

sermon study summary

Revelation Part 25 – The Great White Throne Judgment

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The final judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment, will occur after Jesus returns, after the thousand years are ended, and before the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened” (Rev. 20:12). The great white throne (v.11) is great because of its authority, and white, symbolizing holiness, purity and justice. The verdict handed down from the throne will be completely just. Jesus will be the judge on the day of accounting, and everyone will face Him either as their Saviour or their judge. This fallen, sin-corrupted world won't be able to endure the holiness and power of God, and will be burned up and destroyed (2 Peter 3: 10-13).

The Great White Throne judgment is for those who have rejected Christ. The 'dead' are spiritually dead. Whether kings or servants, rich or poor, all will face Jesus the judge. They will go to Hades, a temporary place where the spiritually dead, those who have rejected Christ and his salvation, await the second resurrection (2nd class) and the Great White Throne judgment.

The judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10) is for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ; it will be a judgment of rewards for their godly attitudes, motives and deeds. When believers die, their bodies go into the grave like everyone else, but their spirits go to be with Jesus. 2 Cor 5:8 says “to be absent from the body is to be present with Christ.” In 1 Thess 4:13 we are told that when Christ returns, our earthly bodies will be brought to life in the first resurrection (1st class). We will receive our glorified bodies, made for an eternal existence, and we will reign together with Christ in His kingdom for 1000 yrs.

NOT SO for unbelievers. When they die, their souls go to Hades and will remain there until the second resurrection after the thousand years were ended (v.5). Their bodies too will be made for an eternal existence. They will be brought before God at the Great White Throne to be judged and will be thrown into the lake of fire (hell).

Every thought, word, attitude, and behavior (good or bad) is recorded in heaven's ledgers. “The books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books” (v.12). No one will be found innocent. Each person's life will be evaluated, and each person's punishment in hell will be consistent with that assessment.

Because of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, Christians have their sins blotted out by the blood of the Lamb. They will not be judged for the evil things they did. God says, “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

“Examine your heart to see whether you are in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). The evidence that your faith is alive and real is the fruit of your faith demonstrated in your attitudes and behaviors. The fruit of your faith doesn't save you, but it proves whether the root of your faith is alive and genuine. James 2:17 says, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” When the object of your highest affection is God and Him alone, the fruit of the Spirit will follow, and you won't need to be concerned whether your name is in the book of life. You will know it!

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Consider a significant evaluation in your schooling or job, etc. What did this tell you about what you learned, how you prepared, or how you performed? Did your evaluation surprise you?
2. If you could ask God one question about judgment and eternity, what would it be?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Describe the scene in Revelation 20:11-12, 4:8; John 5:22. What is the significance of the Great White Throne? Who is the judge?
4. Read the summary for Scriptures on what will happen at the Great White Throne Judgment. By what standard will people be judged? What will be the verdict for each person?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-15. If our names are written in the Book of Life, how will God judge us? What will be our destiny?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

6. Read 2 Corinthians 13:5; James 2:17; Matthew 7:17-23; Galatians 5:22-23. What are evidences of both genuine and false faith in Christ? What are some implications for our lifestyle and the way we serve God?
7. Take a minute of silence to ask God: Who are the first 3 people who come to your mind, including yourself, when you hear about the Great White Throne Judgment and the Book of Life? Share with the group and pray for each other.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

When you stand before the Lord and He asks you, "Why should I let you enjoy eternal life with Me in heaven?" what will you say? How confident are you in your answer?

THE WORD (NIV)

Rev 20:11-15 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Rev 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."

John 5:22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

James 2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Matt 7:17-23 ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Sandi Somers and Jorel Quemuel