



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 20:11-15

“Death and Afterwards, part VI”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message]

“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.”

May God bless this reading from his inspired word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank Thee that we are able to turn again to the inspired word. We thank Thee that Thy word is true, and therefore Lord as we read the book of the visions of John the Apostle, we know that the things that

we are reading are not the products of a fertile imagination, but are the visions which John received from Thee. We pray, Lord, that Thou wilt enable us to interpret them right. Discern in them the great plans and purposes which Thou hast for us, as well as for those who do not know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And as we consider this very solemn portion from Thy word today, may it's teaching grip us and also impel us to spread the good news concerning the Lord Jesus in order that many who do not yet know him may not have to stand before the great white throne. We know, Lord, that all of the affairs of men are in Thy hands, that Thou workest all things according to the council of Thine own will, and we are confident, Lord, that when human history has come to the end of its present age, that all things will have been done in a way that will please Thee. We know also, Lord, from the teaching of Thy word that we have responsibility before Thee. And so may our responsibility be something of which we are thinking each moment of the day.

We thank Thee for this group of believers who meet in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we pray, Oh God, that Thou wilt bless us and guide us and direct us and if necessary discipline us and rebuke us and chastise us in order that we may be useful to Thee.

Lord we pray that the purposes which Thou hast for Believers Chapel may be realized. Thou knowest the needs. Thou art a great God. We leave them, Lord, in Thy hand. We know that Thou art able to accomplish everything that Thou hast upon Thy heart for us. Help us to be patient and to wait upon Thee.

In the meantime Lord, we pray that Thou wilt direct each one of us. Use us for Thy glory and also give us a deeper spirit of love and unity and fellowship one with another. We thank Thee for the fellowship of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the bonds which draw us together in him. And may, our Lord, our common love for him enable us to fulfill the new commandment among ourselves. With Thy help, Oh God, enable us to love one another as Jesus Christ has loved us.

We thank Thee for each one present. For Lord those who may be here without Christ who do not know the fellowship with Thee and with him and with us in him, may there be e sense of openness and love and friendliness and compassion in this group. And so we commit ourselves to Thee and we commit the ministry of the word to Thee, not only here, but elsewhere today that Jesus Christ may be honored and glorified. It is in his name Lord that we pray. Amen.

[Message] We have been studying the general theme "Death and Afterwards," and are at the next to the last message in the series. For today our subject is "The Judgment of Unbelievers." Now if you have not been with us or if you have and would like a review, don't answer for I'm going to give it anyway. You will remember that we have learned, I hope, these things in our series. We have learned that the term death is used of three experiences in the Bible. It is a term that is used for spiritual death or separation from God in our spirits. All are born spiritually dead. It is also used of physical death, the separation of the soul or spirit from the body, an experience for which all of us have been appointed. We must ultimately die physically unless we are alive when Jesus Christ returns. We know that when a person dies the spirit, if he is a believer, goes to be with the Lord. If he is unbeliever, that spirit is reserved for the ultimate time of judgment in a place of torment. In other words, when a person dies the body is no longer someone, but now a something, for the someone has gone and no longer is in the body. We have also learned that death is used of eternal death, which is really nothing more than the continuation of spiritual death on beyond our present human existence.

We then learned that reason and revelation both testified to life after death. History in the experiences of men, intuition, logic, the incompleteness of our present existence to which there is universal testimony, the moral order, just is not done now, all of these things rationally argue for life after death. The Bible, the revelation of God, has confirmed that with clear statements to the effect that there is a life beyond this life. We

learned that the place of the dead in Old Testament times was Sheol, the New Testament equivalent of which is Hades, the word that we have in this passage in revelation chapter 20. We have not learned with dogmatic assurance, but I suggested to you that it is the general feeling of most Bible teachers that Hades was relocated in New Testament times by Jesus Christ's work, that it had originally been a two compartment place and that paradise has now been taken above and when a person dies he enters paradise and is in the presence of the Lord today. We learned also that all the dead are conscious whether saved or lost. There is no such thing as annihilation of consciousness the moment that we die. When we die we remain conscious. We are either consciously in the presence of the Lord or we are consciously retained under judgment for the great day of the great white throne judgment.

