

## **The Great White Throne Judgment and the Bema Seat: Who will be where? Revelation 20:11-15**

**Today we are going to talk about an unpopular subject - Death! Ecclesiastic 3:2**  
**"to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and time to die."**

A)One day should the Lord tarry - we are all going to die!

B)Stats on death - Every One out of one Dies!

C)The Question is where will you go when you die?

A man was walking through a cemetery one day - When his eyes were drawn to the writing on a tombstone- that said - "Pause stranger, when you pass me by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be. So prepare for death and follow me!"

The man responded out loud - "To follow you I'll not consent, until I know which way you went!"

Most Americans don't like to talk about or think about their own death.

A)But the Bible talks about death and the afterlife a lot - the Bible talks about death 394 times - It is important

B) I agree with what Greg Laurie says - "Only those who are prepared to die are really ready to live."

C)CBS poll revealed that most Americans spend very little, if any time at all, thinking about their own death.

In that poll, 3 out of 4 Americans believe in either heaven or in hell. That's 75%.

A)66% believe in both heaven and hell.

B)What's most fascinating to me is that of those who say they believe in heaven and hell,  
1)82% expect that they will end up in heaven at the end of their lives.

C)Whereas only 2% actually state they believe they would end up in hell.

I read a story about a man who was going to fast on an off ramp - he lost control of his car  
A)And crashed his car into a gas station pole, the sign of a gas station - it was a Shell gas station.

B)The impact on the sign was so severe it knocked the guy unconscious -

1)And the impact jarred the S off of the sign

C)When the guy driving the car finally came to - he looked up not really knowing where he was and saw the sign that read "hell open 24 hours."

D)You know Hell is open 24 hrs -and Sadly, it accepts new occupants constantly.

Over 6,000 people die every hour.

A)One only wonders the percentage of those who go to heaven and the percentage of those who go to hell.

B)We are told in Hebrews 9:27 appointed unto man once die then judgment

C)Judgment day is an unpopular idea: -Man dislikes the image of a great hour of reckoning.

D)We hear people say - "Don't tell me what is right and wrong,"

E)This is what is Ironic. PP disdain judgment but value justice,

1)yet the second is impossible without the first.

### **There are two judgments that take place in scripture**

**A)One for the unbeliever and the other is for the believer in Jesus**

B)These two judgments are separated by 1,000 years

C)One takes place after the rapture and before the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming

1)and the other takes place after the 1,000 year millennium -

D)The Judgment that takes place after the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus

1)is what we are reading about in our text today in Revelation 20:11-15

E)The Great white throne Judgment - The Judgment for unbelievers

<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

**In our study today - I want to contrast the Judgment for unbelievers known as the Great White Throne Judgment**

**A) With the Judgment of Believers - known as the Bema Seat Judgment**

B) Start with the Great White Throne Judgment

The Scene

A) This takes place after the Millennium

B) V.11 John sees a great white throne: Great (formidable) White (pure) Throne (authoritative).

C) At the Great White Throne judgment. Only unbelievers will be present.

1) For All the unrighteous humans who ever lived,

D) From the beginning of time until the end of the millennium, will stand before the GWT.

E) This is their date with the God- They've avoided, denied, blasphemed, or mocked.

1) But this is the day that they will stand before him.

At the great white throne judgment status is unimportant. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God,

A) Emperors and peasants - Pauper and prince. Housekeeper and queen. Beggar and oligarch.

B) Income level irrelevant: Prisoner and tech billionaire... Diplomas vaporized.

1) MVP trophies, Pulitzer Prizes, PhD diplomas. Are Nowhere to be seen.

C) They come from different eras. But they all come.

D) God will call their bodies from the sea, the graves, the tombs.

1) Their souls will be summoned from hades - a hell like holding place -

At the great white throne judgment books are opened.

A) 1<sup>st</sup> is the Book of life - The names of those who put their faith in Jesus

B) If your name is not there you are in trouble

C) The second set of books that will be opened is what we might call the book of accounts - v.12 says And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

It would seem that God has an intricate bookkeeping system

A) where He has recorded for unbelievers only everything they have ever done,

B) Every thought, every word - every action - every deed

C) Jesus said every idle word that men will speak, they will give an account in the day of judgment

D) Their Deeds will condemn them - every time they cheated lied, selfish act -

E) every person who thinks - I am good enough - radically surprised -

1) when all their evil deeds and thoughts condemn them

But the major thing that will condemn them is every chance they had to respond to the gospel and did not.

A) Every time they were presented with the gift of life from Jesus - and rejected it

B) One writer called this "the most serious, sobering, and tragic passage in the entire Bible."-

1) It is easy to see why.

