



THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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The Final Judgment

SERMON REFERENCE: Revelation 20:11-15

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2213

The Book of Revelation prophesies that at the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will come with His saints in power and great glory to rule and reign and judge the sins of the world.

Revelation 20 sets the scene of the final judgment, when God settles the score and judges the sins of those who are not in Christ Jesus.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away...And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened...” (Revelation 20:11-12).

Whether we believe in Him or not, we will all meet Jesus Christ. He is unavoidable; He cannot be deceived, disputed, or discredited.

Adrian Rogers says, “If you don’t meet Him as Savior, you will meet Him as Judge.”

This passage also describes those who are called to the judgment:

- The out and out sinner who hates God
- The self-righteous who thinks he is too good for judgment
- The procrastinator who intended to be saved but never confirmed his salvation
- The unsaved church member who has religion, but not the Lord
- The one who has never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Not one sin has escaped God’s knowledge; every sin will be accounted for—secrets that have been repressed will be revealed.

“And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books” (Revelation 20:12).

Like any earthly courtroom, the evidence and the defense will be presented, and then the verdict will be handed down. And what waits at the end of a Christless life is a sure and severe eternity in Hell.

But Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...”

Adrian Rogers says, “I’m not going to stand before the great white throne, and I’ll tell you why: I settled out of court. I have given my heart to Jesus Christ and, on that cross, He took my sin and my judgment.”

Through the blood of Jesus, our sins can be buried in the grave of God’s forgetfulness, never to be brought up against us again.

Life Application

Have you settled out of court? Choose to follow Him today, lest you stand before the throne of God in judgment.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Jesus saves, but there are many who are not saved.
 - i) If they die without Jesus, then they will be lost for all eternity.
- b) Hell is not a fairy tale or a figment of the imagination.
 - i) Hell is very real.
- c) There is coming a judgment.
 - i) There is coming a time when God will put the final period upon the final sentence upon the final paragraph upon the final page upon the final chapter upon the final book of history as we know it.
 - ii) Time as we have known it will come to a conclusion.
 - iii) The dead will rise to be judged.
 - (1) One by one, they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and face the final judgment.
- d) Revelation 20:11-15
 - i) God gave the apostle John a vision of the final judgment.
 - ii) This is God's Word; totally true, fully inspired, and God's message for our generation today is that there is a judgment coming.
- e) Hebrews 9:27
 - i) It is appointed for every unsaved person to have a date with Deity.
 - (1) They will stand before Almighty God and will be judged.
- f) In today's message, we will look at four things concerning the coming judgment.

2) THE SETTING DESCRIBED

- a) Revelation 20:11
 - i) We are talking about a trial.
 - ii) The setting is like a courtroom.
 - (1) The throne
 - (a) Revelation 20:11
 - (i) There is a bench or throne, and it is great and white.
 - 1. The greatness speaks of the power of it.
 - 2. The whiteness speaks of the purity of it.
 - 3. The word "throne" speaks of the purpose on it because a Sovereign is sitting upon this great, white throne.
 - (b) Those who stand before the great white throne are eternally condemned.
 - (2) The Judge is Jesus Christ.
 - (a) Revelation 20:11
 - (i) Jesus Christ will be the Judge in eternity.
 - (ii) The Lord Jesus will be the one sitting upon the throne.
 - (b) Not only is Jesus the Savior, but He is also the Judge.
 - (i) John 5:22
 - (ii) Jesus Christ Himself is the Judge, not your opinion of yourself or that of your friends or family.



- (c) Jesus is described in the Bible as both a Lamb and a Lion.
 - (i) He is both a Judge and a Savior.
 - (ii) You will meet Him as either a Lamb or a Lion.
 - (iii) You will meet Him as either Judge or Savior, but you will meet Him.
 - 1. Jesus is the unavoidable, inescapable person in your life.
 - a. You may have cursed Him, mocked Him, ignored Him, or debated Him, but one day you are going to meet Him.
- (d) Revelation 1:13-16
 - (i) The Apostle John has a vision and sees the exalted Christ.
 - (ii) In verse 13, the word “paps” means “chest.”
 - (iii) The Lord Jesus is wearing the regal robes of a king and a judge.
 - (iv) His hair, which is white as wool, speaks of His unsullied and absolute purity.
 - (v) His eyes are like a flame of fire, which means that He not only sees you but also sees through you.
 - 1. He knows all about you.
 - a. Hebrews 4:13
 - 2. He cannot be deceived, discredited, or disputed.
 - (vi) His feet are like fine brass.
 - 1. In the Bible, brass is a symbol of judgment.
 - 2. He is going on relentlessly to judge; He is unstoppable.
 - (vii) His voice is like the sound of many waters.
 - 1. When He speaks, it is like 100 cascading waterfalls.
 - a. Can you imagine anyone arguing with Niagara Falls?
- (e) The Bible says that from His presence, the Earth and Heavens fled away.
 - (i) Revelation 20:11
 - (ii) This means that everything stable is gone.
 - 1. Everything that people have depended upon and looked to is gone.
 - (iii) Adam fled to hide from God in the trees of the Garden of Eden.
 - 1. Genesis 3:8
 - 2. There will be no garden trees in which to hide.