We have learned that believers shall be given a resurrection body at the second coming or at the rapture of the church, the coming of our Lord Jesus in the air, and we as believers look forward to that day when the resurrection of the body shall take place. I suggested to you that man has existed, believing man, in three states. He exists as clothed today. That is we have a body, a spirit clothed in a body. If we die before our Lord comes in the air, we shall live unclothed. Paul speaks of that in 2 Corinthians 5. That is we shall exist as a spirit consciously in bliss in the presence of the Lord, but we will not have our resurrection bodies yet. So we will exist unclothed, then when Jesus Christ comes with believers and the believers on the earth are caught up to be with them, the dead are resurrected and together the whole church meets the Lord in the air, then we shall be, as Paul says, “clothed upon,” given a resurrection body, not the old body and yet there is identity with it, but a resurrection body like our Lord Jesus Christ's own glorious body.

Now the importance of these things is attested in the New Testament over and over again. We often hear New Testament scholars and some preachers who follow New Testament scholars say that it is very wrong for us to be interested in escatology or the

future. We are not supposed to know the temperature of hell or the furniture that exists in heaven it is sometimes said. Now hardly anything can be more ridiculous than that because the Bible is full of eschatology, from beginning to end it is full of teaching concerning the future, and we are not only expected to be acquainted with it, we are expected to know it. And that is why I'm not apologizing in any way for a series such as this. You need to know these things.

Then we also learned that the Christian, after he has met the Lord in the air and has received his resurrection body, he then is to face our Lord Jesus Christ at the judgment seat of Christ. Now he is not to be judged there with respect to his eternal life. He has that the moment that he believes in the Lord Jesus. That is settled and forever sure. If we have believed in him, it is absolutely certain that we shall be in heaven, but the state of our existence in heaven is a different matter. Now then there are some problems in connection with this and we passed them by sometime at a later date. I wanted to discuss the relationship of rewards to the eternal state, but let's just drop it at that and say our lives here do make a difference so far as the future is concerned as the judgment seat of Christ definitely testifies.

Now then to sum up then this aspect, we are judged as sinners at the cross of Jesus Christ. We are judged as sons in this life, and God has a family discipline which we are the subjects of. Some of the things that affect us in our lives are the result of our Father's discipline. Some things we cannot be sure about. Some things are designed by our Father to educate us. We can never really know certainly about the experiences of someone else because you see it may be that that experience is due to some sin in the life, or it may be that it is some experience which the Lord desires to pass us through in order that we might be a better Christian after that experience. We are judged then as sons in this life, and just as you discipline your children or ought to discipline your children, then so the Father disciplines us, and some of the things we pass through are some terrible experiences. Ultimately at the “bema,” at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ

we are judged as servants of the Lord. So, as sinners at the cross, as sons in this life, as servants, that is as those who are responsible to obey God at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Last time, and we're coming to the last point of our review, last time we looked at the Advent and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus pointing out that the time is coming when the seed of the woman shall ultimately and completely overthrow and crush the serpent's head. And the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus is to come to pass upon the earth. Now this is something to which we as believers look forward. We look forward to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus upon the earth. He shall come to the earth. He shall establish his Kingdom, and we who have believed in the Lord Jesus, we shall rule and reign with him in that Kingdom with our resurrection bodies.

The other question and this is the question that introduces us to the subject today is, “Well what of the unsaved? What about them, so far as that future is concerned?” Now this question about the unsaved introduces us to several serious questions, and I want to just briefly touch upon them. Today we have a short passage and I think we can cover it in a relatively short time, and so I would like to introduce a question at this point which I think is very apropos. And that question is this, “How can we explain the injustice of history?” Why is it, for example, that Bolshevism is allowed to not only exist but apparently to grow in significance and so far as we know might even attain the ascendancy in the earth? Why is this? Was Schiller right when he said that the history of the world is the judgment of the world or was on the other hand, Lessing right when he said that history is that which gives meaning to meaninglessness? In other words, is it really true that God is in control of the affairs of this earth? I think if we think of what happens upon the earth there surely comes to our minds often the question, “Is God really in control?” Does he really have his hands upon everything?

