

## The Book Of Revelation Study 96

*Revelation 20:11-15 (NASB)*

<sup>11</sup> *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.*

<sup>12</sup> *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.*

<sup>13</sup> *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.*

<sup>14</sup> *Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

<sup>15</sup> *And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

We have already described the scene here given by the Apostle.

This passage describes the terrifying reality of the final judgment before the Great White Throne and before Him who sat on this throne, God Himself, the Lamb.

We found out that this judgment on sinners is revealed under four headings.

The Scene,

The summons,

The standard,

The sentence.

Having looked at the scene last study today we move on to the summons,

### THE SUMMONS

*Revelation 20:13a (NASB)*

<sup>13</sup> *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them;*

As the next scene in this ultimate courtroom drama unfolds, the prisoners are summoned from their cells to appear before the Judge.

Since their deaths, their souls have been tormented in a place of punishment:  
Now the time has come for them to be sentenced to the final, eternal hell.

Before the sea was uncreated and went out of existence, it gave up the dead which were in it.

The sea may be singled out because it is seemingly the most difficult place from which bodies could be resurrected. But God will summon from its depths new bodies for all who perished in the sea throughout human history, including those who drowned in the Flood, those who went down with the Titanic, the Lusitania, the Arizona, and the countless other ships that have sunk, as well as all the millions of other people who met their end at Sea.

Death symbolizes all the places on land from which God will resurrect new bodies for the unrighteous dead.

The sea and death are pictured as voracious monsters that have swallowed those bodies and will be forced to disgorge them before their uncreation.

Hades is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol*.

Both words describe the realm of the dead.

**Sheol**, used sixty-seven times in the Old Testament, describes the realm of the dead in general.

**Hades**, is used ten times in the New Testament, always in reference to the place of punishment.

The rich-man in Jesus Parables.

**Luke 16:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> *"In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.*

It is used to describe the place where the unrighteous are kept until their sentencing to hell.

In this incredible scene, **Hades** is emptied of its captive spirits, who are reunited with resurrection bodes before the bar of God's justice.

Unbelievers, fitted with resurrection bodies suited for hell, will then be ready for their sentencing to the lake of fire where their punishment, unlike that in Hades, will last forever.

Now by what standard will they be judged?

#### THE STANDARD

**Revelation 20:12b (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> *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.*

As the judgment commences, the Judge opens the books.

The scene is reminiscent of the one described by Daniel:

**Daniel 7:9-10 (NASB)**

<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 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.*

The books contain the record of every thought, word, and deed of every unsaved person who ever lived.

God has kept perfect, accurate, and comprehensive records of every person's life, and the dead will be judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

Sinner's deeds will be measured against God's perfect, holy standard, which Jesus defined in Matthew

**Matthew 5:48 (NASB)**

<sup>48</sup> *"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

In his first epistle Peter wrote;

**1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> *but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;*

<sup>16</sup> *because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."*

To the Galatians Paul wrote;

**Galatians 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."*

This truth was also taught by James;

**James 2:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

No prisoner before the bar of divine justice will be able to claim the perfect obedience to God's holy standards that He requires.

Why?

They, "*they all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom 3:23), and are, "*dead in their trespasses and sins*" (Eph 2:1)

God's justice demands payment for every person's sins.

Christ paid that penalty for believers;

**Isaiah 53:5-6 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> *But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.*

<sup>6</sup> *All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.*

**Galatians 3:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—*

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

**1 Peter 2:24 (NASB)**

<sup>24</sup> *and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

Now listen, unbelievers, not having Christ's righteousness imputed to them will themselves pay the penalty for violating God's law, and that payment is eternal destruction in Hell

**2 Thessalonians 1:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> *These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

God's judgment of impenitent, unbelieving sinners' evil deeds will include their thoughts.

**Psalms 44:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> *Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.*

**Romans 2:16b (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> *God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.*

**Luke 8:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> *"For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light.*

**Matthew 12:37 (NASB)**

<sup>37</sup> *"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

Finally Unbelievers will be judged for their actions

**Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> *For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.*

**Matthew 16:27 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> *"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.*

No one will be able to claim ignorance of God's standards, because both creation and the conscience reveal God's righteousness.

Those without the knowledge of God's law will be judged on the basis of the knowledge they did have.