3) THE SUMMONS DELIVERED

- a) God is going to send out a summons to gather those to be judged.
- b) Revelation 20:12-13
 - i) When God sends out His summons, He doesn't have to get an extradition from death and Hell.
 - ii) When He says “Come,” they will come.
 - iii) It does not matter how insignificant or how powerful you think you are.
 - (1) Without Jesus Christ, you will stand before God.
- c) Who will be called to the judgment?
 - i) The out and out sinner.
 - (1) They hate God, hate Christ, hate the Bible, and hate preachers.
 - (a) They mock and make fun.
 - (2) There are people in this world who will shake their fists boldly and brazenly in the face of God; they will not bow down to Him.



- ii) The self-righteous.
 - (1) They think that because they are not out and out sinners that they are Heaven-bound.
 - (2) They think that the Gospel is for the thief, the murderer, the drunkard, but not for them.
 - (3) They are nice people, and they are members of fine clubs.
 - (4) They treat others well.
 - (5) They do not think that they need to be saved.
 - (a) They are righteous in and of themselves.
 - (b) They do not understand that the Bible says that it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by His mercy that He saves us.
 - (i) Titus 3:5
 - (ii) Isaiah 64:6
 - (c) Many people are egomaniacs strutting to Hell, thinking they are too good to be damned.
 - (d) The worst form of badness is human goodness when it becomes a substitute for the new birth.
- iii) The procrastinators.
 - (1) They know that they are sinners and that they need to be saved, and they have determined that they will not die and go to Hell.
 - (2) They intend to get saved - someday.
 - (3) The devil will always tell you not to do it today, that there will be a better time.
 - (a) Proverbs 27:1
 - (b) Proverbs 29:1
 - (c) You dare not presume upon tomorrow.
 - (i) Tomorrow is only a time that is on the fool's calendar.
 - (ii) James 4:14
 - (4) There are many procrastinators who intend one day to get saved, but who will die and go to Hell, having never been saved.
- iv) Lost church members.
 - (1) These are they who have been duped by religion.
 - (2) They are not procrastinators because they think it is all settled.
 - (3) They somehow have religion, but they do not have Jesus Christ.
 - (4) They're religious, have joined a church, and have been baptized.
 - (a) The devil would just as soon send you to Hell from a church pew as he had from the gutter; it makes no difference to him.
 - (b) There are many people who get their names on the church roll, but never have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
 - (i) Revelation 20:15
 - (5) The church is not the way to Heaven.
 - (a) The church is the sign that points to Heaven.
 - (b) The church is only a signpost telling us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (6) How sad for someone who sang in the choir, who served the Lord's Supper, or worked in the church to die and go to Hell.
 - (a) Those who helped Noah build the ark drowned.
 - (b) Many will go to Hell because they are counting on their religiosity to get them to Heaven, but they have never repented of their sins and put their faith in Jesus Christ.



- (i) They give lip service to it, but they have never been born again.
 - v) Those who have never heard the Gospel.
 - (1) They have never heard the saving message of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) While they do not have enough light to save them, they do have enough sin to condemn them.
 - (a) They are sinners, and they will be judged.
 - (3) Is it fair for God to let somebody die and go to Hell who has never heard the Gospel?
 - (a) Some may ask, "Aren't they saved if they don't hear?"
 - (i) The bigger question is, are you saved if you do not tell them?
 - (4) The Bible teaches that those without Jesus Christ are going to be judged, but they are not going to be judged the same way that we will be judged.
 - (a) Luke 12:47-48
 - (i) If those who have never heard the Word of God are going to stand and be judged, then what is going to happen to those who knew the Master's will and did it not?
 - (5) Revelation 20:12-13
- d) Notice when God gives the summons, the places from which they are called:
 - i) Death has the body.
 - (1) When the unsaved die, death comes after the body and carries it down to the grave to disintegration.
 - (2) But there is a part that doesn't go to the grave, but it goes to a place called Hell.
 - (a) This is a translation of the Greek word "Hades."
 - (b) It is the place where the departed dead go to await the judgment.
 - ii) If the unsaved are already in Hell, then why are they taken out of Hell to be judged?
 - (1) Because it is Hades and not the lake of fire; they are going to be cast into the lake of fire.
 - (a) What is the difference?
 - (i) Suppose a person commits a crime and is indicted by the Grand Jury.
 - 1. He is so dangerous that the judge will not grant bond.
 - 2. He is put into the county jail and held there until he is judged.
 - 3. He is taken out of that jail, judged, and then put into the penitentiary.
 - 4. The lake of fire is the eternal penitentiary.
 - iii) Death has the body, and Hell has the soul where it waits until the final judgment.
 - (1) They cannot be judged now because it is not finished yet.
 - (a) Their influence upon others is still ongoing and will not stop until it reaches the shores of eternity.
 - (b) God has to wait until it is all over and all the facts are in.

