



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 20:7-15

"The Prelude to the Eternal State"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] ...be our teacher, especially and individually and may we be responsive to his ministry. And we commit this particular passage to Thee that we will be reading and studying and pray that our hearts may receive a blessing from it for Christ's sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, now the subject for tonight is [laughter] the "Prelude to the Eternal State" and we're going to look at Revelation Chapter 20 verses 11 through 15 primarily, because this is the passage in which John the Apostle describes the vision of the great and final judgment. But, I think that for the benefit of the context it would be good for us to begin with verse 7, and read through verse 15. So take your new testaments and turn to Revelation chapter 20 verses 7 through 15.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,

where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire this is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

[Message] Now, beginning here at verse 7 in Revelation chapter 20 we have the last phase of the history of the believer's personal foe or the last phase of the history of Satan. Now, some of you, of course, have read Goethe, and you may remember that Goethe put in the mouth of Mephistopheles the statement: "I am the spirit of Negation," and this is accepted by many people as a workable definition of the devil, he is simply the spirit of Negation, he is regarded by some as a mere abstract principal of evil, but not a person. In fact, to someone so quaintly put it, they spell the devil without "D" and they put an extra "O" in God so that evil and good represent the two forces in the universe rather than God and Satan.

Someone wrote a little verse one time and it went something like this: "The devil was fairly voted out and of course the devil's gone, but simple people would like to know who carries his business on." For we are quite sure that there is a force in the universe which is more than just an abstract principal of evil and if you know anything about the attacks of Satan you know that he is a person.

Well, now here in verse 7 we read: "And when the thousand years are expired;" now, he has just talked about the thousand year reign of the saints with the Lord Jesus

upon the earth, and you remember that we studied the Kingdom last time. Now, here we read and when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, this is, if we're looking for a second coming of Satan; this is, the second coming of Satan.

And the necessity of the coming of Satan to the earth is bound up in the statement made in verse 3, and I want you to turn back to verse 3 because there is one word in this verse that is extremely important for us to understand; and I want the doctor to be sure and see this too. So Revelation chapter 20 and verse 3: "And cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled and after that..."

Now, I want you to notice this little word "must" he does not say, and after that he shall be loosed a little season, he does not say that Satan who has been bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years simply shall come out of the pit. But, he says that he must be loosed for a little season. Now, this "must" I think, is extremely important because it shows us that the release of Satan is a necessary cog in the plan and program of God. Now, why is it necessary for Satan who has been in the bottomless pit for a thousand years to be released? What would we say, if we were asked that question, why must Satan be released? Well, I think that we could say this without any question we could say that by being released and then going out to try to deceive the nations again, as he shall do, according to this prophecy we have demonstrated here the incorrigibility of Satan. After this he must be loosed for a little season. But, not only do we have a demonstration of Satan's incorrigibility, in that after one thousand years of confinement when he is released he goes back to deceive the nations so that they may rebel against God. But we also have demonstrated human depravity, also, because even though there has been the universal reign of the Lord Jesus through the saints upon the earth, nevertheless, Satan is able to go out and again deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, so if Satan's incorrigibility is demonstrated by the release of Satan

after thousand years of confinement so is human depravity demonstrated. The sin nature is still present in the human race, even though the Lord Jesus has been personally present.

I know that some people have a lot of difficulty with this; and they wonder how is it possible for man, after having been ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ for one thousand years to be deceived by Satan again. But, if you read the Bible you will understand why, not only from the stand point from what the Bible has to say about human nature. In fact, I've been reading in the last week, when I can get some time between preaching engagements, every night I was preaching. But during the day and then late at night I've been reading Herbert Butterfield's *Christianity in History* a very interesting book written by a Cambridge professor about fifteen years ago in which he has traced out the relationship of Christianity to history. And the thing that he has especially stressed throughout has been the fact of, the evil of human nature, and if you study human nature or you study history, this is the conclusion to which you come. But, here we certainly see it.

