

THE FINAL RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT OF UNBELIEVERS: THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT REVELATION 20: 11–15

Introduction

The final judgment is coming, that great day when all unbelievers shall stand before God and give an account to God. The final judgment is called the “Great White Throne Judgment.” Many deny a final judgment. They smile and scoff at the idea that there is to be future punishment for sins. They laugh at the preaching and teaching of hell. This Scripture stands diametrically opposed to these people. This Scripture declares emphatically: there is to be a final judgment for unbelievers; every unbeliever, small and great, shall stand before God and give an account to God. The declaration is emphatic: all unbelievers shall be judged and punished for their rejection of Jesus Christ and for their works upon earth. Unbelievers shall be judged at the “Great White Throne Judgment of God.”

- I. The place of judgment: the great white throne (v. 11).
- II. The time of judgment: when heaven and earth flee away (v. 11).
- III. The persons to be judged (v. 12).
- IV. The basis of judgment (v. 12).
- V. The resurrection to judgment (v.13).
- VI. The terrorizing punishment of the judgment: the lake of fire which is the second death (vv. 14-15).

I. *Revelation 20:11 The Great White Throne of Judgment*

There is the place of judgment, the great white throne of God. Unbelievers shall stand before the very throne of God, face to face with God and Christ. Standing there they will see exactly what John saw. They will then know that their unbelief and rejection of Jesus Christ was mad and insane behaviour. They will know they should have never rejected and cursed God and Christ. They should not have lived for the pleasures and possessions of this world. But it will be too late. Standing there, they will not be standing before the cross of Christ. They will be standing before the great *white throne*, before the throne of God’s judgment. Note how the throne is described.

1. The throne of God is a *great* throne. It is far, far greater than any judicial bench of any supreme court. It is greater because God Himself, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, sits upon it. When He speaks and issues a decision...
 - the decision is final.
 - the decision is for eternity, not just for a life term.
 - the decision can never be appealed, not even once.
-

But the throne is also great for another reason: its decisions concern a *great salvation*. Everyone who stands before the great white throne of God has rejected the *great salvation of God's Son*. He has rejected the great salvation offered by the *Son of God Himself*. The salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ is not just another salvation, not just another way to God, not just one of many ways to God. The salvation offered by Jesus Christ is the only salvation of *God's Son Himself*. This is what makes the rejection of Jesus Christ so serious. Jesus Christ is God's Son, God's very own Son. As good as the morality and teachings of some religions may be, there is only one Son of God. God has only one Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the only person who is ever acceptable to God is the person who approaches Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. As stated, the salvation offered by Jesus Christ is the only salvation there is; it is the only way to God. Why? Because it is the salvation of the *Son of God Himself*. Therefore, it is *the great salvation*, the only salvation that has existed or ever will exist. Consequently, when it comes time to judge those who reject the *great salvation* of God's Son, they will be judged from a *great throne*.

Heb 2:3 *How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

Heb 12:25 *See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?*

2. The throne of God is a *white* throne. White stands for purity, holiness and righteousness. We must never forget: no person is perfect. No person is perfectly pure or righteous. We all have some impurity and some unrighteousness. But not God; God is perfect. He is perfect in purity and righteousness. Therefore, no imperfect person can ever live with God. If any of us are to live with God, our imperfection must be removed so that we can stand perfect before God.

How can this be done? Only by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ alone is perfect and sinless. Therefore, the person must believe that Jesus Christ died for his sins, that Jesus Christ actually took his sins off him and died for them. If a person believes this, God counts it so. God actually counts the death of Jesus Christ *for the believer*. Therefore, the believer stands before God perfect and sinless — not because he really is sinless, but because Jesus Christ bore his sins for him and paid the judgment for them. The only person who can ever live with God is a person who has let Jesus Christ bear his sin. If a person wishes to live with God, he must trust the death of Jesus Christ, trust that Jesus Christ died for him.

