

Revelation 20:7-15  
Study ID#12ID1325

Alright, let's open our Bibles tonight. Revelation Chapter 20, verse 7 as we continue, actually come to the end of really this wonderful last book. We've spent a lot of hours in this book haven't we? Lots of months actually. A book in which God, when you begin to read, makes this wonderful promise at the beginning that you're blessed if you read it, you're blessed if you hear it, and you're blessed if you keep the things written in it. So it's a great book. It comes with a built-in blessing, and I trust that God has been blessing you as you've been studying. Yet, within it we have been given much about the future, and what the world is really going to face having rejected the Lord, and some of it is very horrifying and terrifying, but it is certainly of men's own choosing. And I hope that you have been convinced going through the book that God's intention is to save. If you end up in judgment, you're there because you want to be there. You don't want to be saved. You don't want God to save you.

As we've come near the end of the book, the past few weeks we have studied the end of the judgments of God poured out, the battle of Armageddon as the nations of the world gathered together to oppose God. We saw the return of Christ in the midst of this battle together with the church, His bride, with the Old Testament saints as well as the martyrs of the tribulation. And just one word out of Jesus' mouth will defeat His enemies, and the brightness of His coming will be the deciding blow.

And then in Chapter 19 at the end there we saw the Antichrist taken by the Lord and the false prophet and thrown into Gehenna. It is that final place of judgment. Sometimes it's called the lake of fire. And all of the armies destroyed in a huge loss of life as you can't really stand against God and hope to live. We learned that Jesus upon His return would gather together the nations of the world for judgment, Daniel told us that that would take forty-five days, and that their judgment would in part depend upon their treatment of Israel, which according to Matthew 25, would afford them an entrance as a nation into the kingdom age. And so they and the remnant hidden by the Lord, we are told that all of Israel at this point will be saved. Those who survived and are alive will be convinced.

And then Satan is taken by the angel of the Lord, as we studied last time, and he is locked up in the *abyssos* (ä'-büs-sos), the bottomless pit, for the thousand years that Jesus will reign physically upon the earth and establish His kingdom. It'll be the place where many demons are kept today. It is a place that is well known to the demons. You might remember there in Luke Chapter 8 as the Lord goes to deliver a fella that is bound by the devil, the fella there at the *Gadarenes*, and "Why do You torment us before our time?" You might remember them crying out, and Jesus said, "What is your name?" And they said, "We are legion. Many in number." And then they said, "Don't send us to the pit. Don't send us to this place," this *abyssos* (ä'-büs-sos). They know this place exists. And early on in the tribulation Satan will be allowed to bring many demons out to torture and to hurt, but now at this time he will be locked, as well as all of his little demon hordes, and they will be put away for that thousand years so that man might experience the world the way God intended it to be. And many will be born during this time. We gather from the Scriptures that there will be a population explosion. Imagine living a thousand years and having children during that time. And so those born will have little alternative though but to follow the rule of the law. The law will be the law of the Lord. He will rule with a rod of iron. He will not tolerate sin. It is possible from what we read in the Scriptures that you could have your life taken from you for disobedience. God will not tolerate rebellion. And there won't be much I suspect. Folks will pretty much be submitted to the things of God and the will of God. To disobey would be too severe of a price. So most will outwardly go along with the program, even if they don't inwardly agree, they're

going to participate. There's that Scripture in Psalm, I think it's 66, where it says, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power even Your enemies submit themselves to You." So for whatever purpose would drive the hearts of men during this time, people are submitted to the Lord. We see this, by the way, sometimes even in our day. When we had the first Gulf War, the church was packed--for a few weeks. When we had the earthquake here in Whittier Narrows, that next Sunday, man was the place full! And then it quick shaking and they quit shaking. And off they went. At 911, for three or four weeks we were just out the door crazy busy. But it's only because people feel like they have to, and then, "Oh, we don't need the Lord anymore." Fear, but no love for God I guess. Obedience, but with kind of unspoken objection. Motions without emotion. There's going to be some of that certainly during the Millennial Kingdom, and yet at the end of that thousand years, and we are only given just a few verses about that thousand-year reign of Christ. In fact, we looked at them last week in verses 1 through 6. That was all that we have. We don't have any more except from the prophets who kind of fill in the gaps for us.