Now some who are Christians of course answer very quickly. It's very obvious that God's judgments have been in the earth and if you just examine history down

through the years you can see where God has exercised his judgment. Well that may be very well true for you who are a Christian, but I do not think that you can definitely prove that if you are not a question. In other words, it is very doubtful to me that you can prove objectively the fact that God has been active in history. We must look at history in the light of revelation to see the meaning of history. I really doubt that we can prove that God has acted in history if we eliminate the history of the revelation of God. For example, if you were an Englishman you might say, as they often did say, after Waterloo that it was God who stopped Napoleon at Waterloo, but if you're a Frenchman you might argue quite differently. You might say if you were an Englishman that it was God who enabled Russia to stop Napoleon, but if you were a Frenchman you might say Europe suffered because they were not allowed to come under the order of the Napoleonic regime.

So I think it is very difficult for us objectively to prove the action of God in history, and when we turn to our own human lives we find a similar problem. We look at something that has happened and we say this is because God has felt it necessary to discipline that particular person who has suffered this. On the other hand, it may really be for education. We cannot really know. We cannot positively be sure of it. In other words, something that happens may have to do with the past. It may be a discipline, or on the other hand, it may have to do with the future. It may be for education. Christians and non Christians too are always asking the question, "Why?" And that, of course, is a legitimate question to ask, but it is probably more important for us to ask "For what purpose," rather than "Why" because it is very doubtful that we can ever understand fully in this existence all the whys.

Now I was kind of amused as I thought about this message to read Peanuts and notice that Snoopy's remarks were very appropriate to what I'm saying because it was raining cats and dogs, and he was complaining about the fact that he was a dog. He says, "It's very difficult to be a dog," or something like this that, "There are very many

disadvantages to being a dog," and finally in the last, he is reclining upon his dog house and he's looking up at God or towards heaven and he says, "Why rain on me?" In other words, he's kind of disturbed about the meaningless of his dog existence and things seem to be going very bad for him. We can ask why, but we really cannot completely understand.

Now then the judgment that God often gives us is a judgment of silence. If you'll notice in the Bible very frequently, take Romans chapter 1 for example, God does not judge positively, but he judges in the sense that he seems to withdraw his restraining hand and allow men to do what they desire to do, and that becomes his judgment. In other words, three times in Romans chapter 1 Paul says that God has delivered them over, gave them up to, and then the judgments are mentioned, which are judgments which men themselves seem to inflict upon themselves. Often times God does not judge in the sense that he throws a thunderbolt of judgment at us, but he simply allows us to do what we want to do, and that is judgment itself. So I do not think that we can objectively be sure of the hand of God in history. In fact this is why in this day in which we are living we have a situation in which man has become more and more desperate for as he looks at the situation apart from any divine revelation he comes to the conclusion that what we have is an unfathomable nihilism in our existence, that is that nothing really means anything, that it's just nothingness, or on the other hand, he comes to the conclusion that our universe is a scientific mechanistic kind of universe and everything operates according to cold principals of law, and that's all there is to it. And so we finally reach the place where we have human history is "tragic history." Now that is the situation that we face today because we are not willing to look at things from the standpoint of the word of God.

Now the Christian he doesn't have any difficulty with these things at all because you see he looks at things from the standpoint of divine revelation, and he can look back in history, and he thinks that he can see and the word of God in specific cases supports

him, he can see the hand of God in history. He can see the judgment of God. He can see, for example, the judgment of the tower of Babel. He can see the judgment of the flood. He can see the judgment upon Israel. He can see also the approaching signs of judgment upon the church of Jesus Christ. He has seen judgment upon the Babylonians and upon the Egyptians and upon the Assyrians and upon others. He has seen the hand of God in history because he has seen the hand of God in the light of divine revelation. And so we look at history and we say that we have nothing to worry about because we know that God is with us and that this universe is friendly to us. It is not unfriendly to us. The philosopher today in our society in the 20th century looks at this world about us and he sees it as very, very unfriendly. We do not. We know that our Father is on the throne. And we know that the worth of God, "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee," are words that strengthen us and gird us and enable us to meet the problems of our present life.

But there still remains one problem and that is what about all of this injustice that exists in the earth? Is there going to be a final tribunal? Are things going to be made right? Now again we have anticipations of this in nature. We look at nature and we can see the great judgments of nature and we have some anticipations of the fact that God is going to judge. But at the same time that is not conclusive because nature also at times is very friendly and beautiful and nice and sweet which is the true picture of God. The truth of the matter is that both are, but from the standpoint of divine revelation we know that there is coming a time when there is to be a final judgment and the passage that we are looking at now in Revelation chapter 20 is that passage that tells us that there is a time coming when everything is going to be made right. Sometimes when we talk about the idea of hell in the 20th century we seem as if we are ghosts of the past. Whoever talks about hell today? I have even heard it said, in many evangelical churches mind you as I go around the country, "Well that's a very good church. They don't preach that old style hell, fire and damnation any longer, but they're more adaptable to the present day."

