

43. The Great White Throne Judgment

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what will happen at the end of the time when Christ rules on the earth for a thousand years. We saw the eternal judgment of Satan and the physical judgment of those who rebelled. In this topic, we will see the eternal judgment of all those who have rebelled and never repented throughout the history of the world.

We want to look in more detail at the time when Satan was judged and what this judgment of Satan will be like when the sentence against him is carried out. Revelation 20:10 says, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” This verse tells when Satan will receive his judgment. However, John 16:8-11 and John 19:30 tell us when Satan was judged. John 16:8-11 says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” These verses tell us that Satan has been judged. John 19:30 says, “So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” This verse tells us that both the payment for our sins and the judgment of Satan was finished at the cross. Satan is on death row waiting for his punishment to be carried out.

Revelation 20:10 tells us when Satan will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Brimstone is rock that can burn and melt. It is yellow in color and gives off a gas that can make it difficult to breathe. It is similar to the melted rock that flows from a volcano which has an extremely high heat. We see that the city of Sodom was destroyed by brimstone. Luke 17:29 says, “But on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all.” Then, Revelation 9:17-18 says, “And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.” Here, one third of the population of the earth will be killed by fire and brimstone. We see, here, that Satan will experience eternal judgment in the lake of fire and brimstone. In the next verses, we see that all unbelievers will soon join him.

Revelation 20:11-12 says, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.” The One who will carry out this judgment is Christ. Acts 17:30-31 says, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” Here, we see that the One who will judge is the One that was raised from the dead.

The great white throne judgment is where all unbelievers from throughout all of history will be judged. 2 Peter 2:9 says, “*Then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.” Here, we see that all the unjust are reserved for the day of judgment. In fact, the earth and the heavens will also be judged because they have been under the influence of sin since sin began. The word translated “flee away” means *to flee or to vanish*. 2 Peter 3:7 says, “But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” We see, in Revelation 21:1, that they will be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth.

We see that every single dead person will stand before God at this great white throne judgment. It does not matter whether a person has had little influence or great influence. Each person will stand before God to be judged. We see that the books are first mentioned in Daniel 7:9-10 where we read, “I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of His head *was* like pure wool. His throne *was* a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.” These books have recorded in them all of the sinful attitudes of the heart, the thoughts, the words and the actions that every unbeliever has committed.

The unbelievers will be judged for four different things. First, the sinful attitudes of the heart are mentioned in Genesis 6:5 where we read, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.” Then, Jeremiah 17:9 adds, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Second, the fact that their thoughts will be revealed is explained in Luke 8:17 where we read, “For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light.” Then, Romans 2:16 adds, “In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” Third, they will also be judged for their words. Matthew 12:36-37 says, “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Fourth, they will be judged for their actions. Romans 3:19-20, 23 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin...For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Since all believers will have been raised from the dead, the dead are all those throughout history who have not believed in God and repented of their sin of unbelief. For all believers everything written in these books was blotted out at the moment of salvation. Acts 3:19 says, “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” That is why Romans 8:1 says, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” As believers, we will not stand at the great white throne judgment.

We also see that another book is opened. That book is the Book of Life. Philippians 4:3 says, “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.” Then, Revelation 3:5 says, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” All who have come to God in repentance and faith have their names written in the Book of Life. No unbelievers have their names in that book. Instead, they will be judged by their sinful works that have been written in the other books because their sins have not been blotted out.

Revelation 20:13-15 says, “The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” In these verses, we see that all of the dead are gathered together to the great white throne judgment. Those who have died in the sea will be delivered to this judgment. Death includes all those who have died in some other way. All who are dead go immediately to Hades at the time of death. The word translated Hades or hell is used eleven times in the New Testament. Luke 16:23 says, “And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” Here, we see that Hades is the place of torment where all unbelievers wait for this final judgment.

We see that each person will be judged according to his or her works. There may be some like the rich young ruler who have thought that they had obeyed all of the commandments. However, we saw earlier that these books have recorded in them all of the sinful attitudes of the heart, the thoughts, the words and the actions that every unbeliever has committed. As each person is judged, the things that are written in these books about that person will be the basis for the judgment of that person. Each person will be judged only for his or her own sins. As Romans 3:19 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” After their personal sins are revealed, no one will say that they have obeyed all of the commandments. Their mouths will all be stopped.

Once every dead person who is in Hades has been judged according to their personal works, Death and Hades will be cast into the lake of fire. Physical death was when they originally died. This is called the second death because this death means eternal separation from God in the lake of fire. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain very clearly what will happen to all who fail to repent of their sin of unbelief, so they can warn others about this judgment that will come. Then, we want to help them learn to share clearly the need to repent and come to Christ in faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.