"THE GREAT WHITE THRONE"

Revelation 20:11-15

11-20-2022



The most dreadful or terrifying time in history will be
the Great White Throne Judgment!

A Practical Key Truth -- ***The coming Great White Throne Judgment should provoke you to <u>fear God</u>!

Five reasons why God is to be feared:

I. ***The <u>JUDGE</u> on the Great White Throne***
***Points to* a <u>HOLY</u> Judgment (v. 11)**

II. ***The <u>SUBJECTS</u> before the Great White Throne***
***Point to* an <u>IMPARTIAL</u> Judgment (v. 12a; v. 13a)**

III. ***The <u>EVIDENCE</u> of the Great White Throne***
***Points to* an <u>HONEST</u> Judgment (v. 12b)**

IV. ***The <u>VERDICT</u> from the Great White Throne***
***Points to* a <u>FAIR</u> Judgment (v. 12c; v. 13b)**

V. ***The <u>SENTENCING</u> by the Great White Throne***
***Points to* a <u>FINAL</u> Judgment (v. 14-15)**

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I. The <u>JUDGE</u> on the Great White Throne Points to a <u>HOLY</u> Judgment (v. 11)

(***"From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away . . ."***)

"A great white throne" -

"Great" - reflects the <u>importance</u> of the judgment. "It is a great throne, not merely in size, but because of the <u>great issues</u> involved" (Smith, p. 278).
This will be the greatest, most severe judgment of all time. Unbelievers will one day stand before the supreme "<u>Supreme</u> Court."

"White" - Reflects the <u>purity</u> of the judgment, the righteousness of the judgment (Rev. 19:11).
This will be a <u>holy</u> judgment by a holy God (Is. 6)

"I saw . . . Him that sat on it" -

The One John saw was none other than <u>Jesus Christ</u>.

Proofs:

1) God the Father being "spirit" (Jn. 4:24) cannot be seen (Jn. 1:18). John could <u>see</u> the One on the throne. He saw Jesus, who is the "image of the invisible God."
2) God the Father will judge no one; Jesus Christ will do all of the judging (Jn. 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:16; II Tim. 4:1; Jms. 5:9; I Pet. 4:5).
   Jn. 5:22 - "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."
   Acts 10:42 - "And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."
   Rom. 2:16 - "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."
   It is "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead." (II Tim. 4:1).
3) Ezekiel saw One sitting on a throne who had "the appearance of a man above upon it" - This is Jesus Christ! (Ezek. 1:26-28)

"From whose face the earth and heaven fled away" -

"Fled" = to run away in haste (Eng. "fugitive")

"Earth and heaven" = the two places that have been defiled by the presence of sin.

Earth - the sin of man

Heaven - the sin of fallen angels ["The heavens are not clean in His sight" - Job 15:15]

"There was found no place for them" - God's spotless glory (21:23) will be inhibited by nothing. There will be no room for this present "cosmos" in the new heaven & earth. After the Millennium (20:1-10), this world, as we know it, will exist no more because God is going to create a "new heaven and a new earth" (21:1).

II. The SUBJECTS before the Great White Throne Point to an IMPARTIAL Judgment (v. 12a; v. 13a)

("the dead, small and great")

V. 12a

"And I saw the dead" - the phrase "and I saw" (cp. v. 11) indicates a sequential vision to that of verse 11.

In other words, after the earth and heaven are disposed of, now comes the sentencing of man.

As the sequence of creation [1) earth (Gen. 1:2); 2) Heaven ("sky" - Gen. 1:8); 3) man (Gen. 1:27)], so will be the sequence of condemnation ["earth and heaven" (v. 11), then man (v. 12)].

"Dead . . . stand" - This is the second resurrection, in contrast to the "first" (Rev. 20:5-6)

Just as the resurrection of the just was literal, so will be the resurrection of the unjust (Jn. 5:29; Dan. 12:2).

"***Small and great"*** - Everyone who was not part of the "first resurrection" (20:5,6). . .

From the lowest to the highest

From the weakest to the mightiest

From the poorest to the wealthiest

From the most unknown to the most well-known

Everyone from pauper to prince, from common citizen to king, from pagan laity to pagan clergy. All without Christ will one day stand before Him for judgment.

On Judgment day, a pygmy will stand beside a president;
a drug dealer beside a doctor
a parishioner next to a pope

Everyone will stand naked before God - stripped of fame, wealth, power, and influence.

"Stand before God" - If Jesus is Judge (Jn. 5:22), then Jesus is God! Another proof of His deity. [NOTE: the phrase "before God" - critical and majority text reads "before the throne"]

V. 13a

"Gave up . . . delivered up" - same word in the Greek _"didomi") meaning to give or hand over.

"The sea" = the ocean depths where bodies of the dead have sunk and decayed without a proper burial. Not one dead body will remain unresurrected, or lost from God's sight or memory, regardless of where they lie.

"Death" = the grave; the place of decayed bodies of the lost (a reference to where the physical part of man goes).

"The body without the spirit is dead" (Jms. 2:26)

The word ***"death"*** when used in conjunction with the word ***"hell"*** has this meaning: "Death" refers to the physical aspect of departing this life, and "hell" refers to the spiritual aspect of departing this life.
Rev. 6:8a - *"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."*
It is death which claims the body and it is hell (hades) which claims the soul (Ryrie,p. 117)

"Hell" = The place of the departed spirits of the lost (a reference to where the spiritual part of man goes)
A place of spiritual suffering and torment (Lk. 16:23-31).