The point is this: no unbeliever has done this. Everyone who stands before the *great white throne* of God will be bearing his own sins. Not a single *unbeliever* will have trusted the purity and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the purity of God's throne will blaze forth in righteousness and condemn the unbeliever, condemn him

because he is neither pure nor righteous. The purity and righteousness of Jesus Christ to cover his sins were available, but he rejected Jesus Christ. Therefore, the unbeliever stands in his unrighteousness before God's holy righteousness. Consequently his unrighteousness must be condemned by God's righteousness, and it will be. This is what the great white throne judgment is: the judgment of all unbelievers.

***Psa 96:12-13** Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

***Mat 24:30** "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."*

***Mark 8:38** "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

***2 Th 1:7-8** And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

***Rev 1:7** Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.*

II. Revelation 20:11 The Time of Judgment

There is the time of the judgment. When will the great white throne judgment take place?

When the earth and the heaven flee away. This is a poetic way to describe the destruction of the present heavens and earth that is coming. Remember: God has promised to make a new heavens and earth. To do so, He must first destroy the present heavens and earth. When is this universal destruction going to take place? When the great white throne judgment is going on. Picture the scene! There stand all the unbelievers who have ever lived. Billions and billions of unbelievers stand upon the great sea of glass before the throne of God. Then all of a sudden there is a massive explosion of atoms never dreamed possible. A chain reaction sets off all the atoms throughout the whole universe. A universal atomic explosion destroys the whole universe. Both the heavens and the earth are destroyed by God, destroyed by fire.

Imagine the shock to the unbelievers standing before God in the spiritual world. The idea is that they will witness the fiery destruction of their world, the world upon which they had lived their lives. Note the words "there was no place for them [the unbelievers]."

They had lived for the world and their world will be gone. They do not belong in heaven: therefore, there is no place for them. All they had lived for will be gone: money, houses, lands, position, power, fame, popularity, drugs, sex, alcohol, pleasure, possessions and comfort — it will all be gone. There will no longer be a world for the unbeliever, and they do not belong in heaven. There will be no place for them.

Mat 24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

2 Pet 3:7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Pet 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Psa 102:25-27 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Isa 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig tree.

Isa 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever; my righteousness will never fail.

Isa 65:17 “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”

III. Revelation 20:12 The People who are Judged

There are the persons to be judged. Both the small and the great will be judged.

1. Ordinary men and women will be judged:

=> Those who are the average and common people of the earth; the blue collar worker, the employees and workers of the earth. They shall be judged.

=> Those who are the slaves and servants of the world. They too shall be judged.

=> Those who commit the sins that society considers somewhat small and sometimes understandable: sins of selfishness, hoarding, banking, complaining, laziness, slothfulness, indifference, arguing, gossiping, back-biting, criticizing, immorality, stealing and lying. They shall be judged.

2. Great men and women will be judged:

=> Those who are in positions of authority: managers, foremen, supervisors, officers of corporations, owners of businesses, rulers and kings. They shall all be judged.

=> Those who misuse their authority, abuse and take advantage of others, who ignore and neglect others, and in some cases destroy and kill others. They shall be judged.

=> Those who sin with a daring and a flair, who love their sin and revel in it. They shall be judged.

Every unbeliever on the face of the earth will stand before God and be judged. No matter how small or how great, the unbeliever shall stand before the great white throne judgment of God and be sentenced.

=> The small and the great shall stand there.

=> The low and the high shall stand there.

=> The poor and the rich shall stand there.

=> The unrighteous and the self-righteous shall stand there.

=> The non-religious and the religious shall stand there.

=> The unknown and the known shall stand there.

No unbeliever will be exempt; no unbeliever will be overlooked or missed. All unbelievers, each in his own time, will be called forward by name and face Him who sits upon the throne. Every unbeliever will have his day in the great tribunal of God.

