

Prophecy Sermon #15

The Great White Throne

Introduction

Revelation 20

This is our last message in the Prophecy Series.

We will have a CD prepared with all 15 messages on it.

Be here next Sunday as we begin our new series on Ezra.

Lay the foundation for our brand new study.

I've entitled this sermon . . .

Let us stand for the reading of God's holy and prophetic Word

Revelation 20:11-15

Let us pray

You may be seated

We come now to the Great White Throne Judgment, where God settles the score and once and for all adjudicates the world with righteousness and justice.

I. Notice first of all the setting of this judgment in Revelation 20:11

The white throne is called “great” because of its awesome power and ultimate purpose, which is judgment.

It is called “white” because of its unsullied purity.

Our God is a holy God and He demands a holy people.

Until we are broken over our sin – come clean – no personal revival

It’s a great throne; it’s a white throne and now we ask who is sitting on that throne.

Those who stand before the great white throne will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. John 5:22 says, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”

Jesus Christ is not only the Savior, but He is also the Judge. Revelation teaches us that the Lamb will become the Lion. [reference](#)

When the Judgment comes, there will be no place to run and no place to hide.

On the day of the final judgment the unsaved dead will rise from their graves to stand and be judged before the Lord Jesus Christ. All that men have dreamed, schemed, and sold their souls for will turn to rust, dust, mold, and corruption.

We are going to meet Jesus Christ. Every person who has ever lived is going to meet Jesus Christ. He is inescapable and unavoidable.

And if you don’t meet Him as Savior, you will meet Him as Judge. It doesn’t matter how you treated Him when you were alive. In fact, you may have ignored Him, denied Him, and even cursed Him, but one day you will stand before Him.

What will He be like when we meet Him face to face? We were introduced to the Judge in Revelation. That's why they title this book so – for it reveals Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1, 14-16)

Jesus will be wearing the regal robes of a king and judge

He cannot be deceived. He cannot be disputed. He cannot be discredited.

Destruction of the earth and the heaven – Rev. 21:1

When the throne is set, the heavens and the earth as we now know them shrink away, as though the material universe were awed by the face of Him who summons the dead to their accounting. What a sea of faces will appear before Him in that solemn hour of tremendous import!

II. Notice the people who are brought before the Great White Throne of judgment
Revelation 20:12 . . . the dead, the small, and the great.

People from five categories of life will be there. See if you are in any of these categories.

1. *Out-and-out sinners.* These are the ones who hate God and His church. They boldly, braggingly, brazenly shake their fists in the face of Almighty God and say, "If there is a God, You are not big enough to make me serve You." They have denied Him and are unrepentant.
2. *Self-righteous people.* These people think they are too good to miss Heaven. They think the gospel is for the drunkard, murderer, pervert, harlot, child abuser, or blasphemer. They are nice people who live in nice homes and have nice manners. There is no one so bad that he cannot be saved and no one so good that he need not be saved.

3. *Procrastinators*. This group intended to be saved. They knew they were sinners. . . . they just didn't intend to give their hearts to Jesus, at least not when they had the chance. Do you fit in this category? Proverbs 27:1 says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." . . . If you are procrastinating, in the name of Jesus I beg you not to put away this day of salvation. Second Corinthians 6:2 says, "Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation." . . . Can you feel your heart beat? That small beat is all that is between you and hell. . . . Your heart will stop beating one day; and when it does, if you don't know Jesus, you are going to hell. You may respond, "You are trying to frighten me." I would to God I could! I would rather frighten you into heaven than lull you into hell.

4. *Religious people/church goers*. These people are religious, but they have not crowned Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. They are simply deceived. Somehow they are counting on their church attendance, works for God, tithes, or baptism to be saved. But religion never saved anybody. It is Jesus who saves.

It will be a great day when people stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.

The devil had just as soon send you to hell from the pew as from the gutter.

Many people are going to hell surrounded by baptismal certificates, receipts for tithes and offerings. That's the reason the Bible says, "Examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith" II Corinthians 13:5.

Are you a Christian? I am not asking if you know the plan of salvation. I am not asking if you walked the aisle. I am not asking if you are religious. I am not asking if you are Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Church of Christ, or Pentecostal. I am asking if you know you are truly saved. Are you?

If anyone hears the Gospel and willfully and knowingly refuses the Lord Jesus Christ, he will stand before the Great White Throne in judgment. I would not want to be in his shoes on that day.

God will say, "Angel, bring Exhibit A." What is this? It will be the dust on the shoes of the man or woman who shared the gospel with you. You had your opportunity.

Matthew 10:14, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

This judgment will be a judgment of all unbelievers of all time. The purpose of this judgment will not be to determine whether a person is saved or not, for that has been settled forever one way or the other at death.

The purpose of this judgment will be to determine the degree of punishment. There is a principle in Scripture that does teach degrees of punishment. There will be degrees of judgment. Hell will not be the same for everybody. How do I know this? In Matthew 11:20-24 . . .

