage before us. In the first place this morning, let us consider together the time of the final judgment.

The Bible, both in the Old Testament and also in the New Testament, tells us repeatedly that the final judgment takes place when Christ returns. So I want to look at a major passage in the Old Testament, and I want to look at a major passage in the New Testament, in order to demonstrate this point.

First of all, notice the final judgment in the Old Testament described. Turn please in your Bibles to Daniel chapter 7. Now you recall back when we were preaching through Revelation 11, we stopped and went and preached through Daniel chapter 2 and Daniel chapter 7. There, we talked about the flow and the unfolding of human history. So I want to just re-read Daniel 7, verses 1 to 14. It says:

“<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. <sup>2</sup> Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. <sup>6</sup> After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. <sup>7</sup> After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

“<sup>9</sup> I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. <sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. <sup>11</sup> I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. <sup>12</sup> As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. <sup>13</sup> I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. <sup>14</sup> And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

Now you recall when we preached on this passage that these four beasts symbolized the successive world empires that will arise in the earth, from Daniel's day clear up to the very end of time. These successive world empires will conclude with the reign of Antichrist, who is this "little horn" that comes up on the fourth beast that is described. And when these world empires have run their course, concluding with the reign of the Antichrist, then we read that the Ancient of days comes in conjunction with Christ, here pictured as the Son of man, in verses 13 and 14. And when the Ancient of days and the Son of Man come at the end of the reign of Antichrist, the final judgment is set and, as it says in verse 10, the books are opened.

And in the expanded explanation the angel gives to Daniel in the remainder of the chapter, in verses 19 to 27, the same sequence follows: Antichrist appears, and then God comes, and the final judgment commences, and the everlasting kingdom of God is established—which is the new heavens and the new earth. Notice verses 19 to 22:

“<sup>19</sup> Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; <sup>20</sup> and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.” That horn, of course, is the Antichrist. “<sup>21</sup> I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints,”—that's that final transnational persecution of the saints, after the loosing of Satan, described in Revelation 20, verses 7 to 10—“and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them”—virtually wiped them off the face of the earth—“<sup>22</sup> until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom”; that is, the new heavens and the new earth. So we see the age proceeds to the rise of Antichrist; he virtually wipes the church off the face of the earth; then the final judgment comes; Antichrist is destroyed, cast into the lake of fire; and the saints possess the kingdom.

And the same thing is re-described in more detail in verses 23 to 27. Notice: “<sup>22</sup> Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. <sup>24</sup> And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them;”—that's Antichrist—“and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. <sup>25</sup> And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High,”—there's that persecution in the end—“and think to change times and laws:”—Antichrist is going to throw away God's laws and establish the laws of Antichrist—“and they,” that is, the saints, “shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time”—that's the three and a half days, spoken of in Revelation 11:9-11, which is the period of Satan's loosing, where the saints are going to be given into the hand of the Antichrist.

Verse 26: “But”—here it is—“the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” That's the final judgment. “<sup>27</sup> And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people

of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” That’s the new heavens and the new earth.

So here we see this sequence from Daniel’s day to the very end of time, and at the end of time, after the rise of Antichrist and his short period of success against the church, Christ and His father come, the judgment is set, the books are opened, judgment is rendered, the wicked are cast into the lake of fire, and the righteous are conducted into the everlasting kingdom.

Now here in Daniel 7 and verse 10, notice it says in the last phrase, “the judgment was set, and the *books*,” plural, “were opened.” Here we have the books that record the works of men. Now turn please to Daniel chapter 12. We’ll read verses 1 to 3:

“<sup>1</sup> 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*,” singular. Verse 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. <sup>3</sup> And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

And so here in Daniel chapter 12 and verse 1, we see Michael rising and we see him standing up for the people of God, and I believe this is a reference to Revelation chapter 12, when Satan is cast out of heaven by Michael. Remember, he’s cast down to the earth, and it says, Woe to the earth...” You’re going to have a lot of trouble now that Satan’s down there, and he knows he has but a little time. And of course, this last 2,000 years has been a time period of tremendous tribulation for the people of God, as they have sought to advance the kingdom of God across the world.

