



## Lifted Up! The Great White Throne Judgement

Background to this week's story. There are six major prophetic stories in Revelation.

1. The seven churches (Revelation 1-3)
2. The great tribulation (Revelation 4-18)
3. The second coming of Jesus (Revelation 19)
4. The millennium Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-10)
5. The great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)
6. The new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1-8)
7. The new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9—22:5)

Knowing the future is very important to our faith and our love for God and others. All religions have prophets that predict the future. Only the bible has it right.

We know it has it right because it has always been right!

This morning I want to tell the story of the great white throne judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15)

- I have set with families when they have been told by a doctor that there is no more hope for their loved one.
- I have set through court hearings and heard a judge make his final judgment on divorces and felonies.
- I have attended an execution and heard the executioner say, do you have any last words.

These are not my favorite environments to hang out. They are somber. There is incredible sadness. There is anxiety.

But none of those environments compare with what it will be like at the final judgment of God. I cannot recreate it with mere words.

At the time of death, the soul of an unredeemed sinner enters immediately to a state of conscious punishment in a place called sheol in the Old Testament and called hades in the New Testament. Like a criminal awaiting trial, their souls are held there.

But just before God creates a new heaven and a new earth, unredeemed sinners are taken from Hades to face God at their last judgment.

This last judgment tells us three things about God.

### 1. This story tells us that God is just

Justice demands that the accused has a right to stand before their accuser.

The Sanhedrin and the Romans understood this principle of justice in the trial of Jesus. (Matthew 26:59-68; Matthew 27:11-14)

Paul appealed to this principle of justice when he was being accused. (Acts 25:16)

The Sixth Amendment to the US constitution provides that a person accused of a crime **has the right** to confront a witness against him or her in a criminal action. The sixth amendment came from this principle of justice found in the law of God.

In the final judgment, God is the judge, the jury, and the plaintiff.

God raises the accused to face his accuser because God is just.

### 2. This story tells us that God is righteous.

In men's courtrooms, the accused is judged based on the standards of sinful men. Sinful men's world view of right and wrong can change. Sinful men's view of what is righteous is based on the standards of a society or a community.

In God's courtroom, unredeemed sinners will be judged based on God's view of righteousness. His view is based on His righteous nature. His nature never changes. His view of righteousness never changes. His view of righteousness is revealed through His moral law in His Word.

In men's courtroom, the accused is guilty if the evidence proves he has committed a specific crime for which he is on trial.

In God's courtroom, the accused is guilty if the evidence proves he has committed any violation of God's moral law.

- Righteousness to God means to be pure.
- Righteousness to God means to be light.
- Righteousness to God means to be straight.
- Righteousness to God means without fault.

It only takes one misdeed to make us unrighteous in God's eyes. (Romans 3:10). From the story of the fall of man, we can learn it does not have to be a gross misdeed. To remove any doubt and to silence the mouths of the wicked, God will have every deed listed in His books.

There will be some men at the last judgment that will have demonstrated better character than other people. But God is not going to judge men based on the character of others. He is going to judge men based on His view of righteousness.

This story tells us that God is righteous.

### 3. This story tells us that God is love.

In men's courtroom, those that are found guilty can still be pardoned. To be pardoned means that their record is cleared like the crime never happened.

Pardon's by men are given for all kinds of reasons; good behavior, personal bias, extenuating circumstances, time served, etc. Pardons by men let the guilty go free without justice being served.

In God's courtroom, there will be a book called the book of life. The book of life lists the names of everyone that has been pardoned by God for their deeds. The presence of the book of life at this judgment serves to remind the accused that God loved them and that He offered them a pardon.

God's pardon let's the guilty go free with justice being served. The book of life is called the Lamb's book of life in Revelation 21:27. John the Baptist was the first to call Jesus the lamb of God. When he saw Jesus, he said behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29)

When Jesus died on the cross, His death satisfied the just nature of God. God does not pardon men because of good behavior, personal bias, extenuating circumstances, or time served, etc. He pardons men because He loves us, and Jesus died for us. The death of Jesus revealed His love. The story reveals that God is love.

Last week a French police negotiator exchanged himself for a woman who was being used as a human shield by a terrorist. The woman was saved and the officer was killed.

This is what Jesus did for you. But Jesus was God and you are the terrorist.

### Conclusion

At the final judgment, the accused are condemned by God because of their deeds and because their names are not written in the book of life. This stark reality of what men have done and the opportunity they missed will shut the mouths of all men. The final gavel will fall and not one man will say anything. No one will say it is a mistake. No one will blame someone else. No one will say they deserve mercy. At the final judgment God's justice, God's righteousness, and God's love are revealed in such a way that men will have nothing to say.

The story ends in a terrifying way. Other scriptures in the gospels tell us that Jesus will first say to some....

### Matthew 7:23

...'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'  
NKJV

He will say to others...

Matthew 25:41

41 ...'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

NKJV

Men are then cast into a lake of fire to experience the second death, forever.

In the gospels, Jesus used the worst possible images to describe the environment of this lake of fire and the suffering that it will cause the souls of men.

He describes it as an everlasting fire.

- There is no relief.
- There is no death.
- There is no term.

After unredeemed sinners have been there a million years, it will be still be the first day. There is such torment that there is continuous weeping and gnashing of teeth.



In the book of Revelation, the story of the great white throne judgment and four other stories about end times were written for seven churches. These seven churches were established between 46-58AD during Paul's missionaries journeys. These churches experienced incredible growth. They were strategically located. These churches provided support for missionaries reaching the west with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The apostle John wrote Revelation in 96 AD. This was 40 years after Paul had established these churches. Paul had been dead for 30 years.

God's original purpose for giving John these five prophetic stories to the seven churches was to encourage the faithful and to awaken the unfaithful.

Five of these seven churches were spiritually asleep.

1. The church at Ephesus was loveless and indifferent. (Rev. 2:1-7)
2. The church at Pergamos was compromising important doctrines. (Rev. 2:12-17)
3. The church at Thyatira was adulterous. (Rev. 2:18-29)
4. The church at Sardis was dead. They were fakes. (Rev. 3:1-6)
5. The church at Laodicea was lukewarm. (Rev. 3:14-22)

What had been the center of revival in the western world during the ministry of Paul was gone in one generation.

May God use the prophecy I shared with you this morning and all the prophecies in Revelation to awaken the church in this generation in the United States.

Let us pray we will be a part of this awakening.