The absolute, unerring accuracy of God's judgment will ensure that unbelievers' punishment in hell fits their iniquity. Each person's life will be individually evaluated, and each person's punishment will be consistent with that evaluation.

Thus scripture teaches that there will be varying degrees of punishment in hell.

It should be noted that while there are varying degrees of punishment in hell, everyone there will suffer intolerable, indescribable misery and torment.

All sinners in hell will be utterly separated from God and all that comes from His goodness. Thus they will be miserable, but not equally miserable.

After the books containing the prisoners' evil deeds were opened another book was opened, which is the book of life. This book's imagery corresponds to the registry of citizens kept by ancient cities; it contains the names of all those whose "citizenship is in heaven"

It is referred to several times in Revelation. The **Book Of Life** is the record of God's elect, and all whose names are not recorded in it will be eternally damned.

So since their names were not in the **book of life**, the prisoners before the Great White Throne were judged, **every one of them according to their deeds.**

Some in shock and horror, will protest, "**Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform nay miracles?**"(Matt 7:22)

But they will hear in reply the most chilling, terrifying words that any human will ever hear. "**I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness**" (Matt 7:23)

Those who refuse to plead guilty to their sins in this world, repent, and ask God for a pardon based on the substitutionary work of Christ will face trial after they die. And on that day they will be pronounced guilty.

## THE SENTENCE

**Revelation 20:14-15 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> **Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.**

<sup>15</sup> **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

The evidence is irrefutable the verdict rendered; judgment will be swiftly carried out.

As the sentence is passed, **death and Hades**, the grave, and the temporary place of punishment for everyone whose name was not found written in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire.

They will be swallowed up by the final hell. (Matt 10:28)

The final hell, described as **the lake of fire**, may already exist, but if so, it is currently unoccupied.

It's first two occupants, the beast and the false prophet, will not arrive until the end of the Tribulation (19:20)

The clearest and most vivid of the New Testament terms used to describe the final hell, **the lake of fire**, is *geenna* (Gehenna).

Gehenna is the New Testament word for the valley of Ben-Hinnom (also called Tophet,) located southwest of Jerusalem.

In Old Testament times, idolatrous Israelites burned their children in the fire there as sacrifices to false gods;

**Jeremiah 19:2-6 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> **"Then go out to the valley of Ben-hinnom, which is by the entrance of the potsherd gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you,**

<sup>3</sup> **and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Behold I am about to bring a calamity upon this place, at which the ears of everyone that hears of it will tingle.**

<sup>4</sup> **"Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place**

*with the blood of the innocent*

<sup>5</sup> *and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;*

<sup>6</sup> *therefore, behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter.*

In Jesus day, it was the site of Jerusalem's garbage dump.

The fires kept constantly burning there gave off foul-smelling smoke, and the dump was infested with maggots. Sometimes the bodies of criminals were dumped there.

The valley of Ben-Hinnom was thus an apt picture of eternal hell, one used repeatedly by Jesus. Hell will be God's eternal cosmic dump; its inmates will be burning as garbage forever.

The blessed and holy participants in the first resurrection will not experience the second death. But the rest of the dead, who did not participate in the first resurrection will face **the second death**, which is defined here as **the lake of fire**.

**Those who die in their sins** in this present world of time and space will die a **second death** in eternity, they will be sentenced to **the lake of fire** Forever.

Scripture vividly portrays the various aspects of the final, fiery hell.

Fire is used more than twenty times in the New Testament to depict the torment of hell.

Whether the **fire** of hell is literal, physical fire is unknown, since **the lake of fire** exists outside the created universe as we know it.

If the fire here is symbolic, the reality it represents will be even more horrifying and painful.

The Bible also depicts hell as a place of total darkness, which will isolate its inmates from each other

**Matthew 22:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> *"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

This is a place where the worm will never die, (possibly emblematic of an accusing conscience.) which will devour the wicked and will never stop, also this is a place spoken of as the banishment from God's Kingdom a place of unending sorrow.

There is only one way to avoid the terrifying reality of hell.

Those who confess their sins and ask God to forgive them on the basis of Christ's substitutionary death on their behalf will be delivered from God's eternal wrath

**Romans 5:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*

**1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> *wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*