Rom 2:16 *This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.*

Rom 14:10 *You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.*

Mat 12:36 *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken."*

Mat 18:23 *"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants."*

Rom 14:12 *So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

1 Pet 4:3-5 *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

IV. Revelation 20:12 Judgment According to the Book of Life

There is the basis of judgment. Note exactly what is said.

Rev 20:12 *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

There are two kinds of books kept in heaven. Both will be present at the great white throne judgment.

1. There is *the book of life*. This is the book where every human being who has ever lived has his name written. It is the book that includes the names of everyone who has ever lived or ever will live upon earth. God longs for everyone to live with Him forever; therefore, every person's name is recorded in the *book of life*. However, when a person fails to receive Jesus Christ as his Saviour, his name is erased from the book, and he loses the right to live as a citizen of heaven with God. Scripture after Scripture tells us this.

Exo 32:32-33 *“But now, please forgive their sin — but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” The Lord replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.”*

Psa 69:28 *May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.*

Dan 12:1 *“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people — everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be delivered.”*

Luke 10:20 *“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

Phil 4:3 *Yes, and I ask you, loyal yoke-fellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Rev 3:5 *He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.*

Rev 13:8 *All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.*

Rev 17:8 *The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.*

Rev 20:12 *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

Rev 20:15 *If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Rev 21:27 *Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Rev 22:19 *And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

2. There are the *books of records*. These books are the records of all the works of unbelievers. When a person's name is found erased from the book of life, then the *books of records* are opened, and he is judged out of them. Note two things.
 - a. These books are not opened to see whether or not a person is doomed to hell. The book of life tells that. The book of records shows the degree of punishment a person is to receive. A man such as Hitler will be punished and judged much more severely than a petty thief. Both are doomed for hell, but both will not suffer the same amount of punishment.

Mat 11:22-23 *They were, therefore, guilty and were judged "blind" and were to be condemned. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.*

Luke 12:47-48 *"That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."*

- b. The *books of records* means that the judgment will be exact and fair. An unbeliever will be treated justly. There is a record of his works, of exactly what he has done and not done. There is a record of secret sins, of the sins committed in the dark and behind closed doors, of ill feelings within the heart, of evil thoughts of the mind. There is a record of all the works of the unbeliever. Therefore, he can be treated with fairness and perfect justice. He will be judged and punished for exactly what he has done, no more and no less.

Psa 62:12 *And that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Jer 17:10 “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”

Mat 16:27 “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”

Luke 12:48 “But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

1 Pet 1:17-20 Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Rev 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.”

Thought 1. Many a person says, “I’m doing the best that I can.” He will be judged on that basis. He will be judged for all the good things that he did as well as for all the bad things that he did. But note: he is still doomed for hell. Why? If he did mostly good in his life, why is he still doomed for hell? Because he is not perfect — never has been perfect and never will be perfect — not within himself. His only hope for perfection is to trust Jesus Christ, to trust that Jesus Christ has taken his sins and borne them for him. But the unbeliever does not accept Jesus Christ. Therefore, no matter how mild a sinner he may be, he is still a sinner and imperfect. Consequently, he has to bear his own sins and have them read out loud by God. Standing before God, if the unbeliever had only trusted Jesus Christ to bear his sins for him, he would have been free of sin. There would have been no sin recorded against him. For Jesus Christ would have borne them all; Jesus Christ would have freed the unbeliever of sin and presented him perfect before God. This is the reason *good works and doing the best we can* is not enough. No matter how much good we do, we can never achieve perfection. And to live in heaven with God we must be perfect, for heaven and God are perfect. And God is not about to allow heaven and His presence to become contaminated with sin. Heaven would no longer be heaven if sin were allowed within it.

