

JUDGMENT DAY

REVELATION 20:11-15

11And 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. 12And 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. 13And 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. 14And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Introduction

Americans are enamored with the drama of a courtroom. There has been a steady stream of TV shows that focus on the courtroom: *Perry Mason*, *Law & Order*, *The People's Court*, and *Judge Judy*. John Grisham has sold millions of books and movie tickets by focusing on the high stakes of courtroom tension. People in our nation were spellbound for months by the trials. Take the case of O. J. Simpson.

The Bible tells us that the ultimate courtroom drama, the trial of the ages, will occur in the courtroom of God when all those who have rejected Him will have their day in court. This final Day of Judgment is called the Great White Throne Judgment. The court date for the great white throne is set on God's docket to occur after the millennial reign has ended and Satan has been cast into the lake of fire. The setting of this last great judgment is the most fearsome picture in all the pages of the Bible.

I have divided this scene into several parts: the courtroom, the judge, the summons, the evidence, the verdict, the sentence, and the prison.

11And 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.

The Courtroom

Most of us have seen a courthouse, and some have probably been in a courtroom as a juror, witness, or part of a lawsuit. I have always looked at courtrooms to be very cold, not in temperature, but the mood and settings is serious and subdued. The centerpiece of the courtroom is the Judges seat. Around the courtroom we can see a desk for the defendant and the plaintiff. On one side of the judges seat is the place for the jurors. The seating for the gallery is behind all the action.

I have often wondered what it would be like to see the supreme court of the universe; to see God sitting on His great white throne, the throne of judgment. God's throne is called great because it is the highest court in the universe. It is white because it is pure, holy and true. Every verdict handed out will be just and true.

The Judge

As our gaze moves from the courtroom to the judge's bench, our focus is on the Judge. We notice that it is Jesus the Christ sitting on the throne.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

What an honor the Father bestows on the Son. Jesus, willingly placed himself on the cross, to take on mankind's sins, to offer himself as the ransom to all that would accept Him.

The Defendants

12And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God...

Everyone that had ever died without a saving faith in Jesus Christ will be summoned. Their souls will be reunited with their bodies for their court appearance.

The most evil people in all of history will be there. Hitler, Stalin, the Caesar's, they will be brought back to life. But so will butchers, bakers and candlestick makers. Atheists, religious members of all faiths and denominations; Catholics, Buddhists, Protestants, Baptists. All unbelievers will be resurrected.

The Summons

13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them:

On judgment day, there will not be any excuses granted. Those that were buried in the earth or sea will be delivered. Those that were cremated will be in attendance. No one will be able to jump bail. All will be required and delivered before the great white throne. There will be no place to hide.

The Evidence

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.

The evidence is all gathered and ready to be presented as exhibits. Exhibit A are the books of works. These volumes contain all the works of each person. All the deeds, words, and actions are accurately recorded, indexed and available.

Exhibit B, the most important of all the other evidence is the “book of life.” This book only contains the names of every person who has ever accepted God’s mercy and grace by accepting Jesus Christ to pardon them from the judgment.

The Verdict

Consider the events so far. Those that rejected Jesus as their savior, through all the ages, will be resurrected, reuniting their souls with their bodies. Each person will wait their turn to hear their name called. The record of all their works will be placed into evidence and then the search for their name in the book of life will commence. When their name is not found, the worst words man will ever hear will be said: “Your name is not found written in the book of life.”

“You are found guilty of rejecting God’s mercy and plan of salvation.”

The Sentence

14And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Jesus judgment is swift. They will receive a life sentence of eternal punishment in the lake of fire. They will be separated from God and anyone who they might have known on earth that made a profession of Jesus Christ.

The Prison

Death and the grave are cast into the lake of fire that was prepared for Satan and his demons. This is a horrifying place. Eternal punishment. Let me say that again. Not a life sentence but an eternal sentence in a horrifying place.

Hell is a place of awareness and memory – The rich man knew Lazarus, and thirsted because of the burning.

Hell is a place of conscious, physical, mental and spiritual torment – “I anguish in these flames”
Luke 16:24

Hell is the only other place besides heaven to spend eternity –

Hell is a place where the inhabitants do not want others to come –

Hell is just – As there are degrees in heaven for the righteous, the Bible also teaches that there will be degrees of punishment in hell for the unrighteous.

Hell is earned – By rejecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you earn a place before the great white throne and eternity in Hell.

Conclusion

The great white throne judgment will happen.

Hell is real

However, there is good news. You do not have to appear at this judgment or hear the words; “Your name is not found written in the book of life. Therefore you are found guilty of rejecting God’s mercy and plan of salvation.”

Jesus suffered the wrath of God on the cross for you and for me. All you have to do to be excused from the great white throne judgment and eternal punishment in hell is to receive God’s pardon through faith in Jesus Christ.¹

Bob Crowder

¹ Sermon based off the book, The End written by Mark Hitchcock, Carol Stream, IL, Tyndale House Publishing, pp437-444