But at the end of that time, it says “thy people shall be delivered”—that’s going to happen when Jesus returns—“every one that shall be found written in the book.” And of course, it talks about the general resurrection, “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.” There’s the final judgment, and the disposition of the people—those who are written in the book shall be resurrected to life, and those who are not, shall be resurrected to shame and everlasting contempt, and they will be cast into hell. And so verse 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.”

So we see the *books* in Daniel 7 and verse 10; and then we see the *book* in Daniel chapter 12 and verse 1. So we have the books of works, and then we have the book of life. Both of these books, of course, are spoken of in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 12, at this final judgment.

And that brings us to the second passage that we want to look at, regarding the time of final judgment. Having seen the final judgment in the Old Testament described, notice secondly the final judgment in the New Testament described.

Turn please to Matthew chapter 24. Matthew chapter 24 and Matthew chapter 25 form a single unit of eschatological teaching that describes future events from the time of the first coming of Jesus to the time of the second coming of Jesus and the final judgment and the eternal state. So Matthew 24 and Matthew 25 describe the period from the first coming to the final estate. I want you to notice chapter 24 and verse 3:

“And as he,” that is, Jesus, “sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Now notice, here is the question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” When are you coming back, and when’s the world going to end? That’s the question, clearly implying that those two things are going to happen at the same time.

Now Jesus tells them the things that do *not* constitute the signs of His second coming and the end of the world in verses 4 to 8. He talks about the things in verses 4 to 8, and He says that these things do not signify the end of the world, or my second coming. These things in verses 4 to 8 are the things that are going to characterize the entire age, from start to finish, until the end times come. We are living in this period described by verses 4-8 right now.

But in verses 9 to 29, Jesus tells them the things that *do* constitute the signs of His coming, and *are* signs of the end of the world. And once all of those signs recorded in verses 9 to 29 occur, then the second coming happens. Notice if you will verse 30. It says, *Then*, after the signs of verses 9 to 29 occur, “<sup>30</sup> And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Now I want you to skip to Matthew chapter 25. Jesus just said in chapter 24:30-31, “then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” And now Matthew 25:31:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: <sup>32</sup> and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: <sup>33</sup> and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave

me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: <sup>36</sup>naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. <sup>37</sup>Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? <sup>38</sup>When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? <sup>39</sup>Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? <sup>40</sup>And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

So here are the books opened, and the record of the behavior of the people is read and declared. Now notice verse 41: “<sup>41</sup>Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup>for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. <sup>44</sup>Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? <sup>45</sup>Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. <sup>46</sup>And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

So the books are opened, the works are read, and based on the works that they did or didn't do, their eternal destiny is declared and their disposition is made, either into the new heavens and the new earth, or into the lake of fire. Once again, we see that the final judgment takes place at the second coming of Christ, and once again, just like in the book of Daniel, the righteous and the wicked appear before the Judge at the same time, at the end of human history, after the second coming of Christ, and they are all sent either into everlasting life, or into everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. None of them are sent into some kind of a thousand-year millennial kingdom that follows the second coming, as the Dispensationalists would have us believe.

Now this same pattern that we saw in Daniel chapter 7 and that we have seen in Matthew 25, is the same pattern that occurs in Revelation chapter 20. Turn back please with me now to Revelation chapter 20. You recall from our previous expositions in Revelation chapter 20 that Satan is bound at the first coming of Christ, in verses 1 to 3. And then throughout this present age in which we live, Christians are martyred but taken immediately to heaven, in verses 4 to 6.

At the end of this age, Satan is loosed, the Antichrist and the nations attempt to wipe the church off the face of the earth, and Jesus returns with flaming fire to destroy His enemies and to rescue His church, in verses 7 to 10. And then immediately upon His second coming, the final judgment begins, in verses 11 to 15.

So this exact same pattern repeats itself over and over and over again in the Scriptures. The small and the great stand before God, the books of men's works and the book of life are opened, and the judgment is rendered. All men are sent either into the lake of fire, verse 15: “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire”; or, they are sent into the new heavens and the new earth, chapter 21, verses 1 to 3: “And I saw a new heaven



and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle,” or the dwelling place, “of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

So the Bible is clear—there is this age that concludes with the second coming and the final judgment of all men, all at once, whether saved or lost; and then there is the age to come, in which men live forever, either in the lake of fire or in the new earth with its new heavens. And that is the chronology of time and eternity, as to when the judgment occurs, who is there, and what happens at it.

