

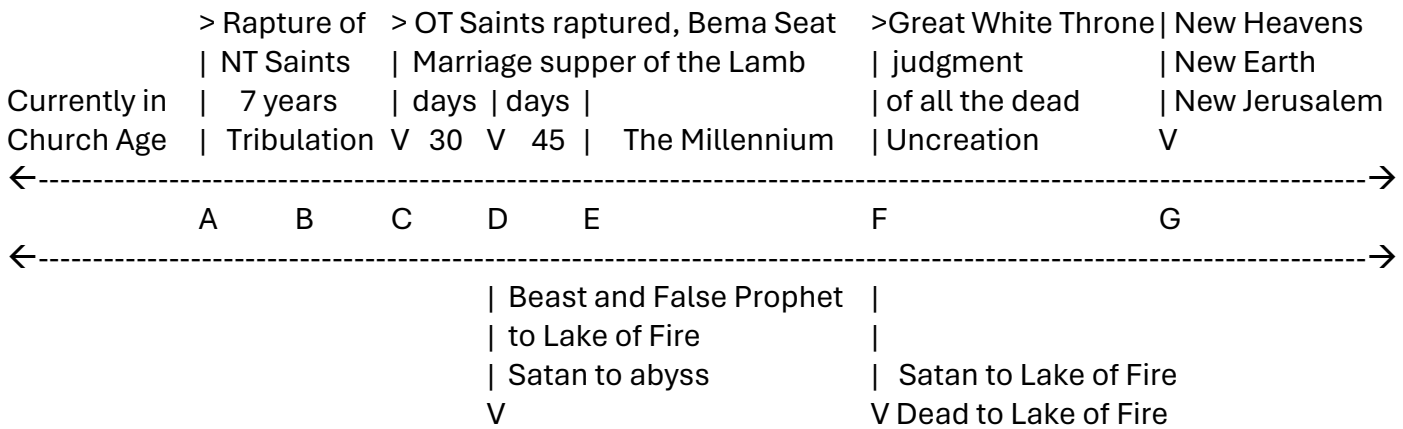
# The GREAT WHITE THRONE (Rev 20:11-15)

Howard Liverance (April 17, 2024)

QUESTION: How dogmatic can we be about eschatology? About our specific view? Does it matter?

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

- This is perhaps the most tragic passage in the entire bible. Why?
- This is where all those who rejected Christ during their lives are judged and thrown into hell.
- This Great White Throne Judgment is not to be confused with the “Bema” Seat Judgment
  - WHAT’S the difference?
    - One is a believers’ judgment.
    - This is an unbelievers’ judgment.
      - How do we know this is an unbelievers’ judgment?
      - Because (most of) the righteous dead have already been judged



- A. NT Saints are raptured. The Tribulation begins. Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel.
  - a. *1 Thes 4:16-17, For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*
- B. Midpoint of Tribulation, Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel. Temple sacrifice is abolished. The abomination of desolation will be set up (Dan 9:27).
  - a. *Dan 9:27 NLT, “The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.”*

- C. Armageddon. Purging. The Great “Supper” of God. OT Saints Raptured (Dan 12:1-2, 10-11)
- a. *Dan 12:1-2, “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.*
  - b. *Dan 12:10-11, Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. 11 From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*
- D. Christ brings  blessing  to earth and prepares the earth for the Millennial Kingdom (Dan 12:12-13).
- a. *Dan 12:12-13, How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! 13 But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.”*
- E. The Millennium begins. All the saints rule with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev 12:4).
- a. *Rev 12:4, they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*
- F. The “dead” are judged for their “works”. Possibly Millennium saints are also judged (Rev 12:5-6).
- a. *Rev 20:5, 12, The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne*
- G. New Heavens and New Earth are created. New Jerusalem descends from heaven (Rev 21:1-2).
- a. *Rev 21:1-2, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

So, let’s talk briefly about the Bema Seat judgment, the timing of which is not clearly delineated in Revelation.