Now, when you turn to the Bible you will especially see it, for example, just to take one or two illustrations when Israel was coming out of the land of Egypt, remember, Satan would not let them go, Pharaoh would not let them go. So Moses performed ten miracles of judgment upon Israel; at times Satan would say, alright, you can go, but don't go too far, alright you can go, but don't leave the country. But, again, he would take back his permission he would not let them go. Finally, when God brought the judgment of the death of the first born on the night of the Passover, remember, there was a great cry throughout Egypt and Israel left. But, no sooner where they out and on their way toward the Red Sea, till Pharaoh and his host even though God has brought upon them, through Moses, ten miraculous supernatural judgments from God; they are after Israel. And so they mount their horses and chariots and go after them, and furthermore, they are willing to go after them, even though the pillar of cloud at night; remember, protected Israel from them. And so you see the total depravity of human nature.

Now, I'll give you another illustration when, Korah and, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against the Lord; remember, trying to intrude into the priestly office. God judged Israel and two hundred and fifty people were swallowed up in this judgment that come in the midst of Israel, and immediately we read the children of Israel began to murmur against the Lord. So right in the presence of a miraculous judgment from God human nature is so depraved that they will actually fight against God. So I'm not surprised that Satan after the rule and reign of the Lord Jesus upon the earth, when he is released he is able to go out and find some spirits whom he can deceive again.

"And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." By the way, the text does not say how he deceive them and we are left to guessing, if you want to try to guess, you might say: Well, perhaps he could deceive them by suggesting some anti-Semitism to them, this might be a likely approach, you know, because during the Kingdom, Israel has become the head of the nations again as the Old Testament says and so it's just possible that he might use this particular approach to stir up some of the nations.

Now, of course, we cannot say that that is the method that he will use, his methods are so devious and so wonderful in one sense that is, beyond our understanding that I'm quite sure it will be extremely clever and very deceptive and perhaps that's as far as we ought to go.

"He shall deceive the nations that John uses these terms, Gog and Magog which come from Ezekiel chapter 38; that he is likening Satan to the great ruler Gog, and the nations are likened also to Magog, and that rebellion against the Lord which took place previously) to gather them together to battle the number of whom is as the sand of the sea (think of it, it's not just a few people he is able to deceive, but a great multitude of people) and so they go up on the breadth of the earth and compass the camp of the saints about and the beloved city which of course is Jerusalem and fire came down from

God out of heaven and devoured them, and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are."

This is the communion of Satan and his communion is with the beast and the false prophet forever and ever.

Have you ever wondered why Satan apparently does not have the judgment that the beast and the false prophet do if anything his judgment is not quite as severe, because he was only confined for one thousand years, but they have already been in the lake of fire for one thousand years, the beast and the false prophet. I'm sure, maybe this has never crossed your mind; perhaps you've never thought about revelation and wondered why Satan was confined and then cast into the lake of fire; whereas, the beast and the false prophet have been already for one thousand years in the lake of fire, at this time. Perhaps, it's because that the beast and the false prophet did have the opportunity of hearing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of their very character being human beings and having the gospel preached to them; it is perhaps possible that their responsibility is considered to be just a little bit more than Satan. Now, we are perhaps just getting out into the realm of conjecture, but nevertheless, that is true, he is in the lake of fire one thousand years less than they. So this is his communion, that's a wonderful communion the communion of the beast and the false prophet; and furthermore, we read: "And the devil shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."

So here we have a verse that is extremely important for annihilationist and also for those who believe in a second chance. For the annihilationist, of course, it says where the beast and the false prophet are. Now, they have been in the lake of fire for one thousand years and they are still there, and apparently, they are still there in their personality, and in the integrity of it. So the lake of fire does not consume so that a person does not exist anymore. Everybody has eternal existence. And the beast and the false prophet after one thousand years are still in the lake of fire; they have not been

consumed. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of annihilation, it does not say, that when we are lost having refused Jesus Christ as Savior we are annihilated. Now, you know of some of the sects tell us that the Bible teaches annihilation, this is one of the many, many passages that refutes that particular doctrine. And furthermore, the Bible also teaches everlasting punishment. And you'll notice here it says that he shall be tormented with them day and night forever and ever; there is no second chance. Our chance to receive the Lord Jesus Christ is while we are here now; if we refuse the opportunity that we have now, there is no other opportunity for us. So the three are tormented day and night forever and ever.