Well having then seen in the first place the time of the final judgment, in the second place then this morning, let’s consider together the process of the final judgment.

Now here in verses 11 to 15 of Revelation chapter 20, we are told what the process of the final judgment will be. Notice first of all, it opens with a description of the throne and its occupant. Verse 11: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it.”

Here in verse 11, the throne of judgment is called “a great white throne.” We saw in Matthew 25 and verse 31 that the throne of judgment was called “the throne of his glory.” And in Daniel chapter 7 and verse 9, His throne was said to be like “a fiery flame.” So each of these various terms that describe the nature of God’s throne tell us something about that throne. It is a white throne, which shows its purity. It is a throne of glory, showing its overwhelming magnificence. It is a throne like a fiery flame, showing its fearfulness. And it is a great throne, showing its overwhelming authority.

The throne of God has played a prominent role in the book of Revelation. The throne of God is described in Revelation chapter 1, chapter 3, chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7, chapter 8, chapter 12, chapter 14, chapter 16, chapter 19, chapter 20, chapter 21, and chapter 22, and often the throne of God is mentioned numerous times, in each of those chapters.

Now the reason why the throne of God is mentioned so often, and the reason why it plays such a prominent role in the book of Revelation, is to show that God is in sovereign control of all the events of history, and that all that occurs *in* history is under His direction and done by His authority, and that every person is accountable to Him for all that they do. The book of Revelation is saturated with references to the throne of God to remind suffering saints, as they progress through this age to the end, that God is in control and He is running things from heaven, and that He is sovereign over all.

And that brings us great comfort as we are assaulted by the Wicked One and his servants. And even though people today do not recognize the existence of that throne, and they do not bow before the authority of that throne, one day, every one of them will appear before that throne and

be judged by that throne and the one who sits upon it. You do not defy the throne of God and escape unscathed. The book of Revelation makes that abundantly clear.

Now the one who sits upon this throne is Christ Himself. Matthew 25:31 makes that clear. It says it is “the Son of man” who sits upon the throne of his glory, judging the people of the earth in the last day. Furthermore, Jesus said in John chapter 5 and verse 22, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”

Jesus goes on to say in John 5:25 to 27: “<sup>25</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. <sup>26</sup> For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; <sup>27</sup> and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”

Acts 17:31 says that God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained [appointed]; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

Second Corinthians 5:10 says that “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.”

In Second Timothy 4 and verse 1, Paul says to Timothy, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; <sup>2</sup> preach the word...”

The point is, this very Jesus Christ that the world condemned and crucified and mocked and rejected is the very one that they are going to have to answer to, and the very one who is going to pass judgment upon them. All men will have to face Jesus Christ as their judge and give an account to Him and of how they dealt with Him. And the question will be, Did you honor Christ as God? Did you recognize Him as your Lord? And did you trust in Him as your Savior? Or, did you reject His claims, ignore His authority, and despise His name? Your works will demonstrate which of those characterized you.

The time to submit to Jesus Christ is now, and thereby know His smile and favor on the day of judgment. As for those who will not submit to Christ now, their knees shall bow anyway, and their tongues shall confess that Christ is in fact Lord, as they are being cast into the lake of fire.

Well this, then is the description of the throne and its occupant. Notice then secondly, it continues with the objects of the judgment. So the process of the final judgment opens with a description of the throne and its occupant, and then it continues with the objects of the judgment.

Now the first object of judgment is the earth and the heavens. Notice verse 11: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away;

and there was found no place for them.” So the first object of judgment of the one who is sitting on the throne is the earth and the heaven.

Now the fact is, the natural creation became fallen when Adam fell, and therefore God’s judgment must fall upon it because of its corruption. Romans chapter 8, verses 19 to 21, tells us about the corruption of the natural creation that came upon it as a result of Adam’s fall. A corrupt creation cannot stand before a holy God, and so it is symbolically said to flee from the face of God, where it is cast into a kind of hell, as described in Second Peter 3.