- This is a believers’ judgment for REWARD.
  - *2 Cor 5:9-10, Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment (bema) seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*
  - **Are there different degrees of reward?**
  - *1 Cor 3:10-15, According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. 14 If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*
  - *Mat 16:27, For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.*
  - *Acts 10:42-43, And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. 43 Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”*

- *Rom 14:10, But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.*
- **Bottom line: Why would we NOT want our lives to be pleasing to him?**

Let's talk now about the Great White Throne Judgement

- This is an unbelievers' judgment for PUNISHMENT.
  - **QUESTION: Are there different degrees of punishment?**
  - *Mat 10:15, Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.*
  - *Mar 12:40 <sup>40</sup> who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."*
  - *Rom 2:5, But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*
  - *Heb 10:29, How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he (Christ) was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*
  - *Luke 12:47-48, that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.*

### ***Him who sat upon it***

- QUESTION: Who is on the throne?
  - The judge of all the earth, Who is he?
  - *Act 7:30-31, Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."*
  - *2 Tim 4:1-2, I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word*

### ***from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them***

- This is the uncreation of the universe.
- QUESTION: Why does the entire universe need to be uncreated?
- QUESTION: What would it mean for it to be uncreated?
- QUESTION: What was here before the creation (tohu/bohu) (formless and void)
- *2 Pet 3:10, But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and **the elements will be destroyed with intense heat**, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*
  - PHYSICS LESSON:
    - Matter consists of "particles" in constant motion.
      - Motion is **distance over time** (miles per hour, feet per second)
    - What causes the particles to be in constant motion?
      - **Energy**: the "capacity to apply force"
      - When force is applied, this is called **power**

- When power expended over time this is called **work**
    - Both energy and matter can behave as both waves and particles
      - **wave equations** for matter are known as de Broglie equations
      - **particle equations** for energy are known as Quantum equations
  - Both matter and energy demonstrate similar (interchangeable) characteristics
    - In many ways, matter can be considered “solidified energy”.
      - Albert Einstein said this: *“It followed from the special theory of relativity that mass and energy are both but different manifestations of the same thing — a somewhat unfamiliar conception for the average mind.”*
  - Matter has four fundamental forces: Strong, Weak, Electromagnetic and Gravity
    - **Strong** force holds the atom together (no one can explain what it is) NUCLEAR
      - Strong only works at subatomic distances, and is very powerful
      - *What’s a gluon? The particle of the strong force is called the gluon because of the strong force’s glue-like properties. The strongest of the subatomic forces is the aptly named strong nuclear force. In the realm in which it operates, it is about 100 times stronger than the next-strongest force (electromagnetic) fnal.gov (Fermilab)*
    - **Weak** force holds molecules together (atoms to atoms) CHEMICAL
      - Weak only works at molecular distances
    - **Electromagnetic** can either push or pull depending on charge
      - Second strongest force, becomes geometrically stronger as distances decrease ELECTRICAL
    - **Gravity**, the weakest force, causes masses to attract, but has infinite range
      - Based on mass, works over long distances and is obviously cumulative.
  - Scientists agree that all these forces (energies) inside matter are in **perfect** balance.
    - If any one of them were greater or smaller, matter would NOT exist.
  - We also know from the bible that the entire universe is held together by Jesus himself.
    - *Col 1:15-17, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For **by Him all things were created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.***
- Einstein’s Theory of Special Relativity
  - $E = mc^2$        $m = 1$  kilogram (2.2 pounds) of matter,  $c = 300,000,000$  meters/second
  - $E = (1)(300,000,000)^2$
  - $E = 90,000,000,000,000,000$  joules      (90 quadrillion joules, one joule is 1 watt)
  - $E = 90,000,000,000$  megawatts      (90 billion megawatts)
  - $E = 90,000$  million megawatts (the United States uses a million megawatts per second)
  - **The energy bond up in 1 Kilogram of matter** will power the entire United States electrical grid for 90,000 seconds, or **one full day**.
    - In a nuclear explosion only a small amount of matter is converted to energy, and the energy release is nearly instantaneous and massive!
  - Imagine how much energy was needed to create all the matter in the Universe!
- So how will the elements melt with intense heat?
  - The sense is all God has to do is remove his hand from the delicate balance of forces inside the atom and the creation will melt away (convert back into pure energy).
  - Another view is that because matter consists of particles in constant motion, all God has to do here is remove **time** from the creation.

- If time is eliminated, there can be no motion
- If motion ceases, then matter itself will cease to exist
- When heaven and earth “flee away”, what we are left with is nothingness.
  - “no place was found for them” (they are not hiding somewhere)
- It is in this emptiness that God holds the final court.