4) THE SECRETS DISPLAYED

- a) Revelation 20:12-13
- b) God is keeping books.
 - i) He is recording the secret things that nobody else knows about.
 - (1) Ecclesiastes 12:14
 - (2) Romans 2:16
- c) There are secrets that have been forgotten and repressed.



- i) You tried to put them out of your consciousness.
- ii) You think, perhaps, that the statute of limitations has taken them all away.
 - (1) But God has kept the books.
- d) God knows it all.
 - i) God has a candid camera and has those things that you have long forgotten.
- e) Matthew 12:36
 - i) Some have taken God's name in vain.
 - (1) They have taken the precious name of Jesus and mixed it with filth and blasphemed the God of Heaven.
 - (a) It may have been forgotten, but it is written down.
 - (2) Romans 14:11
 - (3) Exodus 20:7
 - (a) That one sin would be enough to condemn someone forever.
 - (b) Maybe nothing was meant by it, but that is the sin of it.
 - (i) If anyone can take the name of Almighty God in an oath and say that they didn't mean anything by it, then that shows how little God means to them.
- f) Luke 12:2-3
- g) One of these days, God's candid camera will begin to play, and the unsaved will be standing there to face the record.

5) THE SENTENCE DETERMINED

- a) Revelation 20:13-15
- b) The sureness of it.
 - i) They were judged.
 - (1) This Judge will not be bribed, and there will be no one who can get you out of it.
 - ii) God swears by Himself that you will be judged.
 - (1) Romans 14:11-12
- c) The severity of it.
 - i) The Bible says that you will be judged according to your works.
 - (1) Revelation 20:13
 - (2) We are not saved by works.
 - (3) We are saved by grace, but we are judged by works.
 - (4) This means that there is no mercy.
 - (a) Do not get the wrong idea that when you die that you will stand before God and throw yourself on the mercy of the court.
 - (i) There will be no mercy.
 - 1. If you want mercy, you may have it.
 - 2. If you want forgiveness, you may have it.
 - 3. If you want grace, it is freely offered to you.
 - a. But you must have it now, in this day and in this age.
 - ii) Hebrews 10:28-31
 - (1) If those who despised the Old Testament Mosaic Law were judged without mercy, then how much worse of a punishment will there be for those who ridiculed Jesus and trampled beneath their feet His precious blood?



- (a) Everyone will either be under the blood with their sins forgiven, or over the blood as they trample the blood of Jesus beneath their feet.
 - (2) If you say that you do not want God and do not want to be saved, then there will be no pleading for mercy at the judgment.
- iii) Hebrews 9:27
 - (1) This passage says nothing of mercy.
- d) There are three parts in every trial:
 - i) The evidence is presented; the books are opened.
 - (1) Your deeds are evidence.
 - (a) Every lie.
 - (b) Every curse.
 - (c) Everything you stole.
 - (d) Every gray hair and wrinkle that you gave to your parents.
 - (e) Every infidelity.
 - (2) Your thoughts are evidence.
 - (a) God wrote down lust as adultery.
 - (b) God wrote down hatred as murder.
 - (3) Your influence is evidence.
 - (a) Not only what you did, but those whom you influenced to do wrong.
 - (4) Your failure to do good is evidence.
 - (a) James 4:17
 - (b) The great light that you had and rejected.
 - (5) The evidence will be presented against you.
 - ii) You make your defense.
 - (1) Will you say, "There were too many churches to choose from?"
 - (a) He didn't say believe on the church.
 - (b) He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."
 - (i) Acts 16:31
 - (2) Will you say, "There were some hypocrites in the church?"
 - (a) He didn't say to believe on the hypocrite.
 - (b) Acts 16:31
 - (3) Will you say, "What about some of those preachers?"
 - (a) He didn't say believe on the preacher.
 - (b) Acts 16:31
 - (4) Will you say, "I wanted to wait until I was sure that I could live it?"
 - (a) He didn't say to believe on yourself.
 - (b) Acts 16:31
 - (5) Will you say, "I did not have time?"
 - (a) He will say, "You had time that morning when My servant preached to you."
 - (6) If your defense does not even satisfy you, how can you expect it to satisfy a righteous and a holy God?
 - iii) The verdict is handed down.
 - (1) The recording angel asks the Lord Jesus what should be written down.



- (2) A broken-hearted Savior will say, "He that denies Me before men, the same must I deny before My Father, which is in Heaven. Write 'lost!'"
 - (a) Matthew 10:33
- (3) The names of the unsaved are not in the Book of Life.
- (4) The unsaved will find their souls dropping into Hell.
 - (a) Not that God desires it.
- e) C.S. Lewis said that there are two categories of people:
 - i) Those who follow Satan and say to God, "Not Your will, but mine be done."
 - ii) Those who follow Jesus and say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."
 - (1) When the first category drops into Hell, a broken-hearted God will say, "Not My will, but thine be done."
 - (a) God gives everyone the privilege of choosing their destiny.
 - (b) Revelation 20:15

