

The Great White Throne Judgement

by David Legge

The Great White Throne Judgment is a court scene in Revelation 20:11-15 where God judges all people based on their works, and the consequence of sin is eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

Duration: 39:33

Scripture: Psalm 9:17, Proverbs 9:10, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:15

Topics: "Final Judgment", "Eternal Accountability"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. Ironside begins by reading John 3:16, emphasizing God's love for the world and the gift of His only begotten Son. He then shares a story about a man on a plane facing imminent danger, highlighting the importance of being prepared for judgment. Dr. Ironside emphasizes the penalty of judgment and the accountability for every word spoken. He also mentions the concept of one's life flashing before their eyes in life-threatening situations. Throughout the sermon, Dr. Ironside references various Bible verses to support his points and concludes by highlighting the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice and the vastness of the sun compared to the earth.

Transcript

We're turning in our Bibles tonight to the book of the Revelation, the last book within our Bibles, the book of the Revelation on chapter 20. If you don't know, this book is a vision that John the Apostle had when he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos for preaching the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he was on that island and God revealed to him many things, he saw this, and this is what I want to speak to you about tonight.

Verse 11, he says, 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. Let us pray as we come before the Word of God. Our Father in heaven, we thank you this evening for thy Word and for the

power that we find within it to soothe our hearts.

But Lord, it also is a piercing instrument that shows us to be what we are. And our Father, we pray this evening that as we come to it, we do feel inadequate, we do feel weak. And Father, we say with one of old, who is able for these things? Yet Lord, in thee, O Lord, we put our trust and we ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit to be our portion tonight.

And for those who have never seen Christ in a saving way, that they would see him tonight for his name's sake. Revelation chapter 20 and verses 11 to 15 is the passage of Scripture where you find accounted for us the great white throne. You may have heard about this throne, but tonight we're going to think about it.

Many years ago on July the 8th, 1741, Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon. He entitled that sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. His sermon was written word for word on a sheet of paper and he held it to his face and read each word as it was written.

Yet thousands of people were touched and people had the fear of God in them so much that they held on to the pews, they held on to the pillars around them for fear that the ground would open and swallow them up into hell. One man ran up the aisle and cried, Mr. Edwards, have mercy upon me. That was then and this is now.

And what was a popular message then, a gospel message, about a place called hell is no longer a popular message today. In fact, within the annals and within the corridors of the Church of Jesus Christ and even in its theological halls and in some of its churches, to mention the word hell brings a frown. A great preacher, a great gospel preacher, Dr. Harry Ironside on one occasion was taking a mission overseas.

And when he got off the plane in the airport of the place where he would take that mission, one of the deacons of the church met him and he asked Dr. Ironside what he would be preaching on in his time with them. Dr. Ironside said to him, well, what would you like me to preach on? The deacon said to him, well, what about preaching on the love of God? Dr. Ironside said, well, that's all right, but what text, what passage of scripture would you like me to preach on? He said, well, one that's well known and one that's probably the best known about the love of God is John chapter 3 and verse 16, for God so loved the world. So Dr. Ironside agreed to it.

And on the first night of the mission, they were all sitting, the final hymn before the message was sung and Dr. Ironside rose to the pulpit, opened his Bible at John chapter 3 and began to read. Before that, the deacon had said to him, don't mention hell. Just preach on the love of God, but Dr. Ironside, don't mention hell.

So Dr. Ironside got to his feet and he began to read John 3 and 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not. And he turned to the deacon beside him and said, what will I tell them now? It is well explained in a story that I heard recently of a man who is on a plane and the plane gets into severe difficulties. The engines begin to feel and suddenly there's announcement comes over the intercom that everyone has to go below their seats and put their life jacket on and get into a brace because it is about to crash.

The air hostess comes down the aisle with a package with her and she comes to a very important man and she gives him this package and tells him to put it on his back. It's a parachute. But she tells this man, well, if you put this on your back, it will make you more comfortable.

If you put this on your back, it'll give you a more easy ride. It'll be a nicer trip for you. In fact, this little backpack, although it doesn't seem it, if you put it on your back, you'll find that it's good for your health.

You might look better when you put it in your back. You could feel better. You'll have a better quality of life.

And this man, well, he's convinced and he puts it on his back. But when he puts it on his back, he realizes that the people beside him are looking up. And the people down the aisle are looking that he's different from them.

