

# Judgment Day is Coming

---

*Revelation 20:11-15*

## **INTRODUCTION**

- A. Illustration about lawyer writing a promissory note for a horse he killed, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #6490.
  - 1. We view judgment like that—we know judgment is coming, but we think of it as far in the future.
  - 2. This lawyer thought he would never have to pay for the horse judgment day came sooner than expected.
  - 3. It could be that judgment comes for us sooner than expected.
    - a. Jesus' Second Coming will be "like a thief in the night" (2 Pet. 3: 10).
    - b. We may face the judgment in the near future.
- B. Many scoff at the idea of a judgment.
  - 1. They do not believe that one day they will be called upon to account for their lives.
  - 2. However, the Bible presents judgment day as a reality.
    - a. God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31).
    - b. "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Rom. 2:16).
    - c. "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).
  - 3. Even those who mock the idea of judgment will one day stand before God.
- C. This morning, we want to take a closer look at the Judgment Day.

## **THE GREAT JUDGE, v 11**

- A. John saw a great white throne.
  - 1. The throne is presented as being great.
    - a. The throne in Is. 6:1 was, without a doubt, a great throne for God was high and lifted up.
    - b. The throne was great in that it is far greater than any judicial bench on any supreme court.
    - c. This throne was so great because God sat upon it.
  - 2. The great throne is white.
    - a. White represents purity, holiness, and righteousness--attributes God greatly possesses.
    - b. God will judge the world with righteousness (Ps. 96:13).
      - 1) No one at judgment will be able to claim that God judged him unfairly.
      - 2) God renders righteous judgments, those judgments that are right.
- B. John also saw him who sat upon the throne.
  - 1. There is some discussion as to whether this is the Father or Christ.
  - 2. Throughout Revelation, "he who sat upon the throne" is used as a designation for the Father; we should understand the Father being represented here.
  - 3. This causes a problem for some, because throughout the New Testament both the Father and Christ are presented as judges.
    - a. The Father is spoken of as a judge.
      - 1) We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God (Rom. 14:10).
      - 2) God is the judge of all (Heb. 12:23).
    - b. Christ is depicted as a judge.
      - 1) "The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son" (Jn. 5:33).
      - 2) "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (1 Cor. 5:10).
    - c. These passages should cause us no problems, because the Father and Son are one (Jn. 10:30).
- C. The earth and heaven fled away from God's presence.
  - 1. This could be a way of describing the literal destruction of the universe at Jesus' Second Coming

2. However, this more than likely is a poetic way of expressing the fear of the corruptible in the presence of God.
  - a. When individuals came face to face with God, they were terrified.
    - 1) After Isaiah's vision, he cried out, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" (Is. 6:5).
    - 2) When Peter realized who Jesus was, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Lk. 5:8).
  - b. Here, the earth and sky are terrified to be in God's presence.
- D. No place was found for the earth and sky-there was no place they could hide.
- F. One day, we will stand before God to be judged. Are you ready?

## **THE GREAT JUDGMENT, vv. 12-13**

- A. John saw the dead, small and great, standing before the throne, v. 12.
  1. We should understand the resurrection of v. 13 as occurring before v. 12.
  2. Everyone, small and great, stood before the throne.
    - a. Some seem to think that they will escape the judgment, for God will not judge them.
    - b. Yet, the picture here is that are judged.
      - 1) The small are judged.
        - a) Blue-collar workers who struggle to make ends meet will be judged.
        - b) Slaves will be judged.
        - c) The worse criminals the world has ever seen will be judged.
      - 2) The great are judged.
        - a) Every President of this nation will be judged.
        - b) Those who received the Nobel Peace Prize will be judged.
        - c) Those who found cures for terrible diseases will be judged.
    - c. No one will escape the judgment.
      - 1) "Each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).
      - 2) "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10).
    - d. When we stand before God, we will stand there alone.
      - 1) We will not have the help of family and friends--We will answer for ourselves.
      - 2) "In the choir of life, it's easy to fake the words-but someday each of us will have to solo before God."
- B. Books were opened, v. 12.
  1. The plural "books" probably reflects the early Jewish tradition of two heavenly books one for recording the deeds of the righteous and one for recording the deeds of the wicked.
  2. Since the dead were judged based upon their works, it seems likely that these books contained the deeds of those to be judged.
- C. The Book of Life was also opened, v. 12.
  1. The idea for the Book of Life seems to be based upon Jewish tradition.
    - a. Apparently, the Jews kept a record of living citizens.
    - b. The names in this register would be blotted out at dead.
  2. The Book of Life would be a register of the righteous the spiritual living.
    - a. Jesus told his disciples not to rejoice because they had miraculous power, but they were to rejoice that their names were written in heaven (Lk. 10:20).
    - b. The names of Paul's fellow workers were in the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3).
  3. Is your name in the Book of Life?
- D. The dead were judged based upon their works, v. 12.
  1. Some in the religious world claim that we place too much emphasis on works, yet we will be judged based on our works.
  2. We will be judged based on our works.
    - a. "I the Lord search the mind and try the heart to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:10).

- b. God will “render to every man according to his works” (Rom. 2:6).
  - c. God “judges each one impartially according to his deeds” (1 Pet. 1:17).
- E. The dead were resurrected, v. 13.
- 1. As we said earlier, this resurrection occurred before John saw the dead assembled—John wasn’t interested in chronology.
  - 2. The sea gave up the dead in it.
    - a. Ancient coastal people believed there were two abodes for the dead—the sea and land—burial at sea was thought to be unnatural and inappropriate.
    - b. The sea is mentioned to show that no one—not even those lost at sea will escape the judgment.
  - 3. Death and Hades delivered up the dead in them.
    - a. “Death” and “Hades” are synonyms, and it’s unlikely that John thought of these as two separate entities.
    - b. Everyone who has ever lived is resurrected to face the judgment

### **THE GREAT JUSTICE, vv. 14-15**

- A. Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire, v. 14.
  - 1. Death itself will be destroyed on Judgment Day.
  - 2. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:26).
- B. The lake of fire is referred to as the second death.
  - 1. Just as there is a deeper, higher life, there is also a deeper, higher death; this deeper death is eternal separation from God (2 Thess. 1:9).
  - 2. The wicked are punished in fire--the rich man was in agony in the flames of Hades (Lk 16:24).
- C. Anyone whose name was not written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire, v 15.
  - 1. This is the final destiny of those who disobey God.
  - 2. Jesus spoke of hell as a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 8:12).
    - a. Weeping and gnashing of teeth come as a result of horrible pain.
    - b. Hell is a place of pain.
  - 3. If you are not a Christian, hell will be your home for eternity.

### **CONCLUSION**

- A. Judgment Day is coming. Are you going to be ready?
- B. Illustration about pioneers escaping prairie fires, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, p. 207.
- C. What about you? Are you reading for Judgment Day?