

Judgment of Unbelievers

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[Revelation 20:12-15] 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. 13 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. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Most people do not want to think about hell, just as most law-abiding citizens do not concern themselves with prisons. However, just as society has prisons to lock up criminals, God has prepared hell for punishing those who sin against Him. In the gospels, Lord Jesus spoke about hell more often than about the kingdom of heaven. He wanted to motivate the people to have the desire to avoid going to hell and rather choose to enjoy eternity with God, just as God has given humans the innate desire to prefer to be in the light instead of darkness.

The quoted verses above from Revelation chapter 20 describe the so-called 'white throne judgment,' which is to occur at the end of the coming thousand-year rule of Jesus Christ. This judgment applies to all unbelievers whose names are not written in God's 'Book of Life.' God keeps two kinds of books related to the final judgment, one is His Book of Life, which records the names of all saved people of God, and the other is simply called 'the books,' in which all deeds of those who are not His children are recorded. Thus, these two types of books cover the entire humanity and their life records who will have lived up to the time of this final judgment so that one is recorded in either of the two types of books.

Only those whose names are NOT recorded in God's Book of Life will be resurrected out of death and hades will have to stand before the judgment seat as the guilty and be judged by the records of his/her life in 'the books.' The legal code applicable to their judgment will be the words of Jesus Christ. When convicted, they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and be punished for their sins through eternity.

Bible records two types of hell. All unbelievers and sinners before the white-throne judgment will be locked up in 'Hades,' which is the temporary hell for punishing all sinners, just as there is a detention jail for keeping the convicted criminals before their court proceedings. Verse 13 above says deaths (graves) and hades will put out their occupants to stand before the white-throne judgment seat. In that sense, Hades is hell with limited-time usefulness. After this final judgment, all non-believers and sinners will be punished for eternity in the Lake of Fire, which is the eternal hell.

Some people justify their unbelief by insisting that our souls will no longer exist after our deaths, therefore there will not be judgments. The word of God, however, speaks clearly that all souls remain after death, will be resurrected, and there will be judgment for all. And the verses of Revelation 20 present details of this final judgment for all unbelievers and sinners.

[Hebrews 9:27-28] And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

[John 5:28-29] Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

For the children of God who are waiting anxiously for the second coming of Jesus Christ, they will be resurrected for eternal salvation and life with God, regardless of their sins because they have been forgiven and their names are recorded in the Book of Life. However, for those unbelievers and sinners whose names are NOT recorded in God's Book of Life, their resurrection will be for bringing them to the great courtroom of Jesus Christ as the convicted to be tried and condemned to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Bible tells us that the punishment

in the eternal hell will never diminish or terminate after a period. Lord Jesus stressed the never-ending nature of the punishment in hell three times as follows:

[Mark 9:42-44] If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

Believers will be judged, too. The parable of the talents tells us that the rewards of the believers will be different based on how they have multiplied the talents – that is, literal talents, opportunities, and assets received from God – for God and His kingdom. The saved people of God, however, will be absent from the courtroom of the white-throne judgment because their judgments are past and they will be with God in heaven.

The justness of this final judgment is based on God being the 'just God.' The just God suffered seeing His Son go through unjust court proceedings, bleed and die while nailed to a cross on Calvary hill though He was without sin, and spend three days and nights in Hades though He was the Savior of the world. On Jesus' shoulders lay all sins of the sinners and He had to undergo the suffering and death and the guilty on behalf of you and me. That is why the judgment in the courtroom of white-throne judgment will be just and God's mercy will not be applied to the verdicts of the guilty in this solemn court session. God has shown His mercy sufficiently before this court session.

[John 5:26-27] For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man.

The judge who sits on the white throne during this final court proceedings will be Jesus Christ, that is God the Son. As Jesus declared to the world as above, the authority of His judgeship has been granted to Jesus Christ by God the Father, not because He is God the Son but because He is the Son of Man. He came to this dark world as a human, suffered all limitations and pains as a human, endured unjust judgments, and died a cruel death on a cross without sin in Himself. That makes Him the just Judge in the fullest sense, who is divinely qualified to judge all sinners and unbelievers in the final great courtroom at the end of times.

We are still living in a period of God's mercy, to come before Him and seek His mercy despite our sins and unbelief. When you die, however, your life's records will be final and the opportunity to have your names entered in the Book of Life will be gone forever. When the final judgment hour comes, you will then be brought before Jesus Christ, whom you have denied, rejected, or despised. You will be asked to justify our actions, why did you reject Me, why did you despise Me, why did shun Me as your Savior in the face of powerful proofs all around you? Will you be able to present justifications to this Judge for your actions or non-actions then? I encourage you to come to Jesus Christ now, confess your sins, and seek forgiveness. Then, you will experience the greatest transformation of your life and be borne again as a child of God so that your names are written in the Book of Life and be able to spend blessed eternity with God instead of in the Lake of Fire. Amen.

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