

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 20:11-15 (NIV)
“The Great White Throne”

The Judgment of the Dead

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. 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. 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. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:1-10

Introduction

Psalms 97 declares:

The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him and consumes His foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim His righteousness, and all peoples see His glory. (Psalms 97:1-6)

I can only imagine the terror one would feel standing in the presence of such majesty and glory, knowing all the while that you are His enemy. What a hopeless day of despair, when all the wicked are summoned from their graves and assembled before a Holy God.

...a man reaps what he sows.” (Galatians 6:7b)

Judgment day has come, a day of the *World's Evaporation* and the *Wicked's Evaluation!*

The World Evaporates

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. Revelation 20:11 NKJV

God's throne has been kept hidden from humanity throughout history. **Psalms 97** poetically states that His throne is “surrounded in darkness”. On the Day of Judgment, however, the throne of God will become the centerpiece for all to behold. His throne is called great (**vs.1**), because it holds the supreme authority of Almighty God. There is no court that can overturn His rulings. His is the court of final appeal. His judgments are absolute.

The throne is described as white (**vs.1**), because of His righteousness and holiness. God is pure, and so are His judgments. He alone is qualified to judge sin, because He Himself has never sinned. He is spotlessly white in His holiness. There are none who can accuse Him of any improprieties. He is

above reproach, and when His throne appears on that day, the heavens and the earth will disappear with a roar. All of creation will be destroyed in a fiery nuclear explosion. The entire cosmos will once again be void as it was before creation.

But the day of The LORD will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. **2 Peter 3:10-12**

Colossians 1:17 tells us that it is Christ who holds the universe together. On the Day of Judgment, He allows the universe to fall apart. Everything that He created is uncreated, leaving nothing except the Throne of God. It is worth noting, that the atoms that make up the universe, by their very nature, should fly apart, but they are held together by something that scientists call “the nuclear force”. This force keeps the positive and negative charges of an atom from repelling each other, thus preventing a nuclear explosion like that of an atomic bomb. Although scientists cannot fully comprehend the “nuclear force”, **Colossians 1:17** tells us that Jesus is the nuclear force. He is creator God, and when His Day of Judgment comes, everyone will behold the source of all things.

The Wicked Evaluated

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. **Revelation 20:12 NKJV**

Some Christians mistakenly believe that all of humanity must stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment, but this is not what Scripture teaches. All of God's people will give an account of their lives before the “Judgment Seat” of Christ. This will occur after the rapture of The Church.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. **2 Corinthians 5:10**

Those of us who have received forgiveness for our sin, need not fear the Great White Throne Judgment, because it is not for us. The Great White Throne judgment is reserved for all the ungodly, from the beginning of time, to the end, to be judged according to The Law. Their dead bodies, now resurrected, the condemned will be summoned from the earth and the sea to stand before God to give an account for their sin.

Jesus Christ will judge sinners by their deeds that have been recorded in the books (**vs. 12**).

“...For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so

he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. **John 5:21-30**

The Book of Life (**vs. 12, 15**) is the record of everyone who has been washed by the blood of Jesus and had their sins forgiven. No one who stands at the Great White Throne Judgment will have their name written in this book. God has, however, kept a record of each of their thoughts and deeds.

Scripture tells us that there is a book of conscience (**Romans 2:15**), a book of words (**Matthew 12:36**), and a book of deeds (**2 Corinthians 11:15**). The great and the small (*meaning everyone*) will stand and listen to the story of their miserable lives, as the books are read. It will be a scene of utter hopelessness. No offer of forgiveness will be available to sinners upon this day. Every last one of the wicked shall be declared guilty and shall be cast into hell for all eternity. **“The wages of sin is death...”** (**Romans 6:23**). The memory of those who lived for themselves will be forever forgotten. The righteous will shine like the sun. The wickedness of the “*Babylonian*” system of this world will be eradicated, and the glorious new heaven and earth will begin! The cares and strife of this world are forever forgotten and there shall be no more sickness, death, or tears.

So, the warning here should be crystal clear: Either trust in Christ Jesus Who bore God’s wrath for our sin upon the cross, *or* stand before the Great White Throne and be judged according to your own works and deeds. With even the slightest consideration of the two options that are available to us, to trust in Christ is the obvious choice. Why risk your eternity upon a course that offers absolutely no hope? Trust in Jesus, trust in Jesus... and live!

Truth!