*By joining "death" to "hell", John is implying that both body and spirit will stand before God in judgment (v. 13), and both body and spirit will be thrown into the Lake of fire (v. 14) [cp. Rev. 19:20 - the Antichrist and False Prophet were thrown into the Lake of fire with both body and spirit ("alive"); cp. Mt. 10:28 - ". . . fear Him (God) which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna (place of fire)"]

"Every man" - Not one sinner will escape Judgment Day (God will not be bought off or bribed either).
There is no respect of persons with God (SEE Rom. 2:3-6, 9, 11)

III. The EVIDENCE of the Great White Throne Points to an HONEST Judgment (v. 12b)

("The books were opened")
"The books (plural) were opened: and another book (singular)"

At least three books will be opened on Judgment Day. What are they?

1. **The BIBLE** (the Greek word "book" - "Biblion" from which we derive our English "Bible")
--the Law of Moses will be opened (Jn. 5:45 - *"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."*
--The Gospels of Jesus will be opened (Jn. 12:48 - *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him int he last day."*
--The Epistles of Paul will be opened (Rom. 2:16 - *"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*
*Can you give a Bible answer for your salvation? Do you know a verse that would prove that you have eternal life?

2. **The BOOK ABOUT YOUR LIFE**
[This book includes a record of your ***"works"*** (v. 12b-13)]
The book that has recorded everything you ever did; everything you ever said; everything you ever thought.
In other words, God will one day open a book that has recorded every "work" (v. 12b-13) or deed you ever did or intended to do.
The omniscient God knows all and remembers all.
1) He knows the hearts of all people
--I Sam. 16:7 - "the Lord looketh on the heart"
--Job 42:2 - "no thought can be withholden from thee"
--Psalm 44:21 - "He knoweth the secrets of the heart"
--Ezek. 11:5 - "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them"

2) He knows the actions of all people
Job testified: *"he knoweth the way that I take"* (Job 23:10)
David said, *"All my ways are before thee"* (Ps. 119:168)
Solomon declared, *"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He pondereth all his goings."*
God knew when Cain slew Abel; Sarah laughed in her tent; Achan stole the garment, silver, and gold; David committed adultery.

3. The BOOK OF LIFE (cp. v. 15)
This book contains only the names of the redeemed - also called the *"Lamb's Book of Life"*
To the faithful believer Jesus promises: *"I will not blot out his name out of the book of life"* (Rev. 3:5)
To the unbeliever God warns: *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev. 13:8)

"Those things which were written" - (perfect passive - that which has been written by God in the past and remains (stands) written)

The sentence of the Judge is not arbitrary; it rests upon written evidence (the importance of written revelation in God's Word will one day be revealed).

IV. The VERDICT from the Great White Throne Points to a FAIR Judgment (v. 12c; v. 13b)

(Guilty - ***"according to their works"***)

"Judged . . .
According to their works" (v. 12, 13)

Question: If someone's eternal destiny is determined upon death, based on whether or not they have trusted Jesus Christ, why a judgment, why do they stand trial?
Answer:

1) To demonstrate their worthiness of torment (to vindicate God's holiness or righteousness)
"Works" are undeniable evidence of unbelief (cp. Rev. 21:8 for a list of the doomed)
2) To determine the degree of torment
a. Those who clearly knew God's will but didn't do it will be held accountable and will endure a greater punishment throughout eternity. It is serious to sin against light!
1) Luke 12:47-48 ("many stripes")
2) Luke 20:47 - "Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."
3) Matthew 11:22, 23 - "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon . . . It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom"
4) II Pet. 2:21 - "For it had been better for them not to have known the way . . ."
5) Example: Judas
b. The more wicked one lives, the more intensely he will suffer throughout eternity.

"Were judged" - this judgment, like all the prophecies in Revelation, is stated in the past tense, showing not only John's perspective of the event, but also the certainty of the judgment (Heb. 9:27).

V. The SENTENCING by the Great White Throne Points to a FINAL Judgment (v. 14-15)

("The lake of fire")

"The White Throne Judgment will be nothing like our modern court cases. At the White Throne, there will be a Judge but no jury, a prosecution but no defense, a sentence but no appeal" (Wiersbe, p. 621).
It will be final!
"The ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment . . . the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:5-6)
There will be no hope for the ungodly in the day of Judgment. They will have no firm ground to stand on, no foundation or anchor like the believer has (I Cor. 3:11; Heb. 6:19).
V. 14

"Hell . . . cast into the Lake of fire"

"hell" is not the "Lake of fire," but is the preliminary penalty leading to the "Lake of fire." They are two different places.

Hell is like	a local jail (temporary judgment) to await trial (Ex: Rikers Island)
The Lake of Fire is like	the State Penitentiary (permanent judgment) after being sentenced

"This is the second death" - second death because it follows the ungodly receiving a physical body at the second resurrection.
Those involved in the first resurrection will not face the second death (Rev. 20:6).
If you have been "born again," you need not fear this "second death" (SEE Jn. 3)
God's equation: If you are born twice, you will only die once (that is, if you are not raptured). However, if you are born only once, you will die twice.
V. 15

"Whosoever was not found" - the phrase (used also of Enoch - Heb. 11:6) implies that a search was made, but no trace was found (Smith, p. 280).

"Whosoever" = no exceptions. No one makes last minute reservations after death.
This "whosoever" is the most dreadful in all the Bible. However, the most blessed "whosoever" is in - John 3:16, Rom. 10:13, Rev. 22:17