But at the end of that thousand years, Satan will then be allowed to come forward for a bit to tempt men to try to take the opposite side. And that will lead to the Great White Throne Judgment. It won't take long. And then the final judgment of God upon unbelieving man before, by the time you get to verse 15 you will never see a sinner again, so to speak. Everything from there forward is new and untainted by sin. The world's been corrupted by sin even though the Lord's going to restore it. During the Millennial Kingdom there will be temperate climates and the curse of the animals, so to speak, that survival of the fittest thing, will be gone. The world's been tainted by sin. The new world, the new heaven, the new earth that we meet in verse 1 of Chapter 21 next week and then all through Chapter 22, will not have been.

Tonight we continue with John through the end of the chapter regarding the time after the thousand years have passed. Again, all that you know about the thousand-year millennial reign of Christ you get from the prophets. Virtually nothing is found here. Virtually nothing. God wants, it's almost like a placeholder, "Here's the holder of the place." So verse 7 starts with the words, "Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together in battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea."

Like I said, even as we were given very few verses about Armageddon and the millennial reign of Christ, we are given just a very brief description of these post-millennial days. But the first thing we're told is at the end of that thousand years Satan will be let go for a little while. In fact, the words "little while" are found up in verse 3 towards the end there, "But after these things he must be released for a little while." Can you imagine how Satan must have felt in his fury pent up all of that time like a caged animal when all he's interested in is destroying you, the hearts of men, to defy the Lord. So he comes out knowing exactly what he wants to do. Men are still men. Sinners are still sinners. And so he immediately seeks to drag after himself, or draw after himself, men that are willing to go and head towards Jerusalem and towards the Messiah and towards God's people to destroy them, physically so. Man hasn't known war for a thousand years, but he's quickly going to learn it again. And from every corner of the planet, even after this thousand-year period, the earth where there will be millions of folks, will choose some of them to join Satan's final assault on the way Jesus has been running things. And like a prairie fire, just runs across the earth. And many people are caught up in it. It ought to give us a pretty clear picture of where much of our strife and war and hatred and fighting originate today. Satan, at his dirty best, seeks to destroy. And he loves to appeal to our sinful natures, and you read this, and I want to say to myself, "Lord, just leave him locked up." But Satan works for God in the sense that God uses him to His own

devices. He's not allowed to do what he wants. He's allowed to do as the Lord allows. It is all under the purveyance of God's will. And ultimately the main reason that God lets him go as always is that God wants man to have a choice to love Him back. And that has to come from a willing heart. His force of rule over a thousand years clearly demonstrated the benefits of living a life God's way. But you might have lived in a family that just loved the Lord and they had it pretty strict with you when you were growing up. And man you were just always under those rules. It blessed you, but you didn't like it. "I can't wait till I grow up and drive. I'm leaving home. I'm drinking. I'm yelling. I'm running with scissors. I'm going to do everything I want." And yet you've been blessed. But you think somehow there's a better life out there. There isn't. It's a lie of the enemy. So for a little while Satan is allowed to come and to challenge. Up until this time for a thousand years man's had no choice. His only choice has been to obey or die. That's pretty much it. He didn't have another choice. But now he gets a choice. And Satan comes along and the Lord allows him to push people into a place of choosing.