6) CONCLUSION

- a) You do not have to stand before the great white throne.
 - i) You can settle out of court.
 - ii) You can give your heart to Jesus Christ today.
- b) Upon the cross, Jesus Christ took your sin and your judgment.
 - i) Romans 8:1
 - ii) The fires of God's judgment fell upon Jesus at Calvary, and that is where you need to stand.
 - (1) The fire cannot come where the fire has already been.
- c) Jesus died for you, and He loves you.
- d) He invites you to get it settled today.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



The Final Judgment

SERMON REFERENCE: Revelation 20:11-15

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2213

There is coming, ladies and gentlemen, a judgment. There's coming a time when all that men have dreamed for and schemed for and sold their souls for will have turned to rust and dust and mold and corruption. There is coming a time when God will put the final period upon the final sentence upon the final paragraph upon the final page upon the final chapter upon the final book of history as we know it. Time as we have known it will have come to a conclusion. The millennium will have ended. And the dead will rise to be judged, one by one, to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and face the final judgment.

Revelation chapter 20, find it in your Bible. We're going to begin reading in verse 11, and we're going to stay, primarily, in that passage. I will quote other passages. But you can keep your Bible open to Revelation chapter 20, and we begin in verse 11 and read right on through verse 15. Here is the vision that God gave the apostle John of the final judgment, and here's what he saw as he looked into the future. "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, the 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 that 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." Now, that's God's Word, totally true, fully inspired, and it is God's message for this generation today, and it is this, there is a judgment coming.

Years ago, I heard the story of a young preacher who came to a very small mill town to be the pastor. In that town there was the self-appointed skeptic who felt it was his duty to humiliate and humble every preacher. He loved to argue. He was a pseudo- intellect. He could hardly wait for the young preacher to get there. The skeptic's name was Burt Olney.

When the young preacher came, the skeptic spied him on the streets of the little town, went up and said, "I understand that you're the new minister, is that correct?" He said, "Yes, sir, I am." He said, "Well, I want to tell you my name is Burt Olney and I want to tell you something else. I believe you're a fake and a fraud. I don't believe your Bible. I don't believe there's a God. I don't believe there's a Jesus. I believe that your church is a false organization. I believe that all of you are doing more damage than good. And I repudiate everything that you teach and preach. What do you have to say about that?" This young preacher looked him in the eye and began to quote from the book of Hebrews, chapter 9 and verse 27, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." He said, "Don't quote the Bible to me. I don't believe the Bible. That's no argument. What do you have to say about what I had to say?" The young preacher said to him again, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." He said, "I said I don't believe that, so don't quote that to me. That is no argument." The young minister said, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." He said, "That's stupid. I don't think you know enough to argue." He said, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." He said, "Is that all you have to say?" He said, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment."

Olney was infuriated. He wheeled around and walked off because he could not get an argument going. But later on, after he himself had come to Christ, Burt Olney gave this testimony. He said, "As



I walked over the bridge, going home, it seemed as if the frogs themselves were saying, “Judgment, judgment, judgment, judgment.” And he could not get the Word of God out of his heart that, “It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment.” Now, as it was appointed to Burt Olney, it is appointed to every unsaved man; you have a date with Deity. One of these days, you are going to stand before Almighty God and you’re going to be judged. There is a coming judgment. Four things I put before you this morning concerning that judgment.

First of all, as we open the Bible, I want us to see what I call **the setting described**. In Revelation 20 verse 11, John says, “And I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the Earth and the Heavens fled away.” What a scene. What a setting. We’re talking now about a trial. Notice the courtroom. There is a dais. There is a bench, a throne, and it is great, and it is white. The greatness speaks of the power of it. The whiteness speaks of the purity of it. The word throne speaks of the purpose on it because there is a Sovereign who is sitting upon this great white throne. I hope you never have to stand there.

Sometimes people, ignorantly, pray something like this. They’re already saved and they pray, “And Lord, grant that one day we may stand before Thy great white throne.” Don’t pray that for me, and don’t pray it for you if you understand the Bible because those who stand before the great white throne are eternally doomed and damned forever and ever and ever.

Now, notice not only the throne, but, notice Who is sitting upon it. Notice the person on the throne. Who is the Judge? “And Him that sat upon it.” Who will be the Judge in eternity? It may surprise you to know that Jesus Christ will be the Judge. Jesus will be the one sitting upon the throne. You say, “No, Jesus is the Savior.” Yes, He is the Savior, but He’s also the Judge. May I give you a Scripture? John 5 verse 22, “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.”

Jesus Christ Himself is the Judge. Not your opinion of yourself, not some friend, not your mother, your father. My mother never could find any fault in me. She would gloss over whatever I did. But, my mother would not be the judge if I stood there. No, who is this Judge? None other than the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, Jesus is described in the Bible as a Lamb, but also as a Lion. Jesus is, in the Bible, both a Judge and a Savior.

Now, you’re going to meet Him as a Lamb or Lion. You’re going to meet Him as Judge or Savior, but I promise you, you will meet Jesus Christ. You have a date with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the unavoidable, inescapable person in your life. Now, you may have cursed Him, you may have mocked Him, you may have ignored Him, you may have debated Him, but one day I, as I stand here, I can promise you on the authority of the Word of God that you are going to meet Jesus Christ.