Matthew 10:15

Luke 12:47-48 says to whom much is given, much is required.

One's appearance at this particular judgment will be a direct result of failing to believe on Christ as Savior. But the degree of punishment will be on the basis of one's works.

In determining the degrees of punishment, "books" are mentioned in addition to the Book of Life. A three-fold distinction should be made between the Book of Life, the Lamb's Book of Life, and the other books mentioned in verse twelve.

The *Book of Life* contains the names of every person who was ever born according to Psalm 139:16.

Those who believe on Christ have their names retained in the Book of Life according to Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

However, in Psalms 69:28, the unsaved have their names blotted out of the Book of Life: “Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and not be written with the righteous.”

So then, at the Great White Throne Judgment, if their names are not found in the Book of Life, it will show them to be unsaved and worthy of judgment.

It is at that point that the *other books* mentioned in verse twelve are used. These other books contain account of one’s deeds and responses. It is on the basis of what is written in these books that the degrees of punishment will be determined.

III. The Places from Which The Unsaved Are Called

Revelation 20;13 says, . . . Death and hades will deliver up the dead people who are in them. Earth will open its graves to give up the dead. Out of cemeteries and graveyards the dead will rise. The depths of the sea will give up the dead.

From the Arctic waste they will come;
From the desert sands they will come;
From the tropical jungles they will come.
Wherever people have died, they will be raised.

We need to understand at this point that death has the body, but hell has the soul. Every day death tightens its grip on us and we are one more day closer to succumbing to its power and then one day it will come and death will take us. When we die, our soul has only two places to go—to Heaven or to Hell. Then one day Jesus the Judge speaks and out of death’s grip comes the body and out of Hell’s jaws comes the soul.

. . . when the unbeliever dies, his soul descends into Hades . . . the body had been claimed by “death,” that is, by the grave. Many, however, have drowned in the sea, so their bodies were never in the ground. Many also have had their bodies cremated and their ashes scattered. But wherever they are, God is able to call the atoms all back into place, presumably in the same form as when they died. Bodies will emerge from both

land and sea and, as they come, the great pit of Hades will also disgorge all its imprisoned souls, enabling them to reenter their former bodies.

One other reason for the initial reference to the sea here is probably the tremendous numbers of people who had been drowned long ago in the waters of the great Flood of Genesis.

In any case, every unsaved man or woman through the ages, from every nation of every time, rich or poor, mighty or insignificant, educated or ignorant, all will be raised in their old bodies of flesh to stand before Jesus in judgment. This resurrection will not be like our resurrection where we get brand new bodies. They will have their same old mortal bodies, still subject to pain and death.

IV. The Power with Which They Are Called

Sometimes when a judge issues a summons, the criminal refuses to come. He may disguise himself, flee to another country seeking asylum, or he may even commit suicide to keep from coming to judgment.

But on this judgment day, there will be no refusal and no escape. The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees the judgment of the unsaved dead. Acts 17:31 . . . A forceful summons is coming.

V. At this judgment there will come an indictment. Let's read Revelation 20:12 again.

Did you know that God has your life recorded in His book? Not a thing about your life has escaped His knowledge. And one of these days you will face His accounting of your life. Ecclesiastes 12:14 says, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

God knows the secret things in your life that nobody else knows. If there were a glass window on our hearts, most of us would want that to be a stained-glass window with a heavy glaze on it.

Have you ever taken God's name in vain? Maybe you've forgotten, but God hasn't forgotten.

Luke 12:2, "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

On judgment day, skeletons will come out of closets. And things that your mother didn't know, your father didn't know, your wife didn't know, your husband didn't know, your child didn't know will be shouted from the rooftop. Think about it.

When God takes the lid off our lives on judgment day, . . .
Every roach of sin will come out

VI. The Sureness of the Judgment

Revelation 20:14-15 says . . . No one will be able to bribe the judge. No shrewd lawyer will be able to put a spin on your case. (no Johnny Cochranes and no Dan Rathers to put a spin on the news) Romans 14:11-12 says, "For it is written, 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." God swears by Himself that judgment is coming.

. . . it is obvious that those who die as lost sinners face a terrifying future.

VII. The Severity of the Judgment

This is one line you don't want to find yourself in.

God will judge according to a man's works, not according to His grace or mercy. If you want grace, you may have it. If you want mercy, you may have it. But you must have it in *this day* and in *this life* because there will be no mercy and grace then.

As I said before, don't get the idea that anyone is going to throw himself on the mercy of the court on judgment day. There is no room for mercy in the courtroom of God on judgment day.