You might remember Satan one time there complaining to the Lord about Job and how he'd been hedged in and protected and blessed. No wonder he serves You with everything that he had. But if You stretch his hand and touch what he has, he'll curse you to your face. That was his belief. And the Lord allowed him to go and take from Job all that he had, but He said, "Don't lay your hand on Job." So God controls how far the enemy can go, but yet at this final act....We've mentioned a couple of times the words, "the Day of the Lord," right, and it covers a big portion of time in the Scriptures. This is the end of the Day of the Lord. End of Chapter 20, that's it. After this, the heavens are gone, the earth is gone, there's a new heaven and there's a new earth, and all of the unrighteous are judged, and all of the holy and righteous and believers are blessed. This is the dividing line. This is where the Day of the Lord absolutely runs out of space, if you will.

So he is loosed for a little while, and he is given the freedom by God to invite men away from the Lord's ways and rules that they've known all of their life. Now does it amaze you at all that after a thousand years of being blessed in Jesus' reign, no war, no crime, no really difficulty at all, that anyone would go, "Yeah, we'd like to go with Satan?" I mean you just kind of want to shake your head a little bit. I'm going to buy into the foolishness of this guy. But look, here's the lesson, and it's a valuable one. Even under ideal circumstances, and these are ideal circumstances, man's problem is not related to his environment. It's related to his heart. Don't think for a minute that environment somehow is going to make much of a difference. It can, and it certainly can keep you and shelter you sometimes from temptation, but that's not the way people get saved. It's a work of God's Spirit in their hearts regardless of what surrounds them, or the circumstances in which they find themselves. And only God can change the heart. Man is willing to admit that man has problems. There isn't anyone dealing with man's sociological nature that doesn't admit to that. Psychologists call it behavioral disorders. Sociologists, for the longest time, were calling it a social lag, that people just lagged behind. Minorities oftentimes call it racism. Communists in China call it class warfare. God just calls it sin. It's what it is. It's the heart of man that's wicked and he can't make it right. Class struggle, it is not. It is sin. And God says a sinful nature is only cured by a new birth. Sin leaves me dead to God, separated from God; born again I have faith in Christ, I'm alive and I have hope. My heart is being changed.

When you hear people say, "Well, we're thinking of moving out of the big city to the rural area so we can get away from it all and have a better chance of walking with the Lord." Well.....that would be great if **you** didn't have to go. But when **you** show up, you're the problem. It comes with **you**. Sin is built in. "I'm just going to escape to the desert." Yeah, but **you'll** be there. So it won't be any good. Avoiding temptation is helpful certainly, but you can't escape **you**, and the environment's not the primary key. You have to be born again.

Joseph's a great example in the Bible of someone that had the most dysfunctional of families. We worry about, we want to make a good home for the kids. Well this guy had no home to speak of as far as people supporting him. His brothers sold him into slavery. He lived in the worst possible environment with Egypt. He was a slave in a heathen home with a guy that had a lot of power and a lot of might as far as the heathen gods. He was falsely accused, falsely imprisoned, left to die, friends forsaken him, friends forgotten him. Everyone left him but the Lord. And through it all Joseph loved God. And there's not a chink in his armor. He's one of the guys I love in the Bible to hate. Peter, I love, because he's an idiot, and I can relate to him. But not Joseph. Joseph just shines. Him and Daniel don't mess up at all. Not two of my best Bible friends. But he lived this exemplary life because he loved the Lord. We have some kids in our high school and junior high that come from some pretty rough backgrounds, but they're doing so well with the Lord. And despite their environment, they're doing well. And they're going to do well because God can change the heart.

So here's a picture of a thousand years of Jesus ruling, no elections, no Republicans, no Democrats, Jesus ruling, and people immediately when they get a chance to go, "You want to rebel?" "Oh yeah. Count me in. We're going to **Occupy Jerusalem**." Really? Is that what you're going to do? (laughter) Amazing. So the depravity of the heart of man comes out as countless many flee from Him to follow Satan for a little while.