And they don't understand why he has this on his back. And he starts to fidget because it gets itchy. It gets uncomfortable.

It gets sweaty. And eventually what he does is he takes it off. The plane crashes and that man is lost.

If you were that air host or air hostess, what would you do? I know what I would do. I would come down the aisle and I would say, put this on. It could save your life.

There is a word that we use in the Christian church and in the evangelical church. It's the word save. And my friend, tonight is a biblical word.

It is a Christian word. But listen, it loses all meaning. It loses all point, all power, if you don't know what you've been saved from.

I want to speak to you tonight on the great white throne judgment. And if you open your Bibles at Revelation 20 and verse 11, the first thing I want you to see this evening is the place of judgment. The place of judgment.

And this is a court scene, a bit like the courts that we would know. I hope you don't know too much about them, but you know what is there. And the most important thing that is there is a judge.

Only this courtroom and this court scene is extremely different. Because at this judgment throne and this judgment bar, there is no bargaining. At this judgment scene, there is no defense lawyer.

There are no jury. There is no plea. There is no method of appeal and there is no leniency.

All there is, is judgment. What is the place of judgment? Well, verse 11 says this, and I want to stress this to you this evening, that we have been reading the Word of God. And John says, I saw.

That's not to be debated about. And I'm not going to stand here tonight and try to prove to you that what John saw is true. You know why? Because only the Holy Spirit can show you that tonight.

But I'm telling you that John saw it. And it was real. And oh, how John must have shuddered in his boots to see the awful scene of what was ahead of people if they did not trust Christ.

What did John see? Well, he saw the place of judgment. He says in verse 11, if you look at it, that it is a great white throne. It's great.

Why is it great? Well, it's great not because of the throne itself, but it's great because of the person that sits upon the throne. It's great in its majesty. It's great in its dignity.

It's great in its splendor and in its sovereignty and in its power. It's a great throne. Why? Because there is one who sits upon it who is the judge of all judges, who is the king of kings, who is the Lord of lords, who is the only potentate, the preeminent one in the universe, Jesus Christ.

He sits on the throne. It's a great white throne. Why is it white? Why is it not black? Why is it not gold? Why is it not speckled in the beautiful gems studded in the beautiful jewels of this world? You know why? Because white, pure, pristine, white like snow, speaks of the purity of this throne.

Why is it purity? Simply this, because there will not be one sin that will have a positive judgment from this throne. This is an absolute authority. There's no leniency.

There's absolute judgment. You won't be able to answer back to this judge. You won't be able to plead your cause.

You won't be able to sign a piece of paper and hope that a lawyer will be able to bring you to another court case and will be able to let you get free. There will be none of that. And this person, this pure, righteous, holy person who cannot look upon a mistake, cannot look upon a sin, cannot even conceive a sin in his own mind, he will declare judgment.

And it will be final. It's a great white throne. But this is remarkable.

It tells us something else about the place of the judgment, because it says in verse 11, whose face, the person who is sitting on this throne, from his face. And I want to tell you this evening that from another passage in the Word of God, it says of his face that his eyes were as fire. This is not gentle Jesus, meek and mild, that we so often hear about.

This is Jesus Christ, the judge of the world. And as he stands with his laser-beam eyes, they go through your very soul and spirit, all your motives, all your characteristics, your personality. It shines through everything.

And whatever is not of himself, whatever is not of God and is of sin, will be burnt up like the chaff. It says from his face, the earth and the heaven fled away. My friends, this is too deep for me, and I want you to grasp this tonight from his face, from this blessed person.

You remember the face that was punched, the face that was spat upon, the face that men reviled, the face that men laughed at, the face that men took with their hands and plucked the very, very hairs from his face. From that face one day, the very heavens and the earth will flee away in fear. Do you know the size of the sun? You know, if we were to take a giant ice cream scoop tonight and scoop out the insides of the sun and make it hollow, according to science, you could fit within the sun 1,300,000 earths.

Isn't that mind-boggling? You could fit within a hollow sun 1,300,000 earths. There's a planet in our solar system, and it's mentioned in the book of Job, and you think of how big the sun is, you could fit so many earths in, but in this planet that's mentioned in Job, you could fit 25,000 suns. In the Times a few weeks ago, there was an article that read that there are 120,000 stars in a constellation.