Now I believe in taking the truth of God and making it applicable to the people who are living in the 20th century. That is something that we must always do, but if in so doing we have eliminated the teaching of the word of God concerning hell, then we have emasculated the Bible from some of its most important teaching. As a matter of fact it's striking that some say that this idea of hell is not a New Testament idea, not really an idea which Jesus would approve. And when you take your concordance and look at the Bible you discover this interesting thing, that the word hell I think is mentioned in the New Testament about twelve or thirteen times, and every time but one in which it is mentioned it is upon the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ. The only time in which it is not is in James chapter 3 and verse 6. So that hell is peculiarly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Keble put it, "The Fount of Love His servants sends to tell Love's deeds; Himself reveals the sinner's Hell." So it is our Lord Jesus who is responsibility most of all for the doctrine of eternal punishment. It is our Lord Jesus who is most responsible for the doctrine of hell, and it is our Lord Jesus who gave John this revelation in Revelation chapter 20, this vision. In other words, ultimately what we are doing is hearing a message from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Now let's look at Revelation chapter 20 and verse 11 first of all in which John tells us that he sees the vision of the throne. There are just five short verses in this section, but oh what a tremendous amount of truth is found in five verses. John says, "And I saw." Now if you've been following chronologically his visions he has been saying in this last section of the book that he saw the vision of the marriage supper of the lamb, that he saw the vision of the Second Advent of Christ, that he saw the battle upon the earth in which our Lord Jesus overcomes the enemies of God, then he saw the binding of Satan for a thousand years, then he saw the Kingdom of God in which our Lord with the saints rule and reign for a thousand years upon the earth, and then in chapter 20 in verse 7 we read that he saw, after the thousand years were finished, that Satan was loosed. He too has his second coming, and this is his second coming to the earth in order to round up the final

confederacy against the Lord. John describes that and its defeat and now after the overthrow of the last of human opposition to the plans and purposes of God, before the revelation of the eternal state in chapters 21 and 22, John says, “And I saw.” So we can gather from this that the judgment of the great white throne is a judgment that takes place after the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus. The judgment for believers took place before his second coming to the earth, but the judgment for unbelievers takes place after our Lord’s Kingdom and the final rebellion and the overthrow of it in chapter 20.

One more thing, you’ll notice it is stated here that he saw a great white throne. Now the term great is used because this is a throne of infinite justice. It is white because it is holy justice, and of course the throne suggests rule and authority and government. So the great white throne connotes for us infinite holy justice. There is coming a time in which men shall stand before God and we shall finally see that there is to be a tribunal in which all of the wrongs that exist upon this earth are to be righted. There is coming such a time.

Now at this point sometimes we have a little bit of difficulty, and I want to say a word here to indicate why human judgment is not final and cannot be, just very briefly. It is sometimes thought that human judgment is final and that the only judgment that we are to have is existence. I think if you’ll just think about these things you’ll realize that it cannot be. In the first place there are many sins and transgressions which human law can take no cognizance of. For example, is there any law against ingratitude? Is there any law against mental cruelty? Oh, I know in certain circumstances, but generally speaking against mental cruelty? Is there any law against scorn? Is there any law against dishonoring parents, the subject of the message last week? You see there are many sins for which there is no corresponding law.

Secondly the human judges in our courts do not know the penalty that exactly fits the offense. We can never know that. We know, as a matter of fact the divine penalty for only one offense, and that is that if a man murders another, we know that his life

should be taken. The word of God has said that capital punishment is divine, but beyond that we do not have any divine standard for the wrongs that men commit against one another. And so we have to set up a human system. It can never be completely just. Also, the human judge is often uncertain as to the guilt of the prisoner. How can he really, surely and certainly know unless he be God.

For example, some of us have followed in the newspapers over the past few years the case of Dr. Sam Sheppard. Now how can we really know? How can we really know whether he was guilty or not? The courts have said now I think that he was not guilty. Once before they said he was guilty. You see there can never be any human system that is infallible; consequently there must be a tribunal beyond if there is to be justice. And finally the guilty often escape. Sometimes they're never even brought to trial. And so this life can never give us a complete and accurate and equitable justice, and therefore there must be a great white throne judgment.