I’d like for you to turn in your Bibles with me, please, to Second Peter chapter 3. In Second Peter chapter 3, the subject matter is the second coming of Christ and the day of His coming. Now notice the day of His coming is called the day of the Lord. Notice Second Peter 3 verses 10 to 12. It says, “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. <sup>11</sup> Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”

So the result of this judgment on the old, fallen, corrupt creation is that it will go through a fiery hell of judgment, and then it will be re-made into a sinless, perfect, new creation. Notice verse 13: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Isaiah 51 and verse 6 speaks of this same event, and Hebrews 1:10-12 does also.

Now because of sin, this world we live in is now a corrupt, ruined, and fallen world, with its natural disasters, with its deadly diseases, with its destructive animals, and with its noxious plants. All of that will be done away with in the new heavens and the new earth. Eden will be restored and every effect of the Fall will be removed.

So the first object of judgment, then, is the earth and the heavens. But there are further objects of judgment. Notice secondly, the second object of judgment is all of humanity, and that’s recorded in verses 12 to 13. Turn back to Revelation chapter 20, verses 12 and 13. It says, “<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened,”—notice *books*, plural; *book*, singular—“which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”

Now here in verses 12 and 13 is the resurrection of all of the dead who have ever lived upon the face of the earth. The dead, small and great, encompass the totality of all of humanity, from Adam to the last person ever born on earth. What’s interesting when it says in verse 12, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God”—this phrase “small and great” is used to refer

to all believers in Revelation 11 and verse 18. And this phrase “small and great” is used to refer to all unbelievers in Revelation 19 and verse 18. So the small and great here encompass all the believers and all the unbelievers, which is all the people who have ever lived on the face of the earth, bar none.

So no one will be absent from the day of judgment, and no one will escape the day of judgment. There will be 100% attendance. Not like people today that say, Oh, maybe I’ll go to church today. Eh, I don’t think I’ll go to church today. Nobody’s going to be able to say, Oh, I won’t go to the day of judgment. I’m not going to go to the day of judgment today. That isn’t going to fly. You are coming. The angels will see to that.

Now whether the bodies of people were buried at sea, or whether they were buried on the land, whether their souls were in heaven or whether their souls were in hell, all of them are resurrected, all of them are reunited with their bodies, and all of them are assembled before this great throne and He who sits upon it.

Now as we saw in Daniel 7 and verse 10, we also see here that the books that contain the infallible record of every thought, word, and deed of every person that ever lived are now opened. Nothing anybody ever thought or said or did will ever be forgotten just because a bunch of time has passed by. Each person is judged according to the works he performed in his lifetime and what those works reveal about his attitude towards Jesus Christ, as to whether he had faith in Him as his Lord and Savior, or whether he rejected Him as his Lord and Savior, because our works reveal our true beliefs, and our conduct reveals the god that we actually worship. What we believe determines what we do, and what we do reveals what we believe. And so our works, then, are an infallible indicator of our faith in Jesus Christ or our rejection of Jesus Christ.

Now we’re not saved by our works. We are saved by repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, and by His works. But when we’re saved, we’re also transformed, and that transformed life is the manifestation of the fact that that true saving faith actually resided in that person. And so you can look at what people did, and from it deduce what they believed.

And that’s why judgment is always and everywhere in the Scripture, not according to profession, but according to works. Because, you know, you can profess to be one thing and then live an entirely different way. And how you live really tells who you are, not what you profess. Our works, then, are an infallible indicator of our faith in Jesus Christ, or our rejection of Jesus Christ.

Turn in your Bibles please to Matthew chapter 7. Jesus is speaking here in the Sermon on the Mount, and He’s drawing His sermon to a conclusion. He has this final word to leave with the people to whom He’s preaching—notice what He says in Matthew 7, verses 21 to 27:

“<sup>21</sup> Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me in that day, Lord,

Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup> And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

And what was it that characterized their lives? They were workers of iniquity. Their lives were dominated by sin, controlled by sin, they spent their lives serving sin, even though they went to church and talked about Jesus. He says, If I really am your Lord, if you really believe that, then it’s going to transform your behavior in such a way that you will do the things which I command you; and you will do the will of the Father which is in heaven. Because previously, in verse 20, Jesus had just got done saying, “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Jesus goes on to say, regarding the final day of judgment, verse 24 of Matthew 7: “<sup>24</sup> Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: <sup>25</sup> and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. <sup>26</sup> And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: <sup>27</sup> and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” The difference between those two outcomes on the day of judgment is, Were you a doer of the word, or were you not a doer of the word?