By the way, has it ever impressed you as being significant, that the place of final destiny for those who refuse Jesus Christ as Savior is put, in the Bible, as a lake? What is characteristic of a lake? Well, a lake is a body of water which has no outlet, it is characterized by repression and confinement, and that is why a lake of fire is a lake, that is, it suggest by it's very character that there is no outlet, no second chance. Well, Satan finds his eternal destiny here if you want to believe in the eternal security of Satan this is it, he is eternally secure in the lake of fire. Someone once posed a question to Satan, and I would like to read it to you it was this: "Lucifer, thou son of morning, was it worth it, was it worth the rebellion against God to spend eternity in the lake of fire? You were the most beautiful angelic being in all creation you were the anointed cherub that covered, but now, you will burn forever. You said, 'I will be like the Most High' and I will take the Kingdom to myself. Now, your Kingdom is the lake of fire and your subjects scream and writhe in the flame forever." That's a good question to think about; isn't it, Lucifer, or for anyone else who refuses the Lord Jesus as Savior.

Well, lets look now at the great white throne of judgment: and I saw a great white throne and him that sat upon it, now, this is not a very pleasant subject. Most of you in this audience I know well enough so I can talk to you about an unpleasant subject. We don't like to talk about unpleasant subjects, naturally. Just this past, I have heard of a

young man who has become ill, and it has been discovered that he has cancer. Now, we don't like to talk about this because this is a tragedy. Last week in California, I saw a young man graduate of the theological seminary in which I teach, and he too has cancer, he's being treated; according to the doctors its hopeless. We don't like to talk about it. We don't like to talk about crime; we don't like to talk about war. But, they're some things we must talk about, and eternal judgment is one of the things. And this great white throne judgment, though it is something we don't like to talk about we must talk about it. Paul said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you Ephesian elders the whole counsel of God." And the minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ must declare the whole counsel of the word of God he can not be happy while preaching certain doctrines that are pleasing to men. He must teach the whole of the word of God as the Holy Spirit of God teaches him.

A few years ago in a Midwestern University a poll was taken of a number of ministers in the area of that university, one poll was taken of one hundred selective ministers and the question was: Do you believe in eternal judgment? And hardly fifty percent of the men believed in eternal judgment, ministers. Then a second poll was taken of five hundred protestant ministers, and only thirty-four percent of the five hundred protestant members of minister believed in eternal judgment. Now, it's not very popular to believe in eternal judgment, I can assure you when you start talking about being in the lake of fire forever and ever nice people don't talk about that; and people will lift their eyebrows and immediately think that you're very strange to talk about the lake of fire: "Have you heard about so and so goes around talking about eternal judgment all the time?" You, know. It's not popular, obviously it's not popular, we don't like to face the facts, none of us like to face the facts, and we don't like to face the facts of the word of God, but nevertheless, it is in the word of God. Jerome said, many years ago, and I'd like to read this: "If an offense comes out of a truth, better it is that the offense come, than that the truth be concealed." It is the truth that we must be concerned with.

Did you know that the ideal of hell can be traced to the same origin that the ideal of heaven may be traced to. For you see, the authority for heaven is our Lord Jesus Christ. And the authority, the authority for hell is also our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know that the person who spoke more about hell in the New Testament than anyone else was the Lord Jesus himself? He is responsible for the doctrine of eternal judgment, the Lord himself. And you can see this in his sermons too. In the early sermons, the "Sermon on the Mount", it is full of blessing; nevertheless, within that sermon you will find references to eternal judgment. But, then near the end of his ministry with all of the woes pronounced upon the Pharisees you can see this strain of judgment becoming more and more prominent in the teaching of the Lord himself.

In this particular passage here verses 11 through 15 we have the final judgment, and what a tremendous amount of truth is found in only five short verses, let me try to sum it up tonight. First of all, lets look at the subject of this judgment, in verse 12 we read: "And I saw the dead." I saw the dead. Now, when you look back at verse 5; well, lets read verse 4:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead..."