***12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne***

- When the earth and the universe melt away, they give up all the dead unbelievers from the beginning of time.
- They’re given eternal bodies and are standing before the Great White Throne awaiting judgment.
- QUESTION: What does “the great and small mean”?
  - Those considered important in human terms, standing right next to the insignificant
- This is the “resurrection of judgment”
  - *John 5:28-29, Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; **those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.***
  - *Dan 12:2, Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to **disgrace and everlasting contempt.***

***12 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them***

- The sense here is God has recovered “the dead” from all over the planet, no matter where they are.
- Their souls have been in Hades, and their earthly bodies have been in “death” and the seas.
- In order to be standing before the throne, they have been given eternal bodies
  - *Rom 9:21-24 (NLT), When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn’t he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? 22 In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are **destined for destruction.** 23 He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory. 24 And we are among those whom he selected, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.*
    - Destruction: perdition, loss, waste, ruin
  - *Luke 16:22-24, “Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side. 24 “The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’”*

***12 and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.***

- Picture this: All the dead will stand in the middle of a complete void directly in front of the Throne of God, and the books of all their thoughts, words, and deeds are opened (as recorded

by God's omniscience) and compared with God's perfect, holy standard, and found desperately wanting.

- *Dan 7:9-10* <sup>9</sup>"I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was <sup>[a]</sup>ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire.<sup>10</sup> "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.
- *Mat 12:36* <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that every <sup>[a]</sup>careless word that people <sup>[b]</sup>speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.
- Another book was opened, which is the book of life, a registry of citizens kept by ancient cities
  - *Phil 3:20* <sup>20</sup> For our <sup>[a]</sup>citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ
  - *Dan 12:1* at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.
- It appears that two sets of books are opened: 1) the Book of Deeds, 2) the Book of Life

QUESTION: How are the dead judged? By their deeds. People are "hoping" their good deeds outnumber!

- 82 percent of Americans believe in an afterlife that includes both heaven and hell, but only 4 percent of those people believe that they will go to hell. (James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth* (New York: Prentiss Hall Press, 1991), p. 204.)
- The problem is God's standard requires absolute perfection.
  - *Psa 53:1-3*, The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God, "They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; There is no one who does good. 2 God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there is anyone who understands, Who seeks after God. 3 Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one. (quoted in *Rom 3:10*)
  - *Mat 5:48* NLT, But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.
  - *Rom 3:23*, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
  - *James 2:10* NLT, For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws.
  - So what are the chances our good deeds can get us into heaven? Zero percent
    - But the dead **want to be judged** by their deeds, despite God's free provision!
    - To them that's preferable to being accountable to God's moral standard
    - What's the error here?
      - Comparing ourselves with others!
      - *2 Cor 10:12, 18*, For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. 18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.
      - QUESTION: Who shall we measure ourselves by?

***Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

- The place has already been prepared and made ready!

- *Mat 25:41, "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;*
- **Who were** the first two occupants? The Beast and the False prophet.
  - When were they thrown in there? At the end of the Trib. (Rev 19:20).
- **Who was also** recently thrown in there? Satan - and presumably his demons (Rev 20:10).
- Now, all the "dead" from all ages on planet earth are thrown in there with them.
- Notice the word "thrown"
  - When do we "place" things somewhere?
  - When do we "throw" things somewhere?

QUESTION: What can keep someone out of the Lake of Fire? Your name written in the book of life.

- It is interesting that this feature is mentioned here because this is the unbelievers' judgment.
- It is possible that Millennium saints are also judged at this point, but it doesn't say!

QUESTION: Let's talk briefly about the Book of Life

- "Book of Life"
  - This exact phrase occurs 8 times in the entire bible: Psalms and Philippians once each.
  - The other 6 in Revelation
- "In your book"
  - This exact phrase occurs twice in Psalms
    - *Psa 139:16, And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me,*
- "blot" with "book" four times
  - Some claim these verses imply that a name can be erased. This is not true.
    - *See Rev 3:5, "I will not erase his name from the book of life"*
- **Bottom line: If you have put your trust in Jesus for your salvation, your name is in there!**

Next time (the last session): Heaven - The Eternal State