James tells us, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” You’ve got to actually do what the Bible says. When the Bible says, “Don’t lie,” you don’t lie. When it says, “Don’t steal,” you don’t steal. When it says, “Honor your father and mother,” you honor your father and mother. When it says, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,” you keep it holy. And so on, with the rest of the Ten Commandments; and so on with all the commandments of the New Testament as well. So Jesus said, By their fruits you shall know them. And on the day of judgment, He will know who everyone is—whether they were servants of His, or servants of Satan—by the works that characterized their lives.

Now we also want to take note that just as we saw in Daniel chapter 12 and verse 1, that there is also a book that contains the name of every saved person, and this book is called “the book of life,” Revelation chapter 20, verse 12 says, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life.”

Now we have already seen this book of life mentioned in Revelation chapter 3 and verse 5, in Revelation chapter 13 and verse 8, and in Revelation chapter 17 and verse 8. And we saw that this book contains the name of each of God’s elect, who were chosen before the foundation of the world to be included in that book. It is the book of the Lamb that was written from the foundation of the world.

So not only is search made of the books of human works, but search is also made of the book of life, which is the book that has the names of all of God’s elect in it. And what we find is

everyone whose name is written in the book of life, also demonstrated by their works recorded in the book of works, that they were saved people. There is agreement between the book of works that shows their works of faith, and the book of life, which shows the list of all of God's elect. And so search is also made of this book of life on the day of judgment, and whoever's name is found in it is received into heaven, and whoever's name is not found in it is cast into the lake of fire. Our works will show that Christ really was our Lord in whom we believed, and our names written in the book of life will confirm that we were one of God's elect that He came to save. And the record of the two books will match.

Now the lake of fire as a place of punishment is horrific to contemplate. Death and hell, it says in verse 14, are cast into the lake of fire. Neither death nor hell will have any more function or anymore place from this point forward. The separation of the soul and body, which is what death is, will never occur again for all eternity, for either the saved or the lost. Physical death will cease to occur. Nor will there ever be any need for a place to contain the disembodied souls of the lost, which is what hell is—it's just a place to contain disembodied souls that are waiting their final judgment.

And so there will be no place for disembodied spirits, because there will never be the existence of such ever again. It is resurrected men, body and soul together, that will be cast into the lake of fire, and never will their bodies and souls ever be separated again. Now this lake, then, has death and hell metaphorically cast into it, because those two things cease to exist.

Now this lake is called a "lake of fire." It is a place, as Isaiah 33:14 says, of "everlasting burnings." This is declared to be the second death, the last death, the final death, the eternal death, from which there is no deliverance forever. Now we've already seen this back in Revelation chapter 14. Turn there please with me, if you would. Revelation chapter 14, verses 9 through 11 says:

"<sup>9</sup> And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, <sup>10</sup> the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented"—here it is—"with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: <sup>11</sup> and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

And so we read in Revelation 20 and verse 10: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. So clearly, there is no annihilation of these souls that are cast into hell. Satan is cast into hell, all those with the mark of the beast that participated in the work of the beast, the work of the false prophet, all who participated in Babylon and all of its wickedness—all of those people will be cast into hell. And so all of the lost, and Satan, and all

of his demons are all in the lake of fire together, where they are tormented day and night, forever and ever, and have no rest in body and soul for all eternity.

Now people dispute whether this fire is literal or not, and as I said when I preached in chapter 14, if it is literal, it's awful. And if it's symbolic, then the reality is always worse than the symbolism that is portrayed, which means it's even worse. And so, there is no escape of the awfulness of the torment and the suffering and the pain of hell by saying the fire is symbolic, because if it's symbolic, it represents a reality that corresponds to fire and all of its characteristics. Just like our bodies are suited to dwell for eternity in heaven, the bodies of the lost are suited to be tormented forever in hell, without being destroyed.