Now, we’ve already described Jesus Christ in the book of the Revelation. This is near the end of the book, but let me show you how He is described in the opening chapters of the book, “The One who sits upon the throne.” And then you’re going to understand why He is so awesome, so terrifying, that even the Heavens and the Earth flee from His presence.

You want to go back to Revelation chapter 1 and look in verse 13. The apostle John has a vision. He sees the exalted Christ, and here’s what he wrote. “And in the midst of the seven candlesticks was one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girded about the paps,” that is, the chest, “with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; His eyes were as a flame of fire. His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength.”

That, my friend, is the one sitting upon the throne. He is wearing the regal robes of a king and a judge.



His hair, white as wool, speaks of His unsullied, absolute purity. His eyes, like a flame of fire, means that not only does He see you; He sees through you. He knows all about you. The Bible says in Hebrews 4 verse 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, for all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He cannot be deceived. He cannot be discredited. He cannot be disputed. His feet are like fine brass. Brass, in the Bible, is a symbol of judgment. He is going on relentlessly to judge. He is unstoppable. His voice is like the sound of many waters. When He speaks, it's like one hundred cascading waterfalls. Can you imagine somebody standing and arguing with Niagara Falls? This is the One Who is sitting upon the throne.

No wonder it says, "From whose presence the Earth and the Heavens fled away." Here is a great white throne. His Majesty is sitting there. The Earth, the Heavens flee away. That means everything stable is gone. Everything that men have depended upon and looked to, gone. We get upset if the Earth tremors and there's an earthquake. We say, "It's a weird feeling. I'm used to the Earth being solid." Friend, there will be nothing solid. The Earth, the Heavens, gone. There's an old spiritual that says, "I went to the rock to hide my face, and the rock cried out, "No hiding place! No hiding place down here." That is the setting.

Adam fled to hide from God in the trees of the garden. There'll be no garden trees to hide. Now, that's the first thing I want you to see. I want you to get this in your heart. This, my friend, is not fiction. "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the Earth and the Heavens fled away."

Second thing I want you to see. I want you to see not only the setting described, but I want you to see **the summons delivered**. God is going to send out a summons to gather those to be judged. Look in Revelation 20 verses 12 and 13. The apostle John says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened." And skip on down to verse 13. And the Bible says, "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," underscore this, "every man."

When God sends out His summons, He doesn't have to get any extradition from death and Hell. When He says, "Come," then they are going to come. And notice those who are going to be called to this judgment. Notice the summons. He says, "I saw the dead," listen to me, "small and great, stand before God." I don't know how insignificant you think you are, or how powerful you may fancy yourself to be, but without Jesus Christ, I will guarantee you, upon the Word of God, that one of these days, whether you're a big shot or a little shot, whether you're up and out or out and out or down and out, you're going to stand before God. These who are going to be called to the judgment can be put into five categories. And I want you to classify yourself because you're going to be in one of these five categories.

First of all, there's **the out and out sinner**, the out and out sinner. These hate God, hate Christ, hate the Bible, hate preachers. There're none like that here today unless you've come to mock and to make fun. And if you have, may God pity you and have mercy upon you. But there're people in this world who will stand on their big two feet, stick out their chest, stick their nose in the air, shake their puny fists boldly and brazenly in the face of God, and say, "God, if there be a God, You're not big enough to make me serve You. I will not bow." There's some like that. They will be there at the judgment, you can be certain of it. I said I doubt there's anyone like that here today, but there are plenty like that in the world.

There's another category of persons who will be there, and these are not out and out sinners. Conversely, these are **self-righteous people**, and there are some of them here today. These think that because they're not out and out sinners, that they're Heaven-bound. They think that the Gospel is for the thief. They think the Gospel is for the murderer. They think that the Gospel is for the drunkard, but not for them. They're nice people. They drive fine automobiles. They wear nice clothing. They are members of fine clubs. They treat their neighbors fine. They treat their children fine. And they don't think they need to be saved. They are righteous, in and of themselves. They do not understand that the Bible says in Titus 3:5,



"It's not by works of righteousness that we've done, but according to His mercy that He saved us." And in Isaiah chapter 64 verse 6 the Bible says that, "Our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of a righteous and a holy God." Many people in America are egomaniacs, strutting to Hell, thinking they're too good to be damned. I've said it before; I'll say it again, "The worst form of badness, the worst form of badness is human goodness, when human goodness becomes a substitute for the new birth."

The out and out sinner will be there. The self-righteous person will be there. I'll tell you a third category of persons who'll be there, and these are neither out and out sinners, nor are they self-righteous. They're sinners and they know it, and they know they need to be saved, but these are **procrastinators**. And there're many like that here today. You know that you need to be saved. You have determined that you will not die and go to Hell. You intend to get saved, someday. And I will give an invitation this morning, and I will ask you to come, once and for all, now and forever, and give your heart to Jesus Christ, and the devil will whisper in your ear, "Don't do it today. Do it, but not today." The devil will tell you, "There's always a better time."