So John says, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” I think they fled away in dismay because of the fact that the earth cannot really face the presence of the eternal God. Where this judgment is held the Bible does not say. Perhaps some place in illimitable space so far as we know.

Now that's the vision of the throne. The next thing that John sees is the vision of the judgment of the dead in verses 12 and 13. He says, “And I saw the dead.” Now who are the dead of whom he is speaking? These are not the believing dead for they have been raised previously, when you look back at chapter 20, verse 5, “But 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.” So John has said that certain are raised and enter into the Kingdom rule of our Lord Jesus. But then he says the rest of the dead, “Live not again until the thousand years were finished.” Now the thousand years is finished and John said, “I saw

the dead.” What dead? Well the rest of the dead, those who were not raised before the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, those who were not blessed, those who were the unbelieving dead. They are reserved for the great white throne judgment.

Who are they? They are these who are physically dead and spiritually dead. They live through this existence just as you are living today. They sat in gatherings of people. They carried on their business. They lived in their homes. They raised their children. They had a normal human existence, and the time came that they died physically, but they had not received Jesus Christ as their personal savior. They had not responded to the revelation of God, hence their spiritual death which they possessed while they were physically alive is not prolonged to eternal death. And these are they who stand before the Great White Throne Judgment. Among them are such men as Cain, such men as Nimrod, such men as the entire generation at the time of Noah’s life, such men as Pharaoh, and on down through the years to some of the men who are living today.

Some of our outstanding preachers stand there because we read, “I saw the dead small and great.” Kings on the one hand stand there and peasants on the other hand stand there. Preachers on the one hand stand there, and atheists on the other stand there. You’re going to be surprised at some of the fine men who stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, fine according to human standards. Men who have opened up the Bible in the pulpit shall stand before the Great White Throne Judgment for many men who open up the Bible have not bowed to our Lord Jesus Christ as the one who loved them and gave himself for them. They’re given us many high sounding discourses. They have spoken many great things, like the anti-christ shall speak about righteous, about ethics, about social ethics, about the laws of economics as they apply to the teachings of Scripture and many other pronouncements have they made from politics on through the spiritual things, but they have not told us of the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, and they have not exhorted men to love the one who has loved them and given himself for them. And so, ultimately they too stand before the Great White Throne

Judgment, and sad though it may be to even say this, some of you may stand before the Great White Throne Judgment. May God prevent it, but it may well be true, some of you.

"The dead small and great... and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life." Now they stand before God. That means they are alive. They live. Now the word live is used of the resurrection. When they stand before God or when they live, it means that they are given a resurrection body. So you see there is a resurrection body not only for the believers but there is a resurrection body for the non-believers too, but it's one that I don't want to ever enter into I assure you of that. You see the resurrection body of the unbeliever is a body in which he may suffer the pangs of eternal torment forever and ever and ever. Everybody shall be resurrected, some to the resurrection of life, some to the resurrection of judgment. These judgments are separated by hundreds of years, a thousand years plus, we read, but how different they are. Here men who have not believed in Christ are given a resurrection body to suffer judgment, and I do not think, I do not myself know what this body, is going to be like, but I kind of think it is going to be a body which reflects the state of their soul.

You know I have noticed something about human beings. Ultimately the kind of person you are inside reflects itself upon your face outside. Do you believe that? It's only an opinion that I have, but I kind of believe that it's true that you can usually see the state of a man's spirit by the continents which he possesses. You know there is an old story of Leonardo da Vinci when he painted "Mulle Makna" or the Last Supper, that he for some time he had a habit of delaying the completion of things. He was a procrastinator such as I am, and I know that he worked on the head of our Lord Jesus for a considerable length of time and he also worked on the head of Judas for a considerable length of time, but there is a legend to the effect that da Vinci had finished the painting with the exception of the fact that he had not painted the two heads and he took a young man who had the face of an angel, a chorister in one of the churches in Milano, and he painted him for the face of our Lord Jesus. He was his model.