A constellation is simply a group of stars, a family of stars, and in just one of those, there are 120,000 stars. And this is what is so mind-boggling, that for as many stars, 120,000, there are constellations. But praying tonight on this awful and on this terrible day, there will be a throne either in heaven or space or somewhere, and as the one that sits on the throne looks and his face is seen, the Bible says that all of that

vastness and greatness, it will flee in his face.

What a terrible scene. All flies away from his face except for you. My friend, if you're not saved tonight, the greatest planets in the world, the greatest buildings in the world, the greatest things that men cannot get their puny mind around will flee from the face of the Son of God, but you will be stuck like in cement, you'll not be able to move, you'll not be able to run, and even though you've run from him all your life and all the life he's given you, you will stand still.

And the Bible says you will gaze upon the face of the one whom your sins have pierced. That's the place of judgment. But in verse 12 we find the people who were judged.

It says that the dead, the dead were there, John says, I saw them small and great stand before God. You know, this is remarkable because there are many people in our world today and there are many classes, there are many status symbols and ladders to climb up to, and there are the paupers and there are the rich people, but this is what the Bible says, this is what the Word of God says, that tonight where you are in this place, that God is not looking at your bank balance, God is not looking at how many letters you have after your name, God is not looking at the many rooms you have in your house, he's not looking at the CC of your car, God isn't looking at that tonight. God says that on that dreadful day that the small and the great will be there.

I wonder who will be there. Lot's wife will be there. Do you remember Lot's wife? What happened? God gave her a chance.

God gave Lot a chance to escape. What happened? They dwelt in a terrible, terrible town. The sin of that town went to God as a stench.

It was so evil and God warned them that he would come and he would destroy the town with fire and brimstone and he told Lot and his family to get out. He didn't want to get out, but he told them if you don't get out you'll die. And he says when you're going out, you make sure that your exit from that town and that city is complete.

What I mean is you make sure you're happy to get out, you make sure you're glad to get out. And to show that, don't turn around and look back. And of course we know what happened.

Lot's wife turned around and you know what the Bible says, she turned around, you know why? She loved Sodom. My friend, tonight maybe you're here and that is your problem. That is what has kept you from Christ all your life.

You love your world. You love the wee drink. You love the company of the world.

You love the prestige of the world. You love climbing the ladder. You love living for things down here.

You love your sin, whatever it is. You love the bright lights and the world around. You love it.

And that is what keeps you from Christ tonight. Well listen, if you let that keep you from Jesus this evening, do you know what will happen? You will be with Lot's wife of the great white throne. Who else was there? Herod Antipas was there.

If Lot's wife loved Sodom and the world, Herod Antipas loved sex. You remember what happened? We read in the Bible that John the Baptist lost his head over the whole thing and I mean literally. He was

beheaded because he spoke out against Herod Antipas' love of sex and love of women.

Herodias, a lovely girl in the royal family, in this beautiful prestigious to look upon in the outside, it was regal at everything that you could ever want in majesty, power and status. And this beautiful creature of a woman was in it. She was married to her uncle, which was wrong in the first place.

And then Herod Antipas talked her into marrying him, leaving her uncle and marrying him. And oh, the stench of this to God. And John the Baptist was one of the least people in the land at that time to realize that this stunk to God and that God was angry and he preached against it.

And because of it, he lost his life. I wonder, are you here tonight? And you'll be in hell because you love sex. Listen, young people tonight.

Is that you? It can be in the television, it can be in books, it doesn't have to be the real thing. But that thing could keep you out of heaven just like Herod. It could be the thing to stumble you or you could be like Judas tonight.

What did he do? He betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ for money. He loved money. And because he loved money today, he is in hell.

And in a day to come, he will stand at the great white throne and be judged for his love of money. Or there's Pilate. He will be there.

Why? Well, if you look to John chapter 19 and verse 12, you remember Jesus as a beautiful person, the son of God stood before Pilate about to be sentenced. Pilate said to him, look, I have authority over you. He was saying as a creature to his creator, I have authority over you.

Jesus said, you have only the authority that God gives you. And that put the fear of God into Pilate and he wasn't going to crucify him. And you know what happened? The Jews turned around to him and said, you are not Caesar's friend.