But what of those who are written in the book of life? Well, Revelation 21 through Revelation chapter 22 describes their outcome. They dwell in the new heavens and the new earth, and they dwell with Christ forever in eternal perfect bliss and happiness, of Eden restored, sin removed, the Devil vanquished, and the immediate personal presence of Christ to fellowship with them and feed them and provide for them, forever and ever and ever. And so we must join Revelation 22, verses 1 to 3, to Revelation chapter 20, verses 11 to 15, because it describes the outcome of those who *are* written in the book of life.

So here then are the two destinies. And mark it down, there are no other destinies. There is no third possibility. You don't get to sit this one out. Everyone is either going to wind up in the new heavens and the new earth, or they're going to wind up in the lake of fire, and there are no other alternatives.

And the question I must ask you this morning is, Where will you be? What do your words and what do your works indicate that your outcome will be? Do your words and works demonstrate a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, or do they demonstrate that you merely give Christ lip-service, while you live as you please and live in a fashion that the world approves of, because you participate in all of their sin and wickedness?

If you are not living a separated life from the world, then you are not living a saved life. The Bible tells us in James chapter 2 that faith without works is dead. And James issues this challenge: Show me your faith by your works. Now this doesn't mean we've got to be perfect people, but what it does mean is that the dominating characteristic of our lives needs to be that we follow and serve and obey Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and that we faithfully confess Him before men, and cling to Him as our God, and we do so all the days of our life.

And so the disposition of the Christian is this: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Not, What do I want to do? You know, that's what they tell all these kids at graduation, right? You can be whatever you want to be! You can do whatever you want to do! Well what if I want to be a professional hit-man?

No. You must be whatever God wants you to be, and you must do whatever God wants you to do. And if you do, and if that's the disposition and the direction of your life, then Jesus will say, Ah, I see that you viewed me as Lord, you trusted me as Savior, you demonstrated the reality of that by your effort to obey me all the days of your life. Well done, good and faithful servant. And no one who is not a demonstrated servant of Jesus Christ in their actions will ever be conducted into the new earth.

And so let me ask you, what are you doing to serve Jesus Christ? Is your life given over to the service of Jesus? And if it is, then the works that you do in serving Him will bear a fine record on the day of judgment of the genuineness of your faith in Him.

Now do not be confused in thinking those works are what save you. Those works are what demonstrate that you are saved, and that you do love the Lord Jesus, and you do believe in Him as Savior. And so you're doing them, not to earn something, but to display something. And it's important that we maintain that distinction.

We do not do good works to earn something; we do good works to display something, and that something is our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, If you love me, keep my commandments. So I keep His commandments, not to earn something, but to show something, and that is, to show love for the one that I really believe is Lord and Savior.

Well, let us prepare for the day of judgment by trusting in Christ *alone* for the forgiveness of our sins, and then demonstrating the genuineness of that faith by just living for Him in all that we do and say and think. And when we fail, we just get up and start living for Him again. Jesus is a Savior of sinners, not of perfect people. We need to recognize that as Christians, we're going to fall and fail many times. It doesn't mean that we're going to go to hell because of that, provided that when we fall and we fail, we confess our sins to Him, and when we do, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and we get up, and we start following Him again.

Those are the kinds of works that demonstrate a genuine faith in Jesus. It's not only the works of obedience, but also the works of repentance when we don't obey. And as we engage in obedience and repentance all the days of our life, we demonstrate that Jesus is our Savior and Lord. Shall we pray together.

Father, thank you so much for this sobering reminder of the seriousness of the choices we make in life. And Father, help us not to think that we can put off making Jesus Lord and Savior of our lives one more minute.

Father, may we bow before Him, may we submit ourselves to Him, may we prepare ourselves for the day of judgment, not by reforming our lives, as though somehow we're going to earn your favor, but by repenting of our lives and receiving Christ as our Savior, and resting and relying on



*His* works to save us. And then out of gratitude for that, displaying love to Him by how we behave, and thus showing that we really do love Him *by* how we behave.

Father, may we understand these things and never get the cart before the horse. Father, may faith always precede, and then obedience always follow. In Jesus' name. Amen.