Now notice the words here, "Gog" and "Magog." Gog first appears in our Bible as a descendant of Joel, but he was of the tribe of Reuben. And later there's a fella named Gog who is seen in Ezekiel Chapter 38 and 39 as being a partner to those who lead a rebellion against God and His people, and actually seek to invade Israel from the north. During the first half of the tribulation, which would have from this point been a thousand years earlier, which was all designed to open the road for this European Antichrist, this leader to rise to power, so whatever forces might have been in the way, the Lord actually drags Gog down from the north to Israel so He might destroy them. Magog is first introduced to us as a son of Japheth. So that means he would have been a grandson of Noah there in Genesis 10, and he's also the other compatriot in that Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophecy who joins with Gog in this attack from the north. So, like the name Babylon when it's used metaphorically or symbolically, Gog and Magog become two other names that speak of people who willfully choose to stand in opposition to Almighty God. They've done it in the past, they're here to do it now in a real way. And here they come with an innumerable amount of folks with them. Notice that we read, "to gather them together in battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea." More than a few people join this rebellion. Amazing, isn't it?

In Ezekiel, those wicked nations that were drawn by the Lord, it says "with a hook in their mouth to battle," are wiped out by what is probably a nuclear confrontation. We can't be sure, but we are told by Ezekiel that the dead bodies are not picked up, they are just marked and people are encouraged to stay away from them for seven months. But here, the name is symbolic. It's attached to this final world rebellion of the millennium dwellers who have been deceived by the enemy into thinking that he has a better plan for their lives than God does, who has put on display His plan for a thousand years. And notice again it is Satan behind the scenes stirring it up. We say sometimes to people, "It's like his Waterloo." Waterloo is one of those symbolic names from a real battle that we use when something is doomed to fall. And they're repeating it again. "There's your old Waterloo." So Gog and Magog kind of come across like that as well.

Well then we read in verse 9, as Satan is left to gather his minions that, "They went up on the breadth of the earth," so the picture is of a lot of people, "and surrounded the camp of the saints and of the

beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." The breadth of the earth speaks about many participants on the assault of Jerusalem which is where we know God's throne is, where the saints will serve with Him. Notice that Satan is still seeking the throne. That so many would join him I think shows the complex nature of evil that binds the heart because it is just beyond imagination that someone would go, "Yeah, I think we'll go fight Jesus, and all that He has done these last thousand years. Yeah, we're going to vote against Him." So they gather, they attack, we're going to take over, this is it, last move before the final destruction. And this time the judgment for him comes very swiftly, without any discussion as the Father in heaven sends fire down consuming them all. The Lord's done this a few times right? He sent fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah when that was as far as it was going to go. You might remember in 2 Kings, I think it's Chapter 1 where they came to arrest Elijah and Elijah wasn't willing to go, and the fire came down from heaven and took out these guys, and then the king says, "Well, you guys go." And they got wiped out as well. And the third group, they didn't demand anything, they went, "If you don't mind, we don't want to force you. It's up to you really. We just want to talk."

Gog, there on the mountains of Israel in Ezekiel 38, Magog in Chapter 39 as well. All of these were folks who gathered together against the Lord, and the Father took a step to destroy. So in an instant those who had joined the rebellion are going to recognize the error of the choice they made. And Satan is going to be **grabbed?** their leader, and they're going to be hanging out to dry, "Oh no. Oh no." And I thought about that. The minute you die, you'll find out if you're right or wrong. The minute you die. Right? You won't get like five minutes to go, "Oh, I wonder....nope. Bad move on my part." Or I'm going to be right with God. If you've refused Jesus, you're going to realize the error of your ways. You are no match for God. His word's going to stand. And you certainly like to convince people in the world of that today, wouldn't you.