For some years the picture went by, the painting went by incomplete, and finally being forced to complete it, he was in Rome at the time, and he went down and he picked the face of a beggar that he thought might be a good model for the face of Judas. And he completed this by painting this beggars face. And when he was near the end of it he asked the man what his name was. He said, "Don't you remember me? I sat for your Jesus." You see it was a case of whose life had apparently outwardly gone through all of the movements from the face of the angel boy in the choir to ultimately the demonic kind of face that he possessed near the end of his drunken life. And I have no doubt in my own mind that when men stand before the Great White Throne Judgment in their resurrection bodies it is to be a body which reflects the state of their soul, and it must be a terrible kind of body.

"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." You notice there are two books. There are some that are called books, and then there is one especially that is singled out, "the book of life." I do not know the relationship between these. It has been suggested that the books are the vouchers for the book of life. If you are an accountant you may understand the meaning of that, but if that's it, it makes sense, and the books record all of the actions of men. And the book of life records the names of those who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and so, one is the voucher, or vouchers of the others.

You'll notice too by the way that the judge when the books are opened, he doesn't say, "Now stand aside. I want to see how conditions really are." As a matter of fact every impression that you get from this vision that John saw, and remember it's a vision. John is being told in vision form the truth and the reality of the future. It's to be interpreted as a vision by the way. But the judge does not come and look down and seek to find out what the conditions, what the facts are in the books. He already knows what's in the book. He actually does nothing more than render a verdict, and when you read

the account through you almost are drawn to the feeling that no verdict is even necessary, for when men stand before the Great White Throne Judgment they know what the judgment is going to be.

I think there is one outstand man who had a vision once, a dream of the Great White Throne Judgment, and in his own mind, as he dreamed, he dreamed of men who came up and took one look in the book with their clothes torn off and then they reached down and tore their heart open to see what their heart was to see that it matched what was said in the book. And then they all went off into a Christless eternity, as if to just bare their souls before the books. It's not necessary for the judge to say anything. The facts are there and men know it.

“The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Did you notice, twice it is stated they were “judged according to their works?” What does this mean? I thought that they were judged according to their relationship to Jesus Christ. Well it's really very simple. You see the man who has been related to Jesus Christ, his faith will be seen in his works. The man who is unrelated to Jesus Christ, his lack of faith is also seen in his works. You see the faith and the works are all of one piece. They tell the same story. That's why James says, “Faith without works is dead.” For a living faith always produces vital works. If a man has no living faith, he has no vital works. You may judge him according to his works or according to his faith. The decision is the same, always, in both cases, and so here, “They are judged according to their works.” It is outward. This is a judgment scene, and so it is fitting that it should be that way. This judgment is absolutely just, and all types of sin come to the fore here.

You know I read a great chapter in a book just a few days ago, and I want to just pass on to you the summary of it because it seem to me to be very appropriate to what I'm saying this morning. It was a chapter on sin and the author went on to point out that in the New Testament there are three types of sin. There is the sin of the publican. There

is the sin of the Pharisee and there is the sin of the Sadducee. And the sin of the publican is the sin of fleshliness. This is the man who is the world's idea of a sinner. He's the man who engages in all of the immorality that the world calls sin. This is the man who lusts. This is the man who lives in luxury. This is the man who commits all of the outward crimes. As a matter of fact this is the kind of man that the world calls a sinner. Now Jesus definitely said that that type of person and his behavior represented sin and the sinner, but not the only kind.

The Lord Jesus went on to speak about the Pharisee. Now the Pharisee is one that the world does not recognize. The world does not recognize the sin of hypocrisy in spiritual things, but you see the sin of the Pharisee is the sin of hypocrisy. He is the man whose sin is so great that it causes him to be a model of behavior in the community, and he is willing to go through the outward of being a model kind of individual in order to, within his heart, maintain that attitude of corruption which our Lord Jesus so scathingly denounces in the 23rd chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. It's rather surprising that Jesus did not say a whole lot about the sin of the publican, though he acknowledges that kind of sin, but he almost, I say almost, he almost seems to lose his temper when he discusses the sin of the Pharisees and their hypocrisy.