[Message] Now, you see they were dead too, but they came to life. Now, that word "lived" and he will call it in a moment here, this is the first resurrection, that word "lived" has to do with the fact that their bodies were resurrected and they lived. That is their bodies rejoined their spirits so that this was the first resurrection. Now, the resurrection, the word used here anastasis in the Greek text, is used about I think, about

twenty times in the New Testament. In every case, but one, it refers to the bodily resurrection and that, of course, is what it means here. When he says, "The rest of the dead lived not." He means they did not participate in that first resurrection. But, he says they lived when the thousand years were finished:

"The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priest of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years."

[Message] So when we read in verse 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The dead are those who did not live in the first resurrection so the dead here are the unbelieving dead. These are physically and spiritually dead, but now, they stand before the great white throne and here they receive their resurrection bodies, for remember, the Bible speaks of a resurrection of the just, and a resurrection of the unjust. The resurrection of the just receive bodies that are like the Lord's own glorious bodies; the resurrection of those who are lost is a resurrection of a body which is fitted for eternal judgment. It is not described in the New Testament, as a matter of fact, our resurrection body is only described in general terms, it's not like things on the earth; primarily is the point of Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and Philippians chapter 3 and other places where illusions are made to our resurrection body. It is said to be like the Lord's own glorious body and that is about as far as we can go. The resurrection of the dead and the body they receive that is not described in the Bible all we know is that it is a resurrection. And so they do receive a body, which is fit for eternal judgment.

So when we read: "I saw the dead small and great stand before God." These are those who rejected the testimony of God through our Lord Jesus Christ there are not

believers who stand at the great white throne judgment, only unbelievers are at the great white throne judgment.

Now, in the light of this I want to read something to you, I'm not going to make fun of this man who is saying this, other than just to show you how in our thinking we have frequently perverted the teaching of the word of God. This was a Masonic preacher; and I'm not saying anything about the masons one way or other by repeating this; but I pulled this out of a Masonic magazine one day when I was in a doctors office, waiting on one of these doctors; you know, to work on me. He happened to have one of these magazines and so I saw this and later I knew him well enough to ask him if I might take it. And so this is what we read in this sermon: "We have been given these bodies with the divine hope that we may make them fitting temples wherein God may dwell, but so often we defile the flesh, we make our bodies and our lives cesspools of iniquity, where even the devil is loathed to live, often we swear and blaspheme the name of almighty God and instead of being called living temples we are referred to as legion because we have so many devils. (Now, of course, you can see he's just incidently coming close to the Scripture, his not on the point at all. But, now, listen to this) the holy Bible has given us as a rule and guide, to faith and to life, and he is surely right there, within it's comforts we find a set of rules and principals which if followed will make our lives pure and spotless."

Now, he is awkwardly wrong there because of course we are made pure and spotless only through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who redeems us, in his blood. We will enjoy an honorable life and when our weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey and from our nerveless grasp shall drop forever the working tools of life and our bodies have been laid beneath the solid clouds of the valley, we can look forward if we have been found faithful to a triumphant entrance before the great white throne. There, to stand before him who sitteth as the Judge supreme and hear from him the welcome words: "Well done good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy

Lord. Yes, into the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There will be no triumphal appearance before the great white throne judgment as far as this text is concerned the man who appears before the great white throne judgment is one who has died spiritually, and he is cast into the lake of fire.

So the first thing I want you to notice is verse 12: "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God." The second thing we want to ask ourselves is what is the time of this judgment? Well, now the time of this judgment is very plain. Now, if we look back at verse five we read: "But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years were finished." And then we read in verse 11: "And I saw a great white throne and him that sat upon it; and I saw the dead." So it is obvious that this particular judgment takes place after the thousand-year reign of our Lord upon the earth; it is after the Kingdom.