V. **Revelation 20:13** *The Resurrection to Judgment*

There is the resurrection to judgment. The *first resurrection* will have already taken place one thousand years before. It was the resurrection for believers (cp. Rev 20:5-6). This resurrection, the calling forth of the dead, is the second and final resurrection, the *resurrection of all unbelievers*. God knows where all the atoms and particles of a person are. The atoms and particles of a person’s body may be scattered all over the world, but

God knows where every minute element is. And He is going to call forth every human body — every element and particle — of every unbeliever who has ever lived.

Note where the dead unbelievers will come from:

1. They will come from the sea: from the depths of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Mediterranean and Persian seas, the Black and Dead seas. From all the seas of the world the bodies of the dead unbelievers will come — the bodies of those sunken in the wars of human history, in the merchant ships, and in the ships of pirates. Even the bodies of those murdered and dumped in the seas will come forth. There will not be a body ever lost at sea or in any other body of water that will not come forth. All the bodies of unbelievers that have been scattered over the seas of the earth will be brought back together and raised up — all in the flash of an eye — and every body from the seas of the world will stand before the great white throne judgment of God.
2. They will come from death itself and from the graves of the earth (the word translated “Hades” in the New International Version is “grave” in the Greek). All the bodies of dead unbelievers who are in the earth or scattered over the earth shall be resurrected. God knows where every atom and particle of dust is, every element that makes up every unbeliever’s body. Therefore, when He calls forth for all unbelievers to stand before Him in judgment, all the bodies of dead unbelievers that lie over the dry land of the earth — they shall all come forth. They shall come out of the great pyramids of Egypt, the jungles of Africa, the rain forests of Brazil, the desert sands of Arabia, the burial grounds of Indians, the battlefields of wars, the alleys and secret places of murder and the graves of America. Every place upon earth where a human body has fallen or been placed, that body is going to arise. God is going to call forth the atoms or whatever the basic element of human life is; He is going to call those elements together, and the body of the unsaved person is going to stand before the *great white throne* judgment of God. Note that this is exactly what Scripture says:

Rev 20:13 *The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades [the grave] gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.*

Note the re-emphasis: all unbelievers will be judged *according to what he or she has done*. Every unbeliever can expect to be treated fairly and justly. He shall be judged in perfect justice. He will receive punishment for exactly what he did and failed to do — no more and no less.

Thought 1. God has done all He can. He has provided the way of salvation for every person. All a person has to do is to follow that way, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and follow Him. And remember: Jesus Christ is God’s own Son. The way of salvation cost God the life of His Son. God had to pay the supreme price for salvation; He had to put all the sins of the world upon His own Son and let Him bear all the judgment and punishment for those sins. But He did it; He did it because He loves man. He can

do no more. The decision is man's. Man either chooses to believe and follow Jesus Christ or else to face God alone. Following Christ means that Christ bore our sins and punishment. This frees us from sin, frees us because He took them off us and bore them Himself. Therefore, we stand before God free of sin, perfect and acceptable to God. But if we refuse to believe and follow Christ, then it means that we bear our own sin. We choose to stand before God with our own sin. This is what the *great white throne judgment* is all about. It is the judgment of all those who choose to stand before God as sinners, as bearing their own sins. Therefore, they shall bear them. They shall be judged for their works, for exactly what they chose to do. They shall be treated with perfect justice and equity. They shall...

- bear a punishment that is *equal* to their works.
- bear a punishment that *perfectly matches* their behaviour.
- bear a punishment that *measures out exactly* to what they did.

There will be no unfair treatment, discrimination, partiality or favouritism shown at the great white throne judgment. Everyone will be treated exactly as he himself chose to be treated.

Mat 25:31-32 *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

Acts 17:31 *“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”*

2 Tim 4:1 *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:*

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

2 Pet 3:7 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

Psa 96:12-13 *Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

VI. Revelation 20:14-15 The Terrorizing Punishment

There is the terrorizing punishment of the judgment. If there is any one thing that believers should do, it is to note these two verses. As the great preacher E.V. Hill has said in a sermon: the first reason he accepted Jesus Christ was because he did not want to go to hell. He did not want to be tormented and punished by being separated from God, not forever and ever. Note the verses:

Rev 20:14-15 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

1. Death and Hades (the grave) will be cast into the lake of fire. Hades is the place where all unbelievers go after their death. Hades is a temporary place where unbelievers go to await the final judgment. After the great white throne judgment is completed, then all those who are dead and in Hades will be cast into the *lake of fire*. The lake of fire is the final and eternal place of torment where all unbelievers shall be cast.

