

Revelation chapter 20 Continued

Verses 11-15: These verses describe the final judgment of all the unbelievers of all ages (Matt. 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36, 41-42; Luke 10:14; John 12:48; Acts 17:31, 24:25; Rom. 2:5, 16; Heb. 9:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; Jude 6). Our Lord referred to this event as the “resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29). This judgment takes place in the indescribable void between the end of the present universe (verse 11), and the creation of the new heaven and earth (21:1).

Revelation 20:11 "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."

“Great white throne”: Nearly 50 times in Revelation there is the mention of a throne. This is a judgment throne, elevated, pure, and holy (see article “[Great White Throne – Judgment Seat](#)”). God sits on it as judge (compare 4:2-3, 9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15), in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (see 21:5-6; John 5:22-29; Acts 17:31).

This is judgment day. Now John describes the terrifying scene set before him. He sees the Judge who is seated on His throne of Judgment and all of the accused standing before Him. The verdicts handed down from this throne will be equitable, righteous and just.

“The earth and the heaven fled away”: John saw the contaminated universe go out of existence. Peter described this moment (in 2 Peter 3:10-13; see notes there). The universe is “uncreated”, going into non-existence (compare Matt. 24:35; see article “[Destruction of the Earth by God](#)”).

We also remember (Ecclesiastes 12:14), which promises, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil". As well as (Romans 2:5-6), where Paul speaks of the day of God's wrath "when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done". It is a fearful thing even to imagine standing before God "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away", and have nothing but your own wicked works to show for the time on earth the Almighty had given you. On that day, the words of Paul the apostle will come true: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God" (Rom. 3:19). The final word of course, will be God's.

This vision follows those of the Second Coming (see article “[Glorious Appearance - Second Coming of Christ](#)”), and those of the Millennium, immediately preceding that of the new heaven and new earth (see article “[New Heaven and the New Earth](#)”).

The use for the earth is over. The earth, heaven, and everything in them are under control of God, and if He tells them go they will have to. This is an amazing, incredible statement that is describing the un-creation of the universe. The earth was reshaped by the tribulation judgments, restored during the millennial kingdom, now God will create a new heaven and a new earth as it states (in 2 Peter 3).

2 Peter 3:13 "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"

Verses 12-13: The “dead” are the unbelieving dead of all the ages, the “rest of the dead” mentioned (in verse 5). They are “judged” from two sets of books (see article “[Book of Life - All Books](#)”). The “books” contain the record of every unsaved person’s life. Each unsaved person is judged in accordance with his “works” (compare Rom. 2:6, 16), which clearly show that each one is a guilty sinner (compare Rom. 3:9-19), deserving of eternal death (compare Rom. 3:23; 6:23). The “book of life” contains the name of every person who has received eternal life through faith alone (compare John 20:31; 1 John 5:11-13). These unsaved people are shown that they did not take advantage of the offer of eternal life through faith (compare Rom. 9:32; 10:3). “Death and hell” (Hades), are the temporary holding places of unsaved men’s bodies and souls, respectively (compare Luke 16:19-31).

Revelation 20:12 "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."

“Stand before God”: In a judicial sense, as guilty, condemned prisoners before the bar of divine justice. There are no living sinners left in the destroyed universe since all sinners were killed and all believers glorified.

The "dead" are those who are spiritually dead because of their rejection of Christ. They will stand in their resurrected state before Jesus to be judged by Him.

“Books”: These books record every thought, word, and deed of sinful men, all recorded by divine omniscience (see note on Dan. 7:9-10; the verse that is the source of this text). They will provide the evidence for eternal condemnation (compare 18:6-7).

These statements immediately call our attention back to the words of the Lord Jesus: "What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs" (Luke 12:3). And "There is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open" (Luke 8:17).

Remember that the Christian dead have already won their victory. Those were judged by Jesus at the Bema Seat (see article “[Bema Seat - A Judgment Seat for Christians](#)”). Now is this final fearful scene, where these include all unbelievers who have ever lived. This is the resurrection of judgment and they stand before Christ now at the White Throne Judgment (see article “[Great White Throne Judgment Seat](#)”).

The scope of the scene is chilling. The great mass of these unbelievers before God's throne includes everyone from presidents and kings, to paupers. There is no partiality with God as all will now face judgment.

"Books" is plural here (see article "[Book of Life - All Books](#)"). There are books which contain a person's every thought, word and deed. Nothing will be hidden. Think about the fact that God knows the secrets of one's heart. Those who didn't accept Jesus will have to stand or fall on their deeds. Of course, they will all fall if they didn't accept Him, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Christian's sins have been done away with by the blood of Jesus.

God has kept perfect, comprehensive and accurate records of every person's life (deeds), and those will be measured against God's perfect and holy standard.

Those who didn't accept Jesus will have to stand or fall on their deeds. Of course, they will all fall if they didn't accept Him, because scripture clearly tells us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

"Book of life": It contains the names of all the redeemed (Dan. 12:1; see notes on 3:5).

The Book of Life is the Lamb's Book of Life where the names of all believers are written who have accepted, believed and followed Christ. The Christian's sins have been done away by the blood of Jesus. Those Christians all have their names written in the Lamb's book of life and will not taste of the second death.