And then finally there is sin of the Sadducee. The Sadducee is the man who doesn't care about anything other than the present. He is the worldly. So the sin of the publican is the carnal man. The sin of the Pharisee is the sin of hypocrisy. The sin of the Sadducee is the sin of worldliness. He is not a man, who is, according to the world, like the Pharisee, an evil man. He's just a man who doesn't care anything about the life beyond the grave. He's the man who builds his barns, and then builds bigger barns, and there's nothing wrong with building bigger barns. After all if you've outgrown your present barns, build a bigger barn, but he's the kind of man who has nothing upon his heart but his barns. He doesn't have any idea at all about caring for that which is beyond this life or caring for the spiritual, and all these types of sin are going to be met at the

Great White Throne Judgment and the model, upright, religious, spiritual hypocrite, like the Pharisee is going to stand there just at the worldly who is a very law abiding, honorable kind of citizen, but who has not cared one iota for the word of God. He too shall stand there with the publicans and all of their gross and carnal immorality. That judgment is a just judgment. And you can be sure that sin shall there be paid for in the coin of God.

And furthermore it is in degrees. You know the Lord Jesus said it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment for than Capernaum. Now when he said, “more tolerable,” he acknowledged the fact that there is such a thing as degree in judgment at the Great White Throne, but it’s not very comforting to stand before the Great White Throne and know that you’re not going to be judged quite as severely as others. I don't want to be there at all.

The consequences are spoken of in verses 14 and 15. We read, “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.” You see Hades or Sheol is a temporary resting place for those who have not accepted Jesus Christ. The time is coming when Sheol/Hades is to be cast into the lake of fire. Have you ever wondered why the Bible represents in its symbolic way the final place of judgment as a lake of fire? Do you know why? It’s because a lake has no outlets, and that is why. It is a lake of fire. God is trying to symbolically tell us there is no way of escape. It is ultimate, and it is final. When a man is cast into the lake of fire, that is the ultimate end.

So, death and Hades are abolished, and the 15 verse records, or rather the last part of the 14th and the 15 records, the initiation of the second death. “This is the second death,” that is, when a man is put into the lake of fire, this is the ultimately seal upon his eternal doom. “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,” endless guilt because sin is endless, and when we sin against God the fact that one hundred years shall not change the guild of sin. One thousand years shall not change the guilt of sin. One million years shall not change the guilt of sin. If a man

stands before God and has refused Jesus Christ and stands under the judgment of God, he will stand just as much under the judgment of God in millions of years from now as he does today. If you have committed a crime against God you are guilty today. You shall be guilty next week, no less, no more, next year, no less, no more, and so on so that sin against God is endless in its results. The text says, "Whosoever was not found written," there is no evidence that anyone at the Great White Throne Judgment was found written. This is a judgment of unbelievers.

Well the Scripture certainly points out the reality and horror of the second death by its descriptions of the terror of the wicked. The New Testament is full of the severity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks to the fig tree and the fig tree does not bring forth fruit. It withers up. The disciples are amazed at the severity of the Lord Jesus. He speaks of the wedding guest who came in without the proper garment, and he says that that wedding guest is to be thrown out. Oh, the severity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He also speaks of the rich man, and he speaks about the rich man being in torment. Do not think for one moment that Jesus Christ is not severe when he speaks about judgment, for he is. There is in the nature of things an instinctive shrinking of good from evil and evil from good. And our Lord Jesus is representing that which we know and experience. When Peter saw the glory of Jesus Christ he said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." When the people of the community saw one of the miracles that Jesus performed, "They besought him that he would depart from their coasts." You see evil does not like to be in the presence of good, and the same is true from the divine standpoint and finally God shall have to speak, "And depart from me ye workers of iniquity into the fire that is everlasting."

There is only one way of escape and that is through our Lord Jesus. Did you notice in this passage that the one question is, "Is your name in the Book of Life?" That's the one question. "The books were opened and another book was opened which is the Book of Life." If the name is in the Book of Life everything is alright. If the name is not

written in the Book of Life then everything is wrong. And so, is your name in the book? Is it written in the Book of Life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world? What about it? Can you be sure of it today? Do you know it? Are you positive? Would you like to be sure? The only thing that you need to do is to see our Lord Jesus as the one who died for you, loved you and gave himself for you, and then in your heart say to him, “Thank you Lord for giving Jesus Christ to die for me. I take him as my personal savior.” Now I'm not going to argue when your name is written in the book. But I know this that if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, your name shall be in that book, and you can have a sense of certainty and assurance for the future. May God help you to make that decision if you've never made it.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and Heavenly Father, we cannot help but sense the solemnity of the Great White Throne Judgment. O God we pray that Thou wilt...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]