C) It is a courtroom scene, but it is unlike any earthly courtroom scene.

1) There will be no debate about guilt in this courtroom scene.

D)There is a verdict but no defense. There is a judge but no jury.

1)There is a sentence without any appeal.

<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

**A)The Great white throne Judgment is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death - Eternal Dying**

B)Everyone dies once - Physical death - this body shuts down -

1)but those who refuse to embrace Jesus - Die twice

C)The 2<sup>nd</sup> death is the worst - Forever separated from God - That is what hell is

D)The Bible describes Hell as a place of outer darkness -torment weeping and Gnashing of teeth

1)Can't see anyone only - hear them moaning screaming - teeth Gnashing

Pause do you know that Jesus spoke more about hell than anyone else in the Bible.

A)REAL PEOPLE GO THERE!

B)But Jesus spoke so much about Hell - because He knows REAL PEOPLE GO THERE!

C)I've heard people tell me things like, I look forward to going to hell, because all my friends are going to be there.

1)My Favorite Rock bands will be there it's going to be ONE big party.

D)It may be true that your friends will be there - and your favorite bands will be there

1)But those bands will not be doing concerts - you will not be hanging with your friends

E)Hell will NOT be A party at all.

1)Torment - Outer darkness - Exceedingly hot but you don't burn up- sulfur smell - rotten eggs -

F)Guys that is Hell

Jesus said: Hell was not made for man - but for the Devil and his demons -

A)Movies often depict Satan on a throne ruling hell with his Demons

B)Satan is not ruling in Hell - He is not on a throne. He will be the chief victim in that place.

C)Jesus spoke a lot about hell - more than anything else - because real people go there!

How could a loving God send people to hell?

A)He doesn't - people go there of their own free will - Rejecting Jesus

B)They volunteer for Hell by rejecting God's invitation to Salvation -

1)You today - Today is the day of salvation - Accept or reject

C)Today before we go I am going to give you the opportunity to escape Hell -

1)by giving your life to Jesus - Your Choice today

D)Now if You reject and end up in Hell - not God's fault - your Choice will put you there!

So The Great white throne Judgment is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death

A)Everyone dies once - Physically - it is going to happen to you

B)But if you reject Jesus you actually die twice - first is physical death - end of life in this body - spirit lives

C)The 2<sup>nd</sup> death is to be eternally dying -The 2<sup>nd</sup> Death is to be separated from God for eternity.

Now if you know Jesus - given heart - only Die once - Physical

A)Eternal Life - Living forever with God / Jesus in his Kingdom

B)Your name gets written in the book of Life!

C)There is a Judgment for believers too - Completely different kind of Judgment

<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10 CSB

A)The phrase judgment seat in this verse is a single word in the ancient Greek language of the NT. -

B)The word Bema - *Bema* literally means "step," as in a raised platform or seat.

C)“According to historians, ‘In Grecian games in Athens, the arena contained a raised platform to which the president or umpire of the arena sat.

D)From there he watched all the contestants; and from there he rewarded all winners.

1)It was called the ‘BEMA’ or ‘reward seat’...

### **The Judgment seat of Christ or the Bema seat is a judgment of rewards**

A)Rewarded for what we have done in this life.

B)We are Stewards: Time, Talents, Treasures

C)Our Time: Our life - Talents the gifts and opportunities we have been given to bless others

1)Our Treasures - the Resources we have to do it

God is watching us - How we use what we have been given - to bless others and for his glory.

A)What is God looking for? Faithfulness - Faithfulness = Fruitfulness in God’s economy.

B)We have all been given a similar amount of time 24 hrs in a day - a certain number of years

C)We all been given talents and treasures - although those can be different.

1)Those given more - more is required -

D)But overall - question: Have you been faithful with what given you?

Individuals will receive different rewards depending on their personal obedience and faithfulness...

A)Think of it this way: Here in America, we provide children with a free education in the public schools.

B)But that doesn't mean every child is going to value and use that education equally.

C)Some will work harder and be more faithful and committed students than others,

1)and they will do better and be rewarded for it. Honors and Scholarships to college

D)Students don't have to earn their seat in the public-school classroom,

1)but they are responsible for their efforts.

In a similar way: Embracing by faith what Jesus did gets us into heaven

A)But the capacity with which we enjoy Heaven and eternity - Jesus comes back to set up his kingdom -

B)Will be based on what we did with the Time, Talents and treasures we have been given.