Note: there are many who say the idea of fire is symbolic, that the *lake of fire* is not real fire. But we must never forget this: if it is not real fire, then it is something far, far worse. For physical and material substances are nothing compared to spiritual and eternal substances. The substance of physical and material fire is nothing compared to spiritual and eternal fire. The human mind cannot conceive how glorious heaven will be nor how terrible the lake of fire will be. Therefore, to say that the *lake of fire* is a symbol does not ease the punishment of hell. Scripture paints the punishment of suffering apart from God as being so horrifying and terrorizing that a person who goes to hell would probably choose fire over the reality of the lake of fire. Remember the rich man and Lazarus: the concern of the rich man in hell was not that he was in a flame of fire, but the torment and suffering he was bearing. He was so concerned over the suffering that he longed for his brothers to escape the suffering when they died (cp. Lk. 16:24, 27-31).

Mat 8:12 "But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mat 13:41-42 "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mat 13:49-50 "This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous. And throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mat 22:13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Mat 24:50-51 “The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Mat 25:30 “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

2. The lake of fire is the second death. That is, it is eternal death. In the Scripture death means separation from God. Death does not mean annihilation, ceasing to exist nor extinction. This life is not all there is. When a person dies upon this earth, he still exists. How? He exists in the next world, in the spiritual world and dimension — the permanent and eternal world, the world that does not age, deteriorate, die or pass away. The physical world does pass away, but not the spiritual world or dimension. The spiritual world, the next world, is eternal and lasts forever and ever. Therefore, when a person dies upon this earth, that is just the first death. The person is merely separated from this life and world. He merely passes over into the next world, and he exists there forever and ever. But note what happens to the person who dies separated from God. If he does not follow God, if he chooses to be separated from God in this life, then when he passes on into the next world, he is still separated from God. His condition and state never change. He chose to be separated from God; therefore, he shall be separated from God forever and ever.

The point is this: when the unbeliever stands before the great white throne judgment of God, he shall die the second death. He shall be judged to be separated from God. God will know that the man never lived nor followed Him, that the man chose to be separated from Him. Therefore, the man shall die the second death. He shall be separated from God eternally.

The second death simply means to be separated from God eternally. But note how terrible the second death is: the place of the second death is the *lake of fire*.

3. The basis of judgment is the *book of life*. If a person’s name is not found written in the *book of life*, then he will be cast into the *lake of fire*. A person must possess the perfect life of Jesus Christ if he is to live forever in heaven with God. If a person does not possess life, the perfect life and righteousness of Jesus Christ, if his name is not written in the book of life, then he is doomed to death. He is doomed to the second death, to the lake of fire.

Mat 5:22-29 “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell....If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

Mat 10:28 “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Mat 13:41-42 “The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Mat 18:8-9 “If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”

Mat 23:15 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.”

Mat 13:42 “They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Mat 25:41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

Mat 25:46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Mark 3:29 “But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”

Mark 9:43-48 “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

Luke 3:17 “His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Luke 12:4-5 “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

Luke 16:22-24 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’”

Thought 1. Note what a few other Scriptures have to say about hell.

2 Th 1:9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

James 3:6 *The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Rev 14:10-11 *He, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.*

Rev 20:10, 15 *And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Rev 21:8 *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.*

Psa 11:6 *On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulphur; a scorching wind will be their lot.*

Isa 33:14 *The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?"*

Isa 66:24 *"And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."*

Mal 4:1 *"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them." ■*