In other words, on our chart here the great white throne judgment takes place at the conclusion of the thousand-year reign of the Lord Jesus. "But before the coming of the new heavens and the new earth which are described in the last two chapters of revelation. So the time of the great white throne judgment is at the conclusion of the age of the Kingdom. Where will this judgment take place? Well, verse 11 says: "And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it and from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

Apparently, John sees this great white throne set up in space somewhere; in other words, we do not know specifically where the great white throne judgment will take place. The very fact that it is called the great white throne suggests that this is an infinite judgment because it is of the great white throne, it is a judgment with respect to holiness and justice, because it is the great white throne; and it is absolutely just because it is a throne and the God of heaven sits upon it. That is as much as we can say; John does not name the place, we assume that this takes place in the presence of the eternal God.

Why the great white throne judgment? Have you ever wondered about that; why is there need for a final judgment? Well, first of all there's the need for judgment because of the vindication of the holiness of God. God is absolutely holy and just, and it is necessary, he has deemed it so that men see that he is holy, and righteous, and just, and I think that perhaps the greatest reason for the great white throne judgment is that the holiness of God might be vindicated.

Joseph Cook, was an outstanding Bible teacher, a few generations back and he use to like to stress in his ministry the necessity of God's holiness being vindicated. And he would point to passages like: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity." And one of the reasons that the whole program of God has been in operation is that men might see that he is just. And knowing, of course, that men do not like to think of God as a just God they would rather think of him as a God of love. Joseph Cook imagined a conversation between some angels, two angels met before the creation and they were talking on the street corner, one of them said to the other, "Have you heard the news?" The other one said, "No, what do you mean?" "Did you know that God was going to create a race of beings like himself?" "Oh, you mean like God, in the likeness of God?" "Yes, in the likeness of God, and these beings will have bodies; they will not be spirits such as we are; we angles, but they will have bodies they will have intellect emotion and will, they will be in the likeness of God." "Oh, well, surely God will not allow evil to take place in this new creation (for you see, Satan has already sinned in heaven and there are evil angels) surely God will not allow evil to intrude into this new creation." Oh, no, God is too good to allow evil to take place in the creation." And then he use to go on, and on, like this you see.

You see; it is very easy for us to reason and say God is love and therefore he cannot permit evil, but after all, the test as to the nature of God is not what we think he ought to do, but what he has done; and he as allowed evil to take place, and he has allowed men to suffer because of their sin. And we are no longer allowed to argue and

debate, does God permit sin, and does God allow suffering, does God judge. He has judged; he has permitted suffering; he has permitted sin; there's no question about it now. We know that he does permit these things. And if you look at human history you have nothing but a great mountain of human suffering, all of course, traceable to the fact that man is a mountain of sin. So the first reason that we have for judgment is to vindicate the holiness of God.

The second reason is the revelation of the goodness of God. I'm quite sure that God knew full well all of the suffering that sin would entail, but he also knew this, he knew that it might just be that through the suffering of the human race there also might come blessing to the human race and that the greater good of having a redeemed company of men was worth the sorrow, and the pain, and the suffering, and mind you God has suffered more than anyone else in human suffering. That, that might be worth the fact that he will now have a race of beings who are like him, like his blessed son the Lord Jesus Christ. So the second reason is that the goodness of God might be revealed.

You know, Paul in Romans chapter 11 says when he has gone through the program and purposes of God he said, "behold the goodness and the severity of God." These things are true of God. There are two things that we could never know of God if we do not have sin. First, we could never know that God punishes evil; we could never know that. And the second thing is we could never know that God is gracious and so if he is to reveal himself he must permit sin, and he has regarded the greater good of the permission to be worth the travail and the suffering which sin has produced.

And finally, of course, the judgment is the consummation of the sinfulness of man, our acts lead to a type of habit, and our habits forged a kind of character, and it is necessary for a Judas to go to his own place. He would rather go to his own place than any other place.