There is an old saying by Poet CT Studd "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last"

A)Note this: As believers - We will not be judged for our sins -

B)Jesus already paid the price for our sins - Cross - Resurrection - Communion

C)You put your faith in Jesus - Justified - Declared righteous - Sins forgiven and forgotten -

1)God sees you in his son - That can be your story today - Embrace Jesus - opportunity

D)So we are not judged for our sins -“the purpose of Christ’s judgment seat is to evaluate us for the way we live our Christian lives,

1)for the quality of our service.

E) The question here is not whether you are a Christian, but what kind of Christian you are...

1)So the purpose of the judgment seat is to evaluate our fitness for eternal rewards.”

### **See it is Possible to have a saved soul but a wasted life - little fruit - not much to show for what God has given you.**

A)What will be judged at the Bema Seat?  
Actions and Attitudes

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

B)Jesus said in Matthews gospel - Anyone who gives a cup of cold water to a child in my name - receives an eternal reward

1)Everyone is running to sign up for CM today after service! 😊

C)Any act of Kindness done to others in Jesus name will be rewarded

D)Any service -for Jesus - Parking Lot - ministry - Packing a shoe box

1) Sharing your faith / leading loving your family

But not just Actions but Attitude or motives

A) In 1 Corinthians 3 - Paul is talking about our service for Jesus - and he likens it to building on a Foundation

B) Jesus has laid the foundation for Salvation - the church - the Kingdom of God -

1) and we are all building on it -

<sup>12</sup> If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become obvious. For the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned up, he will experience loss, but he himself will be saved. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

The Fire reveals the quality of the work

A) The Motive - Fire purifies things like gold and silver - burns up things like wood hay - straw

B) The Quality of the work is revealed by the motive of the work - If the motive is right:

1) gold silver precious stones

C) If the motive is wrong - wood hay and stubble - that burns up

See it is possible to do the right things - but with the wrong attitude or motive.

A) If your motive is to be seen by people - wrong motive

B) If your motive is to get a pat on the back - wrong motive

C) If your motive is to get a position - wrong motive

D) Motive is to glorify Jesus and help others meet Jesus and grow in Jesus - right motive

We are encouraged to be ambitious about eternal rewards 2 Timothy 4:7-8

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul ran His race and fought his fight with determination obeyed

A) He was looking forward to his reward - His prize

<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14

**B) At the judgment seat of Christ - we are only evaluated on how we as individuals have run**

1) The Focus isn't on your friends - ON YOU!

C) We are encouraged to be disciplined and focused in our pursuit of eternal rewards

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

"If athletes are willing to exercise discipline and self-control to win a medal or trophy or ribbon that you can't take to heaven

A) How much more should we be willing to exercise discipline in our Christian lives - knowing a heavenly reward is waiting

B) Jesus said in Matthew 6:19 <sup>19</sup> "Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. CSB

C) Treasures here at temporal - There Eternal

The last phrase of that verse is Key

A) Where your treasure is - your heart will be there also

B) If your treasure is in the things of this earth - your heart will be here

C) If your treasure is in Heaven - Your heart will be most interested in storing up eternal rewards at the Bema Seat

Close with this:

Have you ever heard of a processionary caterpillar?

A) It's this kind of caterpillar that will follow another caterpillar in line.

B) If you line them up, head to tail, they just go around in circles. And they keep going.

C) So experiments were done placing these caterpillars on the rim of a clay pot.

1) And they put a plant in the middle of the pot, a food source.

D) These processionary caterpillars went round and round and round till all of them died from exhaustion and starvation.

E) Not one broke ranks to get a piece of that little plant which would have been its food source.

1) That would have sustained them

People in this world live on the treadmill of life - going round and round in circles

A) Focused on earning a living - - experiencing or escaping in worldly pleasures

B) Never being Satisfied! - God spoke through the Prophet Isaiah - asking why do you spend your money on what doesn't satisfy

C) Jesus says - Come to me Bread of life - I will Satisfy the longing in your heart

That is what those who follow Jesus do - they break ranks with Society

A) Experience eternal life - Quality here - AND an assurance of a glorious future to come

B) The Bible says - God has put eternity into the hearts of every man.

1) Idea that there has to be more than this life

C) That is because there is - Eternity in one or two places - With Jesus - Heaven - Reign

1) New Heaven and new earth

D) Or Hell - Eternally separated - The Choice is up to you.- Choose Life

Give you the opportunity right now - PRAY

If you are ready to receive Jesus today - Come back to him.

As many as received him gave them the right to become sons and daughter of God - believe on his name. John 1:12

A) Ready to do that - Ask you to take a couple of STEPS

B) First step - Acknowledge - raise your Hand - Pray for you

C) Second step - Public profession - Come forward - pray with you

Communion

Thanking Jesus - paying price - making a way

Acknowledging - Be about Kingdom

Your time, talents - treasures - his glory