"Judged ... according to their deeds": Their thoughts (Luke 8:17; Rom. 2:16), words (Matt. 12:37), and actions (Matt. 16:27), will be compared to God's perfect, holy standard (Matt. 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15-16), and will be found wanting (Rom. 3:23). This also implies that there are degrees of punishment in hell (compare Matt. 10:14-15; 11:22; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 12:47-48; Heb. 10:29).

Revelation 20:13 "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."

"Death and hell" (see note on 1:18). Both terms describe the state of death. All unrighteous dead will appear at the Great White Throne Judgment; none will escape. All the places that have held the bodies of the unrighteous dead will yield up new bodies suited for hell.

Those who are lost, wait in torment in a place of punishment until judgment day. The terrible thing is that they are aware that they will be thrown into the lake of fire on judgment day. These are all of the unbelievers though all ages who have died. They will be raised up by Christ for judgment called the second resurrection.

Before the sea was uncreated and disappeared out of existence, it gave up the dead that were in it. The sea may be mentioned as it is seemingly the most difficult place from which dead bodies could be resurrected. But God will summon new bodies for all who perished in the sea throughout history.

Death symbolizes all of the places on land from which God will resurrect new bodies for the unrighteous, unrepentant dead.

As the next scene in this courtroom drama unfolds, the lost will be summoned to appear before the judge. Since their deaths, their souls have been tormented in a place of punishment, now the time has finally come for them to be judged and sentenced.

Revelation 20:14 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

The "second death" is eternal punishment in the lake of fire, experienced only by the unsaved. Once this final judgment occurs, there is no further need for either death or hell (Hades; 1:18; 6:8, Isaiah 25:8; 1 Cor. 15:26-55). An eternal separation is now made between those who have life and those who have "death" (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29).

It does not mean these places are thrown into the lake. It means the inhabitants of these places.

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The scriptures never refer to death as the mere cessation of life, but instead as the unnatural separation of something from that to which it belongs. Therefore, a body without the spirit suffers physical death (Gen. 35:18). The expression "second death", defines the separation of a man from God. Human consciousness is conveyed in the biblical description of second death, suggesting that the beast and the False Prophet will both remain alive for a thousand years after being cast into the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10). When a person is saved, he has passed from death to life, and can be assured he will never come into condemnation (John 5:24; see Gen. 2:17; Mark 9:43).

This final hell is described as the lake of fire. It may already exist but presently is not occupied until the beast and the false prophet is cast into it. They don't arrive there until the end of Tribulation.

Those who die in their sins in this world will die a second death in eternity. They will be sentenced to the lake of fire forever at the great White Throne Judgment (see article "[Judgment on Mankind is Coming](#)").

Whether this fire is symbolic, the reality it represents will be even more horrifying and painful. The bible also defines hell as a place of total darkness, which not only separates the unbelievers from the light, but from each other as well.

What is written in these last two verses should drive each of us to continue to spread the gospel as long as there is breath in your body. I cannot bear to think of anyone I know going to this terrible place of torment.

And that's it. In a ball of celestial flame, the rebellion is over. There will be no repeat of the plagues of the Tribulation, nor of the judgments of the Great Tribulation. Once and for all, human rebellion will have been wiped out of existence. And once and for all, it will be crystal clear to a watching universe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential

for making the unrighteous human heart into a receptacle of God's holiness. The Millennium will prove that even the best of conditions, a thousand years of peace, prosperity, safety, long life, health, abundance, cannot change the wickedness of the unredeemed human heart. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can do that!

Awesome is the Word! It probably is not humanly possible to meditate on these awesome truths for extended periods of time. Who can long ponder the lake of fire, an eternal place of torment, possibly billions of unredeemed souls, a divine Person "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away," or fear some books of judgment that seal the fate of the unsaved?

And yet our Lord tells us of these awesome events. Why? To give us every opportunity to escape the terrible judgment that is to come. Remember, "no believer in Christ" will stand before God at the great white throne. That terrible spot is reserved only for those who have rejected Christ as Savior, who have decided to crown themselves king, and who have refused to accept Jesus Christ as their true Lord.

Do not make that terrible mistake! Instead, place your faith in the Lord Jesus and ask Him to forgive your sins; then you will be ready "to stand before the Son of Man" at the judgment seat of Christ (Luke 21:36). One thing is certain: You will stand in one place or the other. Hell, or heaven. Make sure it's the latter. And don't think that you can choose not to believe there is such a thing as heaven or hell as it makes no difference. Everyone will be judged and assigned to one place or the other. As on earth, it is the same there, ignorance is no excuse of the law!

It is so easy to get your name written in the Lamb's book of life.

Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

You see, Jesus must be our Lord as well as our Savior. If you truly believe, you will repent and be baptized. If your name is not written in the book of life, do not delay, do it today.

Click <http://discoverrevelation.com> and read the "The Meaning of Worship" and see what it's like to worship the risen Savior. Also, be sure to click the link <http://discoverrevelation.com/Salvation.htm> regarding "Can you Lose Your Salvation" once you have it.

Revelation chapter 20 Continued Questions

1. What color is the throne?
2. Who will stand before Jesus to be judged?
3. Who will not taste the second death?

4. What is the second death?
5. Who is thrown into the lake of fire with the devil, false prophet, and beast?
6. What Scripture tells you how to be saved?
7. What have you received in this lesson?
8. The earth and the heaven _____ away.
9. What will God give each person?
10. What will God create?
11. What does the Book of Life contain?
12. What is death and hell (hades)?
13. Where were the Christians judged at?