But the Bible says in Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow. For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." The Bible says in Proverbs 29:1, "He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." And I want to say this, as clearly, God help me to say it, this may be the last Gospel service you will ever be in today. You dare not presume upon tomorrow. Tomorrow is only a time that's on the fool's calendar. James 4:14, "What is your life, but a vapor that appeareth for a little while. For that ye ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.'" There're many people who are procrastinators, who intended one day to get saved, who will drop into Hell, having never been saved.

And I'll tell you another category of persons who'll be there. Not the out and out sinner, not the self-righteous, and not the procrastinator. But these are they who have been duped by religion. These are **church members**. They're not procrastinators because they think it's all settled. They somehow, have religion, but they don't have Jesus Christ. They're **religious**. They've joined a church. They have been baptized. They may be members of a Bible-preaching, Bible-believing church.

You may be a member of this church. I've told you before, and I'll tell you again, The devil had just as soon send you to Hell from that pew as he had the gutter. It makes no difference to him. There're many people who get their name on the church roll, but never have their name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Is that not true? You're going to find out that the books were opened and, "Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20 verse 15. You see, I believe in the church. But the church is not the way to Heaven. The church is the sign that points to Heaven.

Now suppose you came out there and on Interstate 40 you saw me sitting on a sign that says, Forrest City. Say, "Pastor, what are you doing?" "Well, I'm, I'm going to Forrest City." Say, "No." "Yes, I am. Don't you see the sign that says, 'This way to Forrest City?' I'm sitting on this sign, I'm on my way to Forrest City." You say, "No, Pastor, you don't get there by sitting on a sign. The sign points you to the way. The sign is not the way." The church points you to the way; it is not the way, my friend. The church is only a signpost saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

O, how sad for somebody who sang in the choir to die and go to Hell, who played in the orchestra, who sat on the platform, who served the Lord's Supper, worked in the church. Those who helped Noah build the ark drowned. Lost church members. I believe that a great number in this building this morning are going to die and go to Hell because they're counting on their religiosity to get them to Heaven and they have never repented of their sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ. They give lip service to it, but they've never been born again.



Now, there's a fifth category of persons who are going to be there to be judged, and these are **they who've never heard the Gospel**. They're not out and out sinners. They're not self-righteous. They're not procrastinators. They're not lost church members. They do not know. They have never heard the saving message of Jesus Christ. And while they do not have enough light to save them, they do have enough sin to condemn them. They are sinners and they will be judged.

You say, "Well, is that fair for God to let somebody die and go to Hell who never heard the Gospel? Are they saved? Aren't they saved, Pastor, if they don't hear?" I think it's a bigger question, are you saved if you don't want to tell them? No, the Bible teaches that these without Jesus Christ are going to be judged, but they're not going to be judged the same way you're going to be judged. Listen to Luke chapter 12 verse 47 and 48, "And that servant, which knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

You sat in this service this morning. You heard the Word of God. You heard a pastor preach a message that he has prayed over and soaked in prayer. You will hear somebody stand before you, and with tears, say, "Come to Jesus." Now, friend, if those who've never heard are going to stand and be judged, what's going to happen to you? What is going to happen to you? You who knew your Master's will and did it not.

Revelations 20 verses 12 and 13, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." And notice when he gives the summons, the places from which they are called. He says here, "And death and Hell gave up the dead which were in them." Death has the body. When your body dies, death comes after your body and carries it down to the grave to disintegration. But there's a part of you that doesn't go to the grave; it goes to a place called Hell. It's a translation of the Greek word Hades. It's the place of the departed dead before the final judgment. They go there to wait the judgment.

You say, "Well, wait a minute. Why, if they're already in Hell, why are they taken out of Hell and to be judged?" That's not the lake of fire, that's Hades. They're going to be cast into the lake of fire. You say, "What's the difference?"

Well, suppose a person commits a crime and he is indicted by the Grand Jury. He's so dangerous that the judge will not grant bond. So he's put into the county jail and he's held there until he is judged. He's taken out of that jail, judged, and put in the penitentiary. The lake of fire is the eternal penitentiary. But death has the body and Hell has the soul. That's where people without Christ have died and their body is in the grave, their soul being held there, waiting until the final judgment. Well, why bring them out and judge them again? Because it's not all over yet, as we're going to see.

You see, he has corrupted those who will corrupt those who will corrupt those who will corrupt those who will corrupt those who will corrupt those, and on and on and on and on, and that wicked influence will not stop until it has reached the shores of eternity. So God has to wait till it's all over to bring these out of that holding place and say, "Now, we're going to face the record." That is the final judgment, friend, when all of the facts are in.

Now, let's go to the third thing and think not only of the summons delivered, but **the secrets displayed**. Look in Revelation chapter 20 verses 12 through 13 again, "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."

God is keeping books. God is recording the secret things that nobody else knows about. May I give you some verses for your margin? Ecclesiastes 12 verse 14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with



every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Romans chapter 2 and verse 16, "In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

You see, there are secret things, things that nobody else knows. Things you did when you were overseas in the service, things your mother, your father don't know about, things your wife doesn't know about, things your children don't know about, things, perhaps, that you've forgotten. God is keeping His books. They're secrets that have been repressed. We tried to put them out of our consciousness. We think that, perhaps, the statute of limitations has taken them all away. And we've lived long enough that we've kind of hardened over those particular things, but God has kept those books.

