

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

Revelation 20:11-15

No intelligent person can examine the movements of nature, and trace on history's pages the movements of nations, or experience the quiver of his own conscience, without being convinced that there is an eternal law operating from the throne of God which has brought, is bringing, and will bring men face to face with judgment. No honest person can deny the great law of reward and penalty. It is in nature. It is in life. It is written on the statute books of our government. It is written on the blue canopy of God. It is written in the human conscience.

God's infallible word testifies to the fact of man's personal accountability to God. According to the scriptures, and they are our only source of information and authority, there are yet to be different judgments, with different subjects to be judged, at different times, in different places, on different bases and with different results. Unfortunately, some people, who are either untaught or mistaught, are under the impression that there will be one great general judgment, at which time all who have ever lived, the righteous and the wicked, the saved and the unsaved, will be gathered before the throne of God and judged according to their works. Such will not be the case, as a careful study of the scriptures will reveal to any unprejudiced person.

Of the judgments which are to come, I have spoken previously about the judgment of the saints, under the title "The Judgment Seat Of Christ." Now, we shall consider "The Great White Throne Judgment," which is described in the twentieth chapter of The Revelation. It will be the final judgment.

I. When Will The White Throne Judgment Take Place?

The Great White Throne Judgment will take place one thousand years after the first resurrection or following the millenium. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:5). The Great White Throne Judgment will follow the second resurrection, or the raising of the wicked.

II. Where Will The White Throne Judgment Take Place?

The scene is laid somewhere in space, apart from the heaven and the earth. "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" (Revelation 20:11). It will be one of the most terrible and awe-inspiring scenes upon which human eyes will ever gaze.

III. Who Will Be The Judge On The White Throne?

The righteous Judge who will sit on the Great White Throne will be none other than the Son of God. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).

IV. Who Will Be Judged Before The White Throne?

All of the unsaved of all the ages from the first lost person to the last individual dying without Christ will be judged at the Great White Throne. Not a single Christian will be judged there. Jesus Christ has been judged already for the sins of God's children. All who trust in Christ are forgiven, and their sins are blotted out. Those who accept the price which the Lord Jesus paid for their sins will not come into condemnation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

No believers in Christ will ever stand before the Great White Throne to be judged. They will have been with the Lord one thousand years preceding this judgment of the unsaved. "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" (Revelation 20:6).

No saved person will ever be judged at the White Throne. Therefore, it would be a colossal error for a believer to promise to meet his saved friends at the White Throne. That will be the meeting-place of the ungodly of all the ages. From the graves of every land, from the graves of the islands of the sea, and from the seven seas, the bodies of the wicked dead will be resurrected to be united with their spirits in order that they may stand before Christ in judgment. It is a judgment of the "dead," and at this time all of the children of God will have been resurrected a thousand years before.

At the White Throne Judgment both "the small and the great" will stand before Christ. No partiality will be shown by the righteous and perfect Judge. In His presence the great and the small will be treated alike. Ever remember that "white" denotes justice and purity. Because of His spotless purity Christ will administer absolute justice to all who appear before His throne.

V. What Is The Purpose Of The White Throne Judgment?

The purpose of this judgment will not be to determine whether people are saved or lost. That is determined only in this life. The moment a person dies his destiny is sealed for all eternity. There is no opportunity for salvation after death.

The purpose of this judgment will be merely to ascertain the degree of punishment for the wicked. This judgment will determine the amount of punishment that will be meted out to each individual. There are degrees of punishment for the ungodly, just as there are differences in the rewards given to believers.

VI. What Will Be The Basis Of The White Throne Judgment?

All who appear at the White Throne will be judged "according to their works." "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" (Revelation 20:13). In this passage God speaks as if it were accomplished already. That is understandable when you recall that with God there is no yesterday or tomorrow, but only one ever-present now. He knows everything about the future as well as He does about the present.

Those who appear before Christ at the White Throne will be judged according to what they have done with reference to the Son of God. If they have heard the gospel of Christ and then have rejected the Saviour, their punishment will be far more severe than that of those who have not heard it at all or only occasionally. This is one thing which is to be understood by the expression, "they were judged every man according to their works." The rejecters of the Christ and His wonderful salvation must answer for their crime. They are lost because that is their condition by nature, and they have deliberately and willfully refused "the gift of God" which is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." They have "trodden under foot the Son of God" (Hebrews 10:29).

VII. What Will Be The Result Of The White Throne Judgment?

Every one who appears at this judgment will be condemned on his own record. Thus every mouth will be stopped because of personal guilt before God. Those who appear before the Great White Throne will be speechless. They cannot complain against God

because He loved them and sent Christ to die for them. They cannot complain against Christ because He died for them. They cannot complain against the churches which have preached the gospel to them. They will have remained in their lost condition by personal preference. The reason for their appearing before the White Throne will be their personal refusal to accept Christ as Saviour.

All who refuse to trust Christ or accept Him as their personal Saviour will spend eternity in hell, and they will only be receiving their proper wages or getting what is their due. As certainly as there are degrees of sin, there will be different degrees of punishment in hell. Some will suffer in hell more than others, depending on the opportunities they rejected and the sins they committed. A child who comes to know that he is a lost sinner and continues to reject Christ as his Saviour and dies unsaved will certainly go to hell. But how much heavier will be the punishment of the wicked man of many years, who after great enlightenment and many opportunities to accept Christ as his Saviour, persisted in his rejection of every offer of mercy and salvation!

Unsaved friend, remember that one day the curtain will be rung down on time, the wheels of industry will stop, the places of amusement will be deserted, the dead will come forth from the earth and the seas, and you will be ushered into the presence of Christ the Judge. There you will face the record of your sins. There and then your sentence will be pronounced, and you will be consigned to an eternal hell. Won't you avoid the White Throne Judgment and the horrors of hell by receiving Christ as your Saviour and thereby having your name written in the Lamb's book of life? Not only receive Christ as your Saviour, but confess Him, live for Him and serve Him faithfully to the end of life's way.