So when we read in verse 10 that the devil is taken, notice here that the deceiver is cast into the lake of fire, the word is **Gehenna**, where he will spend all eternity, a place that according to Matthew 25, verse 41, Jesus created not for man, but for the devil and his angels. This place was created to judge the angels who rebelled against God long before you, man, were created. And yet, it is unfortunately a place that many will up because they've decided that he is wiser than the Lord. And if you're not in the Book of Life, verse 15 at the end of this chapter will say, then that's where you'll end up, the lake of fire. You only have two options. You have only two places that you will end up. But I want you to notice here in verse 10 that the Lord goes out of His way to say the Antichrist, the beast, and the false prophet were thrown in here a thousand years earlier, and they're still there right? Satan now comes after the thousand-year reign of Christ, they went in before the reign. Satan now goes in after and there they still are, still being tormented night and day and there is no end in sight to that horror that they are facing. That's a horrible fate, isn't it? I mean I can't even begin to wrap my mind around a place that God has created that you can suffer for eternity. Not for awhile, not for a week, not for a month, not for a year, forever! Forever. And it is so horrible that God was willing to send His Son to keep you from it. It is so horrible that Jesus spoke more about hell than He did about heaven by far because He doesn't want you to go here. It is so horrible that He paints these dramatic pictures for us in the Scriptures to try to warn us to stay away or to keep out and to turn away. Better that you go into glory lame and maimed, without an arm, without a leg, than your whole body gets cast into hell. Just, whatever it takes, don't go there. Don't go there. Keep from there. And the Bible clearly sets forth this doctrine of a conscious and eternal place of torment for unrepentant man. Now whether you can defend it on philosophical grounds or not is really not the issue. The business for you is to believe what God has said. And you can

leave the clear light of eternity, explain what we don't understand, how God in His infinite wisdom has decided punishment is better than annihilation, or just long-term eternal damnation is far better than something that you might have come up with. That's what the Bible tells us. And so it is a ludicrous kind of conceit that would bring anyone to write a book or to take a position that there's no hell coming from your foolish little mind to try to dogmatize God's word. You cannot do it. God is going to have His last word, trust me. He's going to have it just the way He wants no matter how smart you think you are.

So, I read these verses with fear and trembling. And having seen the disposition of the opposition and of their leader, John now turns to the last event on the calendar before everything from verse 1 of Chapter 21 is glorious. In fact, we get more information about the new heaven and the new earth than we get about this or the judgment or the thousand-year reign, or the battle of Armageddon. There's just as many questions mind you, but we get more information.

So John turns to the last thing on the calendar before the earth is finished, and that is the resurrection of the unbelieving dead and they're being brought before God's throne in judgment, final judgment, and they all end up where the devil does, in the lake of fire, in Gehenna. It is called the Second Death. They died once physically, they would now die for all of eternity.

Verse 11 says this, "Then," John said, "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." Now we are introduced here to the great white throne judgment of God. That's what it's called, this final judgment. The word "throne" is used sometimes, I think 38 times in the book of Revelation, but this one is absolutely unique because this throne is not upon the earth, and it is not in heaven. Not in heaven because the unbelievers will never end up there. Not upon the earth because the earth is about to be destroyed. So I don't know where the Lord sets up, but it isn't in heaven and it isn't in earth, and the unbelievers will be sent forward now to stand before the Lord.

In Daniel Chapter 7 (verses 9-10) Daniel is given by the Lord a night vision of the things that are coming. And he certainly doesn't fully understand them. But this is what he wrote, "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."

Well there the Father judges on behalf of His Son to terminate the reign of the Antichrist and give the kingdom to His Son. But here in Revelation Chapter 20, the Judge is Jesus. You might remember the Lord saying in John Chapter 5 to His people, "For the Father judges no one, but He's given all of that judgment to the Son that all should honor the Son like they honor the Father. And if you don't honor the Son, then you don't honor the Father who sent Him." The very words, I think, that describe this throne ought to strike terror in most people's hearts. It is great in the sense that it is infinite over finite, it is white with holiness and purity, it is a throne of unlimited power, and everyone who isn't saved whose name is not in the Book of Life will show up here. It's going to be quite a day. And we read that as Jesus sits down upon this throne that the earth and heaven flee from His place until there's no place found for them. This is the end of heaven and earth as you know it. Everything you know and see, you understand, will be gone. Everything that has been touched by sin, rebellion, has seen the consequences of man's failure, is not absolutely destroyed. The very next chapter, verse 1 will say, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

And there was no more sea," which is a bummer, but we'll get to that next week. It's gotta be good, right?