If you were Caesar's friend, you wouldn't have anybody else who's a king. This man says he's king of kings. He's putting himself above Caesar.

You're not Caesar's friend. Of course, that was below the belt for Pilate. You know why? Because Pilate was a lover of men.

He loved prestige. He loved to be popular. He loved to be seen to be fashionable and to be going with the crowd.

He loved all of that. And he was so taken up with his reputation and his name that he crucified the son of God to be called Caesar's friend. What about you tonight? What about you? He will stand before this great and awesome throne and everything in the worlds around will disappear and flee and he will stand and you might stand beside him in the same category for loving men, for loving your mates and being afraid of what your mates would say and your family would say, what your wife would say or your husband.

And because of that, you would stand in Pilate's shoe. Or there's a man in the book of Acts called Galio and he will be there. There's a great rumpus in the city in which Galio was a governor with him.

He had power within the city and there was a great uproar. Why? Because of the Christians, because of the Jews fighting with the Christians and so on. There was so much going on.

And you know what Galio did? He stepped back and it says that he cared for none of those things. Lot's wife loved Sodom. Herod Antipas loved sex.

Judas loved money. Pilate loved men and Galio loved nothing. And you could be here tonight and you're looking along and you're saying this is all good and I would agree with you there David, but you're not willing to do anything about it.

He looked on and he said that's all well and good. You have your meetings. You have your missions.

You preach your gospel. You talk about hell if you believe it. But I'll live my life.

I'll get on with my own life. I'll not worry about it all. My friend, you'll stand right behind Galio.

When the Second World War was over, the rule book of all those who were in the Nazi party, which added up to about eight million people, was let loose and given to the authority. And within that book, there were the small, the great, the prestigious, the rich, the great politicians, people who loved being in the leading ruling party, who had all the power, prestige, and wealth. Yet now, now it was different because it was in the hands of what was supposed to be a just rule.

And that just rule said that they had committed war crimes. And it was different then. My friend tonight, listen, you could be living like these people.

You could be living like Lot's wife and you think everything's okay, like Herod. You could be living like Galio. You could be living like all these people.

You could be living like King Agrippa. Almost, almost. You're nearly there.

You're nearly over the line. But the time could come too late when the books will be open, when the rule will be called and your name won't be Emmett. What will you do there? I want you to see finally the penalty of judgment.

You know what it says? It says the books were open. And the book of life was open. And the dead were judged by their works.

You know, Mark says in Mark 4, and Matthew says in Matthew 12, and Matthew also says in Matthew 10, listen, for there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested. Neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. Every idle word that man shall speak, they shall give account thereof on the day of judgment.

There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed. You ever had an experience? I don't know whether you ever had, but I'm sure you've read about it many times. When a person is in such a difficult situation, maybe they're in a car accident, maybe they're in another accident, a life-threatening situation, and they use the phraseology that their life flashed before their eyes.

My friend, tonight, there is a day that will come when that will happen to all of us. Dr. Wilbur Penfold is the director of Montreal Neurological Institute, and he wrote a report on the brain. And I quote it here, word for word, and please listen to this.

He says, your brain contains a permanent record of your past that is like a single continuous strip of movie film, complete with a soundtrack. And this film library records your whole waking life from childhood on. You can live again those scenes from your past, one at a time, when a surgeon simply applies a gentle electrical current to the center point of the temporal cortex of your brain.

The article goes on to say that as you relive the scene from your past, it says you feel exactly the same emotions, the same feelings as you did during the original experience. My friend, tonight, if that's what men in white coats can do, what can the Son of God on a white throne do? Can you imagine that? Those experiences, those sins, those nights of drunkenness, of revelry, those nights that you didn't do it maybe outwardly, but you did it in your mind, the things that you have thought about, can you imagine this for a whole eternity perhaps, reliving them, re-experiencing them, feeling them over and over again, and not being able to escape? Those skeletons will not remain in the cupboard, because the Word of God says that the books are opened and the dead will be judged small and great upon their works, upon the things that they have done. Can you imagine standing there, and the Son of God who knew no sin, did no sin, could not conceive a sin, or could not commit a sin, and you're standing and you're watching your life, and you're watching the sins, and He is watching them too, and the tears are running down your face, and every single one that you feel again, you're doing it.