There are three parts to every trial. First, *the evidence is presented*. The books are opened. Everything will be known—every idle word, thought, and deed. Every dishonest thing that was done, every nickel that was stolen—all this evidence will be known. And not only will this evidence be things that were said, done, or thought, but these will be things, that were left unsaid, unthought, and undone. James 4:17 says, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

Next, a person has a chance to *make his/her defense*. What will be the response? I can hear people saying, “Wait a minute, Lord, don't judge my sin. I didn't know which church to join. There was a Baptist Church Methodist Church, . . . God will respond, “I didn't say believe on the church. I said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

And they might say, “Wait a minute, God. I didn't respond to your call to be saved, because I didn't want to be like those hypocrites in the church. And I wasn't going to call myself a Christian in front of other people and not be able to live like one.” God will respond, “I didn't say believe on yourself. I said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

What defense will you give if you are not saved? What can you possibly say in defense of your trampling beneath your feet the precious blood of the Lord Jesus and despising His spirit of grace? What can you say on that judgment day when you know that you rejected His outstretched nail-pierced hands and His voice that invited you: . . .

Finally, the *verdict of the court is handed down*. The brokenhearted Judge will say, . . . Matthew 10:33, “But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.” Jesus also said in Matthew 7:23, “And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.’”

If you are not saved, your soul will drop down into the lake of fire at that moment according to Revelation 20:15. You may say, "I don't believe in hell fire." Thirty seconds after you get there, you will believe in it. Either the Bible is true, or it is not true. There is a lake of liquid fire, and the sadness of it is this: No one has to go.

Someone asked a preacher, "Do you really believe in hell? If so, tell me where it is." The wise pastor said, "Hell is at the end of a Christless life." If you die outside the Lord, you will come to a judgment, and then you will know that the Bible is indeed true.

I am not going to stand before the great white throne, and I will tell you why. I settled out of court. Jesus became my Savior when He died on the cross in agony and blood, and with His blood He paid the debt of my sin. Romans 8:33-34 says, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Isn't that wonderful? Your sin can be buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness, never to be brought up against you again.

Romans 8:1a, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

There, in an aching, trembling body of flesh, every man will have to watch his deeds in the flesh displayed to the whole creation so that both he and every other man must finally acknowledge that his condemnation is just. . . . (Matthew 7:22, 23).

And so will Satan, and so will his angels, and so will all unsaved men and women from every age, . . . continue in the lake of fire, in conscious torment, day and night, forever. Month after month, year after year, a million years into the future

Not only are lost men and women condemned by the record of their works but also by the absence of their names in the Lamb's book of life. One can speculate that beside each person's name as entered in the book at time of conception will be recorded the time of his "age of accountability," the date of his conversion to Christ as His Savior, and

evidence demonstrating the genuineness of that conversion. However, if there are no entries for the last two items by the time that person dies, the entire record will be blotted out (Revelation 3:5), and an awful blank will be left in the book at the place where his name would have been.

. . . so that the actual pains of hell will be felt differently by each one. . . . God is surely able to inflict His punishments in perfect justice, individually tailored.

But they did not desire Him nor His love nor His presence. They preferred to continue in their sins, independent of God and His will. There is no punishment that could possibly balance such a crime as this. To despise the loving care of their Creator and the infinite suffering of their Savior for them is to strike at the very heart of God and the purpose of their creation.

The second resurrection will be composed of unbelievers only.

The second resurrection will soon give way to the second death in the Lake of Fire, which will be the eternal abode of the lost.

The last of the enemies of man is not Satan, but death itself (verse 26). It should be remembered that death will still exist in the kingdom. . . . death can be abolished. And, at this point it will be.

Nothing shall be overlooked. . . . “The Judge of all the earth shall do right” (Gen. 18:25) A righting of all the wrongs of the ages.” And, I may add, the tracing back of every evil act to its source, and the placing of responsibility for every offence against the moral law, where it belongs.

No one will be great enough to escape; no one will be too insignificant as to be overlooked. The dead, both “small and great,” will be there. Although their bodies have been buried for centuries. Death, the grave that has claimed what was mortal of man,

his body, will give up its prey. Hades, the world unseen, will surrender the undying spirits and souls of the lost. With his body, soul, and spirit reunited, the man will stand trembling before the judgment bar. The books of record will be opened. Memory will respond to every charge.

“This is the second death.” Death is the separation of body and spirit, we are told in James 2:26. The second death is the final separation of the lost from God, who created man.

It is a divine picture intended to make the soul of the sinner shrink with dread as he contemplates the end of those who obey not the gospel.

But over the portals of the lost they inscribed of old, “Abandon hope, ye who enter here.”

Invitation

Now is the time acceptable. Now a gracious Savior waits to catch the first breath of repentance, and He answers the feeblest cry of faith. Trifle not with His mercy and hope not for some vague second chance, but close with Christ now, and know for a certainty that you will have no part in the doom pronounced at the Great White Throne. The Lord Himself has said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

. . . the bodies of its inhabitants would be unconsumable bodies, everlastingly being consumed by undying worms and burned by unquenchable fires.