You all heard the amusing story of the two boats who were leaving from a certain wharf or harbor; one of them was going out into the harbor and there was going to be a

lot of gambling on board because it was illegal for this to take place on the land and so a number of gamblers and tough guys had chartered a boat to go outside of the harbor and there they were going to have a day of gambling and fun on that ship. And then there was also leaving from the same wharf a boat which had been chartered by a certain church for a Sunday school picnic; and one of the gamblers was a little late at the wharf; and so he rushed down and seeing a boat he rushed and jumped on the boat and just managed to make it as the boat went out and discovered, of course, that he was at the Sunday school picnic instead of with the rest of his friends. Now, there was no more unhappy man that day I'm sure than that man at the Sunday school picnic who intended to have a good day of fun on that ship.

Now, this is true of human nature you see; human nature because of the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ character is formed and an unbeliever would be the most unhappy person in all the world if he had to spend eternity in the presence of the holy and just God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that's the one place he does not want to be. So here in the judgment we have the consummation of the sinfulness of man. We don't realize how man so dislikes the presence of God.

Well, now, let's say a few words about the character of this judgment; I've listed, I think, seven things in the notes and I would like to just briefly go through them. The first thing that is true of this judgment is that it is just. We read here that the dead are judged according to their works; remember, Abraham said in Genesis chapter 18 in verse 25: "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the Lord Jesus said in Mathew chapter 12 and verse 36 that we should have to give an account of every idle word that we have spoken, think about it man's judgment is absolutely just.

Have you ever wondered how God is going to judge men? May I just imagine a little bit for you. You know when you turn on or when you're in a room such as this and say you have the blinds up in the middle of the day and you come in and you open the blinds, immediately a shaft of light from the sun floods the room, the moment you do this

immediately the light is in the room. It's difficult for us to comprehend the fact that light travels. Our eyes are not fast enough to see this. Light travels, we are told, at the speed of a hundred eight six thousand two hundred thirty four miles per second or two hundred ninety nine thousand seven hundred and something kilometers per second.

Now, we know from scientific experiments, Professor Michaelson, of the University of Chicago, first, I think measured the speed of light. Did you know, for example, that if the sun were to go out it would be approximately eight minutes before we knew it because the light rays take that long to reach the earth. Do you know that if the North Star should explode it would not be until approximately, 2040, 75 years later that we should find it out, for it takes seventy-five years for light to come from the North Star to the Earth? Do you know that if you could sit on the star regal with a powerful telescope powerful enough to look at the Earth do you know what you would see; because, of course, we cast light rays. What would we see well? We would see Columbus landing on the shores of the United States, because that is how long it takes for the light rays of those bodies to reach the star regal because it is that far away.

Do you also know that it is possible to take a manuscript on which something has been written many hundreds of years ago and by the use of certain chemicals, even though, it has been written over again it is possible by the use of chemicals to bring out what was originally written on the manuscript; now, we have what we call palimpsest manuscripts of the new testament. If you open up a Greek New Testament and you see manuscript "C" at the bottom of the page just a capital "C" that is a manuscript which is called *kodex ephramy receptus*. *Receptus* is a word that means erase in Latin, a palimpsest manuscript. What was done was that this manuscript was originally a manuscript of the New Testament, but some scribe needing some paper, and since paper was not easily procurable in the 6th or 5th Century's, he had this manuscript of the new testament and he wanted to copy some sermons of Ephraim. And so he just wrote them; and he erased as much as he could of the New Testament and wrote over them the sermons of Ephraim.

Well, now it was discovered later when this manuscript was discovered that underneath the sermons was an ancient addition of the New Testament and so by the use of chemicals, scholars are able to bring out, the original new testament on *kodex ephramy receptus* so that now we know what that manuscript reads in various places because it is able to be brought out by chemical action.

Well, now our minds are like a palimpsest. Everything that we have ever said or done and which has come to us is imprinted upon our minds. Now, of course, it is lost to us and as we go along and get older and older we loose more and more of it don't we? Some of you are nodding your head there are some of you who are like I am you are reaching the last stages of your earthly pilgrimage so you know how fleeting memory is; but really you have not lost those things, those things are impressed upon your mind. And have you ever noticed how when something will occur and you will remember something that you had forgotten a long time ago you; will remember it because it is there, it is there.