It is from this throne and after this judgment Jesus will usher in the new heaven and new earth. Now you remember back in Matthew Chapter 24 that Jesus had said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means." Well, here's the fulfillment. Here's the event, and like I said, this marks the end of the Day of the Lord in Bible prophecy. What will happen to the old earth? Well, we know. Peter wrote in 2 Peter Chapter 3, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; and both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you."

Isaiah, 700 BC, wrote, "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree." It will be the end. It'll be burned up when these souls of the dead are taken out of the graven, taken out of the sea, taken out of wherever they died. But the Lord gathers them together. And by the way, this is the resurrection of the unjust. They're all going to be given eternal bodies that can survive in and live in that eternal condemnation. You don't want to come here. Great white throne judgment invitation--no thank you. I want to go to be with the Lord. I don't want to find myself ever at this place.

So, what is going to happen when these souls are gathered before the Lord? The heavens and the earth are going to burn up, to disintegrate, if you will. In fact, it would seem that that Scripture that we read about there in Colossians, that by Him all things consist, or are held together, that Jesus will probably just let go. He holds together all that is matter, all that we understand, and yet at this time, this is it. And so I suspect that He's just going to let go and the judgment of God is going to fall.

We have seen the first resurrection. Now we have the second one, and the body and soul of the unbeliever is going to be delivered up before the Lord. Remember, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid him who can destroy your body, but then can do nothing more. Rather, fear Him who can throw body and soul into Gehenna." So that's unfortunately what we find here at the end of Chapter 20 is the final judgment of those who have refused to walk with the Lord. You remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus, there where we developed our understanding of where the wicked dead are kept, in Hades, in the grave, if you will, in the center of the earth, right? There's a place where the unbelieving dead are kept. Some die in the ocean and the bodies come out of the ocean, and the dead that are in the sea, they give up the dead that are in them, but their souls go to a Hades, to a holding cell, but their bodies are resurrected. They're going to be given new dwelling places, if you will, that will last for all of eternity. So the believers at the rapture got their new bodies. The Old Testament and tribulation saints at Jesus' second coming received their bodies. And now at the end of the thousand years, the lost will stand before God and placed into hell with a body that will endure the suffering for all of eternity. Pretty frightening. But man, you have to fight hard to get here.

So then we read this in verse 12. And by the way, the white throne judgment is really a place of sentencing. It's a penalty phase for all those already found guilty. What is that Scripture there in Hebrews, where it says, "It's appointed unto man once to die, then the judgment." It's 9:27 right? (Right!) Appointed unto man once to die, then the judgment. So, they've died, now they're coming to final judgment.

Verse 12, "And I saw," John said, "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. 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. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Now notice in verse 12, "the dead, small and great." Whatever position you might have held while you were alive, will have little impact on what happens here. "Do you know who I am?" It doesn't matter. "Do you know what I did?" Exactly, I know everything you did. And that's why you find yourself here. So the well-known and unknown are all known by God, and they're each going to appear, and the cross stands as the great equalizer among people of faith. You can be wealthy or poor or favored or not, but we're all welcome at the cross right? It equalizes us. We all need Christ. It's the great equalizer for those of us who believe the Lord. This throne is the great equalizer for the lost. Everyone answers for their life. And no one is going to make it. And notice there in verse 12 that they will stand before God. I just can't imagine. To look into Jesus' face and into His eyes and into that face that was spat upon and mocked and from which His beard had been so roughly torn from His face because He came to die for us. How do you think these folks are going to feel? How fearful are they going to be when they stand there? The body comes from the grave, the soul comes from Hades, from the holding cell, and there they stand before Jesus who is able to cast both body and soul into eternal damnation. Pretty heavy right?