You regret you ever did it. What a terrible penalty to pay. What is the penalty? The penalty is hell.

You know, the Bible speaks about death, and death claims the body. Hell claims the soul and spirit. But there's a strange verse in this passage that says that the sea gave up the dead which were in it.

You know what that means? That the sea, those who have died at sea, those who have been buried at sea, it vomited the dead back up again, and every particle that was lost from one end of the ocean to the other, that made up that person, will come together miraculously as one person, and their body will be there again, and the soul and spirit will unite with it. And those people who are unsaved will go and stand before God in their body. Death took their body.

Hell, if they're not saved, took their soul and spirit. But listen, the word of God says that on this judgment, if their name is not found written in the book, that they experience the second death. What is the second death? The second death is when your resurrected body, soul, and spirit is cast into the lake of fire.

Cast alive into the lake of everlasting fire. And we see something, a little bit of the picture of it, with the rich man in Lazarus, and that rich man who had lived such a fat, sumptuous life on earth, and this poor peasant who had lived to hell on earth was now in heaven, and he was in hell. And he could see him, he could see him in heaven enjoying himself.

He could talk to Abraham. He could feel his thirst. He could feel the heat.

He could think. He could remember all that he did in his life, the times he rejected God's truth and walked past the beggar lying there. Oh, my friend, tonight, this is an awful penalty.

Jesus called this place, this lake of fire, where people, body, soul, and spirit are cast into, he called it Gehenna. Gehenna was a place where King Manasseh offered children, sacrificed children to the fire for the god Moloch. But in Jesus' day, Gehenna was a city dump.

It was the place, the incinerator, that was a continual fire and flame. The flame never went out. And Jesus Christ not, not me, Jesus said that that is what hell will be like.

And the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever. And they had no rest day and night. My friend, tonight, I want to finish on this note of good news.

Listen to me. If you're not saved tonight, you will face this. Believe you me, you will face it.

And this night that you heard about it will haunt you for all eternity. But listen to this. Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, almost 2,000 years ago, he went through your lake of fire.

He went through your hell. He went through your first and second death. Do you know why? So that you would not have to.

David, how can I be saved? How can I be saved from all this? How can I escape this? Listen, flee. Flee to Christ tonight. Trust Christ.

Prepare to meet your God. He is standing with open arms to you. All you have to do is come to him.

Please come to him tonight. Please don't face this. Many people feel they're living a hell on earth already.

Listen, they know nothing about hell. Nothing. Will you not trust Christ tonight? Will you not run to the bosom of Christ and be put within that bosom so that when he goes through the fire as he did go through the fire, you are within him.

And he is taking your penalty. He is setting you free. And he's taking you over to the glory land.

He's taking you to heaven where there is no pain, where there is no sorrow, where there is no separation, no parting, no dying, no crying, nothing more. Where there is eternal rest and eternal bliss forevermore. My friend, what holds you back? For whosoever was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Let us sing prayerfully our final hymn. 258. I am trusting thee, Lord Jesus, trusting only thee, trusting thee for full salvation, great and free.

And we'll sing the first, the fifth, and the sixth verse. The first, the fifth, and the sixth verse of 258, standing to sing. I am trusting thee, Lord Jesus, never let me go.

I am trusting thee forever and for all. Let us pray. I believe God has been speaking to some of you tonight.

Talk to us, and don't leave this place without getting right with the Lord Jesus Christ. You can get right with him where you are, but if you want to talk, if you want help, if you want to be pointed in a certain direction or a certain scripture, we are here for you. But get right with God tonight.

Our Father, we thank thee for thy word. And Lord, we know that we have a duty to preach all thy word. We know that the love of God means nothing if we do not see the wrath and the anger of God upon sin.

Lord, the cross means nothing if there is not a hell, if there is not a punishment. For what could Christ save us from? What would be worth doing what he did? Only hell. And Lord, hell is the most real thing that there is in the gospel in the sense that we are all destined there if we do not get saved.

Lord, save souls tonight for thy glory. In Jesus' name. Take us now, our Father, to our home and bless us there.

Amen. We trust you've been blessed and challenged by the message you've just heard. Why not pass it on to a friend or colleague? If you have access to the internet, you may want to visit our website, which is updated weekly, at PreachTheWord.com. There you'll find our audio sermon archives and transcripts of Pastor Legge's messages.

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