Now, do you not think in the light of this that when men stand before the great white throne judgment and the God who is responsible for all of the light rays; you know it just might be that you may be so far away in space that God may say: "Now, is there any question about this or would you like to see yourself in action?" And then it just might be that you're able to see exactly your life every single thing that you have said, every thing that you have ever done, from the stand point of eternity if from the stand point of natural reasoning we can see how such a thing is possible; how much more is it possible with God. So you can be absolutely certain that the great white throne judgment is absolutely just; and there will be no question about it there will be no: "I've forgotten about that, don't remember doing that at all." But we will see and here. Do you know even the sound waves that you produce are still traveling in the Universe. If we had the kind of instrument to pick them up you might pick up your baby talk because they are still moving in the vast area of sound waves.

So this judgment is just; furthermore, it is without respect of persons. You notice here he says: "I saw the dead, small and great stand before the Lord." Now, that means, kings and peasants; that means, preachers and those who are in the pew. Remember, the Lord Jesus let us in on that didn't he: "Some will say unto him that day Lord, Lord have we not cast out demons in thy name, have we not done mighty things in your name, have we not preached sermons in the name of the Lord Jesus; and he will say: 'I never knew you depart from me ye workers of iniquity.'" You know it's possible for a man to get in the pulpit and open up the Bible and in the name of Jesus preach, and yet, not know the Lord Jesus; did you know that? That's what he says, Matthew chapter 7 verse 22 be on your guard, be on your guard, the fact that a man preaches in the name of Christ does not mean that he is preaching the truth.

So it is without respect of persons, I think it is in degrees. We read here they shall be judged according to their works. Now, I do not think that this has reference to the quantity of their works, in other words, I don't think his going to say, "Now, Steve Davidson (of course Steve's not going to be at this judgment, we'll use a John Doe) John Doe, you have done a great pile of good works; look at that magnificent pile of good works, and so I'm not going to judge you like I have done someone else who has not this great pile of good works or bad works; look at this great pile of bad works that you have done."

In other words, this is not according to quantity, I don't think, but rather quality. In other words, they do not stand before the great white throne judgment to ascertain whether they will be judged or not, whether the good works out weigh the bad. I wonder how many people are deceived by that; they think that if we have maybe one more good work than bad works; well, then we're alright, they will cancel each other out, and we will be left with a good work. Or they think of some scales, you know, in which you put good works on this side and bad works on this side and if the good works out weigh the bad works then you are going to be saved. That isn't what this means. The

question here is not about the fact of judgment, the question is the amount of judgment and the works determine the amount of judgment; they do not determine the fact of judgment. Everyone who stands before the great white throne judgment is judged but the Christian will not be judged.

Will you turn with me to John chapter 5, John Chapter 5; verse 24:

" Verily, verily I say unto you he that he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into (now, do you know what this word means: "judgment") shall not come into judgment he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me shall hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but is passed from death unto life."

[Message] So the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will not be judged with respect to eternal life. When he has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ he has everlasting life. That is settled. Now, remember, I pointed out that we would stand before the judgment seat of Christ with a view to rewards but that does not touch everlasting life. That is settled, when we have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ personally. So here this is not a judgment to determine whether we will be judged, but how much the dead will be judged. So I think that this judgment is in degrees.

I wish I had time to refer to some of the other passages; for example, we have our Lord saying that it should be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than; for example, Capernaum. Capernaum had the benefit of the works of the Lord Jesus Christ, Tyre and Sidon did not have. And so the responsibility of Tyre and Sidon is less than Capernaum which was our Lords home, and so he says it shall be more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for Tyre and Sidon than for Capernaum; apparently degrees of judgment dependent upon responsibility.

Now, it is also of the body, this is necessary because as we mentioned the dead lived and the very term resurrection means the resurrection of the body and so when the dead stand before God they stand in their resurrection bodies. And so this is a judgment that touches not only the spirit but it also touches the body. It is of the dead only; now, we notice that, in verse 12: "I saw the dead small and great stand before God." Not those who have lived and have taken part in the first resurrection, but the dead. And furthermore, in verse 15 where it reads: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This in the Greek is in the construction in which it implies, since it is a first class indefinite relative clause. It implies that everyone who stands there was not found in the book of life. So the dead only are there, and the statement: "Whosoever was not found in the book of life," is cast in such a way in the Greek text, that it implies, that every single one who stands before the great white throne judgment as the books are open; and as the book is opened they are not found written in the book of life.