But we are told that the books will be opened. These are the judgment books, not the Book of Life. No one's found there. No one makes it away from this. This isn't a place of judgment, this is a place of penalty. The judgment's already been made. They've been appointed unto.....man once to die, then the judgment. They've been judged already. But now the final place of judgment. And notice that no one is going to make it when their accomplishments are listed out. Their works will fail them. Their holiness will come short. Their righteousness is not sufficient. And if you look at verse 14 and verse 15 the results will be the same for everyone when it comes to performance. So the determining factor here is as it has ever been. It isn't your works that save you. It's Christ who saves you. And if you want to go and take a chance on standing before God with your works, you're not going to fare any better than these folks. Now look, some did better than others. Some were a little kinder, some were less angry, some were more benevolent, some were less self-serving. All of them failed. Some were nice people, some were rotten folks. Some spent their life in prison, other people spent their life in the Rotary. They didn't make it. They didn't make it. If you get here you didn't make it. You didn't make it because you came on your own. It's Christ-rejecting life that shows up here. And the wages of sin is death. And you die.

Imagine that the Lord keeps track of every action of your life. He does. He knows your reasons, your thoughts, your intents, your motives, every whispered word. He's heard. He knows. He's well aware of you. I think it's Ecclesiastes 12 (verse 14) where it says of the judgment of God, "God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil." God knows. So these folks



have no way out. "Oh, no, I've been pretty good!" And then the Lord can just run the tape. "Play the tape!" No, you don't want that. All standing before God when the books are opened. Let's see what you did to accomplish heaven and you fell short. You didn't make it. You recall the time the Lord took Ezekiel **maybe** into the minds of the priests. You can read it for yourself. It's in Ezekiel Chapter 8, but he saw these pornographic pictures on the walls, and he thought he was in the temple, and he said to the Lord, "Where are we?" And the Lord said, "We are in the minds of the priests serving in the temple." And Ezekiel couldn't believe what he was seeing. The Lord was showing the very thoughts and intents of the heart of those who were meeting with the people to fulfill the sacrifices. When Romans 3:23 says, "We've sinned and all fallen short of the glory of God," their works will prove insufficient and they will be judged. And the judgment will be fair. We know from Matthew Chapter 11 and from Luke 12 that you will only be held accountable for what you know. He who is worthy of many stripes, but didn't know it, will get few. He who was well aware of what the Lord wanted, will get many. So there will be levels of judgment in hell. There'll be, I don't know if you can call it compartments, but there'll be places of greater and lesser suffering, but indeed you'll be cut off from God. But God is fair.

I think in Luke it says, "But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with a few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; **and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**" (the highlighted portion is the correct words of the verse.) So God will be fair. If you didn't know more, then you'll only be held accountable for what you did know. So it will be a fair place, degrees of punishment depending on levels of knowledge. How that works, I don't know. I just read it and believe it.

So it comes down to this, you can have a fair trial then, or you can receive a full pardon now. Right? You can get off the hook, **scott-free**, cleansed, walking papers, white as snow. By going to Jesus and confessing your sins and asking Him to forgive you, and then one day you'll stand before God, and Jesus will stand up next to you with His arm around you. "He's mine. He's mine." Or you can wait to have that fair trial. And you can make a case for yourself. "Well, I tried real hard." Well, the Lord knows. The Lord knows. To receive your pardon, though, you're going to have to confess your sins and plead for mercy at the cross and ask Jesus by faith to fill your heart, and live your life for Him. You don't want to end up here.

But notice from verse 14, once you die, it's too late. Death and hell give up the dead. Once you die there are no reverses. There's no stay of execution. The judgment here is sure and it's lethal. An eternity of torment with the devil and his angels awaits you. You'll get to meet the Antichrist. You don't want to meet the Antichrist.