I had a friend who was being criticized. And I said, "How do you feel about being criticized?" He said, "I just say thank God they don't know any more." Just thank God they don't know any more. God knows it all; secrets that have been repressed, secrets that have been recorded. God is keeping a record. That should not amaze you today. It might have amazed your great grandfather that everything that you've done has been recorded.

I was rummaging through some old boxes and I found some tapes. And they were tapes of a radio program I used to do many, many years ago, back in the 50's. It was called, "Daybreak." I said, "Let me hear what I sounded like back yonder." It was weird. There I just put that tape on, and there I was, a half a century ago almost, preaching the Word of God. Now, if man can do that, what will God do? God's candid camera, God's tape recorder. God has those things that you have long forgotten.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12 verse 36, "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak shall they give an account thereof in the day of judgment." You have cursed. You've taken God's name in vain. Not everybody here, perhaps, has done that, but many of you have. You've asked God to damn something. You've gotten mad and you've said, "O, Jesus Christ" or whatever. You've taken His name, the precious name of Jesus, upon your lips and mixed it with the filth and slime of the sewer, and you have blasphemed the God of Heaven. You forgot it; it's written. Romans 14 verse 11, "'As I live,' saith the Lord, 'every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God.'" And the Bible says in Exodus 20 verse 7, "God will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." That one thing would be enough to damn you forever. You say, "Well, I didn't mean anything by it." Friend, that is the sin of it, that you could take the name of Almighty God in an oath and say, "O, I didn't mean anything by it." That means that God means that little to you, that you could take His name like that and not mean it.

The Bible says in Matthew 12:36, "Every idle word that men speak, sins that have been repressed and secrets will be then revealed." Luke 12 verses 2 and 3, "For there's nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light. And that which ye have spoken in the ear in the closets shall be proclaimed from the housetop." What a day that will be. One of these days skeletons will come out of closets. One of these days God's candid camera will begin to play. One of these days God's tape recorder will play, and you will be standing there to face the record.

Now, let's move on to the final thing, and that is now **the sentence determined**. You see, we're talking about a courtroom now. We've given you the setting, we've talked about the summons, we've talked about the secrets that are going to be brought out. Now there's a sentence. The sentence is going to be determined. Notice what he says here, "They were judged every man according to their works," verse 13, 14 and 15, "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."

Several things I want to say about this sentence. First of all, I want you to see **the sureness of it**. They were judged. You're not going to be able to bribe this judge. No slick lawyer, no shrewd person is going to



get you out of it. God swears by Himself that you'll be judged. Let me give you one of the most terrifying Scriptures in the Bible, Romans 14 verses 11 and 12, "For it is written, 'As I live,' saith the Lord, 'every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." God swears by Himself that you're going to be judged.

But think not only of the sureness of it, but **the severity of it**. The Bible says in Revelation 20:13, "They're going to be judged according to their works." Now, you're not saved by works. You're saved by grace, but you're judged by works. You're judged by works. Now that means, there's no mercy. Are you listening?

Do not get the wrong idea that when you die that you'll stand before God and throw yourself on the mercy of the court. There will be no mercy. Now, if you want mercy, you may have it. If you want forgiveness, you may have it. If you want grace, it is freely offered to you, but you must have it now in this day and in this age. When you hear the Gospel preached and you turn your back on the Gospel, do not have the unmitigated gall, the temerity to stand before God at the judgment and say, "God, have mercy."

May I give you another verse? Hebrews 10 verses 28 through 31, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, 'Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense,' saith the Lord. And again, 'The Lord shall judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Now, what he is saying is this. If those who despised the Old Testament Mosaic law were judged without mercy, of how much sorer punishment, more unmitigated punishment shall he be thought worthy who've done this, who has ridiculed Jesus, who has trampled beneath his feet the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who has done despite to the Spirit of grace? Are you listening? I am preaching to you Jesus today.

The Holy Spirit of God is speaking to your heart. And you will walk out of this building this morning either under the blood, having your sins forgiven, or over the blood, trampling the blood of Jesus beneath your feet. Now, when you do that, if you say, "I do not want God! I do not want Christ! I do not want to be saved! No!" to the Holy Spirit, you do despite unto the Spirit of grace! You will not come to the judgment and then plead for mercy. It will do you no good. The Bible says in Hebrews 9 verse 27, "It's appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." It says nothing of mercy there. You're going to be judged according to your works.

Now, in every trial, in every trial, there are three parts. First of all, **the evidence is presented**. The books are opened. What is the evidence? Your deeds; every lie, every cursing, everything you stole, every gray hair that you gave to your mother, every wrinkle that you pinched into your daddy's brow, every infidelity. Then your thoughts. God wrote down lust as adultery. God wrote down hatred as murder. And then your influence. Not only what you did, but those that you've influenced to do wrong. And then your failure to do good. James 4 verse 17, "To whom that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The great light that you had and you rejected. All of that will be the evidence that is presented against you. One foul, smelly mountain of sin; sins that you've forgotten, sins that are there. The evidence will be presented against you, and then you have a chance to make your defense.