So this is a judgment of those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, it is of individuals, notice verse 13: "and they were judged every man according to their works." Your mother or your father cannot stand this judgment for you no one else can, if you are here at the great white throne judgment you are there as an individual. I trust of course, that not any of you are going to be at the great white throne judgment; this is going to be a terrible thing, and one last thing it is eternal.

"And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire (we read in verse 14) this is the second death. (And the Greek text adds: 'This is the second death,' the lake of fire.) The lake of fire is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake fire."

[Message] So this lake of fire in which the beast, the false prophet, and Satan are is the place of judgment, eternal judgment for those who reject our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Sin involves endless guilt and because men have sinned against the Lord they must suffer forever.

You know our law courts really are guilty of something that is illogical but because we're human we have to do things, we say for example, a man steals his neighbors spare tire and we say to him: "You shall suffer by being put in jail for thirty days." So you're guilty for thirty days. But, now, this is of course, thoroughly unbiblical. We have to do it among human beings. But, the fact that something is thirty days old does not mean that it is no longer wrong. The very fact that it is a sin means that it is eternal judgment. Ten days later it's just as bad, a year later it's just as much a sin. Suppose I were to commit murder today, ten years later, if they discover me the chances are, our juries would be very light on me because the sense of immediacy is involved in our judgment of guilt, but before God not so I'm just as guilty ten years from now, as the day I commit the crime. I'm just as guilty a hundred years as the day I commit the crime. So sin brings of necessity eternal judgment because it is sin against the eternal God. Well, the results of this judgment then are the lake of fire.

Well, our time is up I wish we had time to go on and talk about this fact of eternal judgment may I just stop and read some passages to impress this upon you; let me read some passages that have to do with the terrors of the wicked:

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil of he Jew first and also of the gentile. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. And these shall go into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal. If thy hand offend thy cut it off it is better for thy to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell into the fire that never shall be

quenched (who said that? Our Lord.) Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him. But woe unto that man by whom the son of man of is betrayed, it had been good for that man if he had not been born. (Now, if there would be a day in which Judas should eventually come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and live in the presence of God forever, then it would be worth everything for that eternal blessedness, but our Lord says: 'Woe unto that man by whom the son of man has been betrayed it would have been good for him if he had not been born' our Lord said that.) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be torment day and night forever and ever."

[Message] Let me tell you, I think I've got time to tell this. This is a true story it concerned T.G. Shedd, he was an outstanding Presbyterian theologian, he has written some of the most significant work on eternal judgment. One time the *North American Review* asked Professor Shedd if he and Henry Ward Beecher an outstanding preacher of the day would debate the question of eternal judgment in their paper. And so they asked Mr. Shedd to write a paper on eternal judgment and they asked Mr. Beecher to write a paper. And they agreed that they would write it; and that they would swap papers before they published, in order to know what the other was going to say so that in their articles they might try to answer the other person's arguments. So Dr. Shedd finished his first. He sent it into the North American Review, they sent it out the Henry Ward Beecher who happened to be in Denver at the time, and just a few days later he wired back: "Cancel the engagement, Shedd is too much for me, I almost believe in eternal punishment now, myself. Get someone else to write the other article." Because you see the Bible is very strong on the doctrine on eternal judgment.

How important is it for us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us. And then we do not appear before the great white throne judgment because when we believe on him we pass from death into life and we shall not come into judgment.

Well, let's close with prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, we thank Thee, and praise Thee for the Lord Jesus Christ; and for this wonderful truth: that when we believe in him, we escape condemnation. For Thou hast said, "There is therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." And so we thank Thee, and praise Thee for salvation, and pray Lord that Thou would give us compassion and love...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]