So the most important issue becomes simply this, is your name in the Book of Life? That's really what you want to know. Is Jesus dwelling in my heart? Am I born again? By the time you get to the end of Chapter 21, there's a verse that talks about those written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It's Books of Life, Lamb's Book of Life, but it contains everyone's name who would give Jesus their life. According to Chapter 17 it was written by the Lord before the foundations of the world. The Lord knew everyone, certainly, that would come, knew those who wouldn't come. When He wrote to the Sardis church, Jesus in promising the saints in the church at Sardis, He said, "If you overcome, you will be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out your name from the Book of Life. But I will confess your name before My Father and before His angels." So it could be that the Lord at one point wrote everyone's name in the Book of Life, because that's His intention. He would that all men would be saved, and aside from these few that you read here towards the end that take the mark of the beast, whom the Lord said were never written in there, it could be that everyone's name was there because that's God's heart. And like

Sardis, if you refuse the Lord then He takes your name out. But it's you who have decided not to come. You've been invited to the wedding feast. You've been invited. You've been given an invitation. Whosoever will, let him come. And you go, "No thank you. I'll go on it on my own." "Alright, we'll just take your name off the roll." You don't want that. "I could have been in." And maybe that's the horror of hell. "I could have been in. I chose not to come. I can see where my name was written, and where it's been removed."

"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." This is what David wrote in his Psalm 69, which is a prophetic word of Jesus' death and the world's rejection of Him. But it was written about 1000 BC. This is what David wrote. Psalm 69 (verses 20-28): "Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them, and their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; and make their loins shake continually. Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate; let no one live in their tents. For they persecute the ones You have struck, and talk of the grief of those You have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." 1000 BC. So it is certainly a probable position to take that the Lord put your name in the Book of Life. Now if you come to Him, He'll leave it there. If you won't, He'll have to blot it out. Not exactly what God intends, but notice here, everyone who's not found written in the Book of Life will have to be judged out of the books according to their works, and that won't work. That won't work. Here in verse 15 we find the bad news that they're all cast into the lake of fire where they are now joined to their god, and the one that they have been following.

To know that your name is in the Book of Life is pretty exciting isn't it? Yet what a sobering conclusion to the chapter, to this book, to the history of man on the planet. No one can say God's hiding the truth from me. He's even told you how it all ends up. The earth flees from His face, His anger. The heavens can't come near. There's no place found for them. And when Gehenna is filled, and the righteous stand with God, a new heaven and a new earth come. Look, God doesn't send people to hell. He blocks their way. He blocks their way. For God loved the world enough to send His Son so that if you believe in Him you don't perish. You have everlasting life. God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. If you believe in Him you're not condemned. If you don't believe in Him, you're already condemned, because you don't believe in Him. Which resurrection will you be experiencing? That's the issue I guess. Hopefully you're ready to go if the Lord calls. Your name is in the book. "Hi, reservation for one, Abeelen." And they'll even pronounce it right. It won't be **Abileen**. (laughter)

Next week we'll try to look at Chapter 21. We've called that chapter "New Housing."

Tonight, if you don't know the Lord, would you come and talk to a pastor after we dismiss? They'll be up front, several of the guys. They aren't always all here because they're teaching the kids, or wherever they're at, but grab a guy and say, "Look, I need to be sure that my name is written in the Book of Life." And you can know that if you have Jesus, you have life. John 3:36, "He who has the Son has life." If you have the Son, you have life. "Well, I don't feel like I have life." It doesn't matter. "Do you think I should feel more like it, have life?" I don't know. My feelings change. If I have a good breakfast, I feel pretty good. If I don't eat, I don't feel good. If I have to work too hard physically, I feel lousy. If my team wins, I feel great. If they lose, I'm not so happy. I hope to see you all Sunday night at church by the way, you

Super Bowl (laughter). I'll keep it civil. So come and talk to a pastor. We'd love to talk to you about your relationship with the Lord. It's absolutely an eternal issue. Don't mess it up. God would have you have life.

**End of message**