Now you think about it. You make your defense. What will your defense be? Right now, suppose the end of time has come, and you're there to stand before the Lord. What will your defense be? I mean, there you are before Jesus Christ. You've ignored Him, cursed Him, walked out on Him, turned your back on Him. What will you say? Oh, I know what you'll say. "No, no, now wait a minute, Lord. Wait a minute, Lord.



I didn't know what church to join. There were so many churches: Baptist church, Presbyterian church, Church of God, Church of Christ, Episcopalian church, General Assembly, Regular Baptists. I didn't know which church to join." He'll say, "I didn't say believe on the church. I said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved.'" That's Acts 16 verse 31.

"Yeah, but now, wait a minute, Lord. There were some hypocrites in that church, Lord. I know a man in that church who was a hypocrite, Lord. Yes, I did." He'll say, 'I didn't say believe on the hypocrite. I said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'"

"Yeah, but, but, Lord, did You know Adrian Rogers? Have You, did You ever hear him preach? Lord, I didn't like him. I came to church on a Sunday morning to be made to feel good, and he preached on judgment. I didn't like that. I don't think that's the place to do that. I think people ought to be affirmed when they come to church. I didn't like that preacher!" He'll say, "I didn't say believe on the preacher. I said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'"

You'll say, "But, Lord, I wasn't going to go down there and be a hypocrite. Not me. I wasn't going to go until I was sure I could live it." He said, "I didn't say believe on yourself. I said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'"

"But, Lord, I didn't have time. When I had that head-on collision. I didn't have time!" "You had time that morning, that Sunday morning, when My servant preached to you and begged you to give your heart to Jesus Christ." I mean, think about what you're going to say. It doesn't even satisfy you. How do you expect it to satisfy a righteous and a holy God? No, the evidence is presented. You make your defense.

And then **the verdict of the court is handed down**. The recording angel is there. He says, "Lord Jesus, what shall I write?" And a broken-hearted Savior will say, "He that denies Me before men, the same must I deny before My Father, which is in Heaven." Matthew 10 verse 33. Write, L-O-S-T. His name is not in the Book of Life. How sad because it could have been! It should have been! But he's not found written in the Book of Life! And you'll find your soul dropping down into Hell. Not that God desires it. C.S. Lewis said, "There're two categories of persons; those who follow Satan and say to God, 'Not Your will, but mine be done,' and those who follow Jesus who say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'" To the first category, those who say to God, like Satan, "Not Your will, but mine be done," when they drop into Hell, a broken-hearted God will say, "Not My will, but thine be done." God, my friend, will give you the dubious privilege of choosing your destiny. Revelation 20:15, "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

I'm not going to stand before the great white throne. Do you want me to tell you why? I've settled out of court. I have settled out of court. I have given my heart to Jesus Christ, and on that cross Jesus Christ took my sin. He took my judgment. Romans 8:1 says, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Thank God for that.

One quick little story and I'm finished. I've heard it given many ways, but let me give you the essence of it. Some men were out on a prairie. There was tall, brown grass. There was a fire. The winds were high and whipping the flames toward them, and they knew that they could not outrun the flames. They said, "We're going to perish in the flames." But a man who knew the ways of the wild said, "No, we'll not die." He reached into his pocket, took out a book of matches, and at his feet, he set fire to the grass in front of him. The flames are coming this way, and now the fire is burning that way. One in the group said, "You fool. Now we're surrounded by fire." He said, "No," said, "Wait, I know what I'm doing." Said, "Wait until this fire burns on and then step over here, step over here in the burned off place, for the fire cannot come where the fire has already been." Friend, are you listening? The fires of God's judgment fell upon Jesus



at Calvary, and that's where you'd better stand. That's where you'd better stand because the fire cannot come where the fire has already been. He died for you. He loves you. He invites you, and I want you to get it settled today.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Remember that the procrastinator is going to be there, the self-righteous person is going to be there, the lost church member is going to be there. How many of you can say with me this morning, "Pastor Rogers, I have settled out of court and I know it. I don't just have religion; I have Bible salvation. I am saved by the grace of God. I have a Bible reason and a changed life to back it up." Can you give me that testimony? Thank God for that. Now, if you couldn't, I want to help you today to get it settled. You say, "Pastor, if a person can know it, I want to know it." All right, I want you to pray like this, right now. "Dear God. I want to settle out of court. I want to come and stand where the fire has already been. I come to Jesus. I come to the cross. I give my heart by faith to Jesus Christ. You've told me, Lord, if I would trust in Him You would save me. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And right now, by faith, like a child I receive You. Come into my heart." Pray that friend. "Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me. Save me, Jesus." Did you pray it? Then pray this way. "Thank You for doing it. And now, Lord, I will make it public. I will not be ashamed of You because You died for me, give me the courage to make it public. In Your name I pray. Amen."



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