Man's Last Day in God's Court, Part 1
Revelation 20:11-12
66-77

Let's turn in our Bibles to Revelation chapter 20 verses 11 through 15, a marvelous and familiar text, giving to us the most serious and sobering scene in all of the Bible because it describes the most tragic event in the history of mankind, the Great White Throne Judgment. Revelation chapter 20 verse 11, "And 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. 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. 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. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
This is man's last day in God's court. This day of judgment, this tribunal, this court, this trial will not be like the familiar trials held on earth. For those on trial this day will experience a very different kind of court. There will be no debate about guilt or innocence. There will be a prosecutor but no defender, there will be an accuser but no advocate. There will be an indictment but no case for the charged. There will be a swift presentation of the convicting evidence but no rebuttal, a testimony with no cross examination. There will be an utterly unsympathetic judge and no jury. There will be a sentence but no appeal, a punishment with no parole in a jail with no escape.

The petty courts of earth fall far short of this one. Somewhere unknown to us between earth and heaven, between the world as we know it now and the new heaven and the new earth, this judgment will take place. And it is the last courtroom that will ever convene throughout all eternity. After this no one will ever be tried again and God will never again act as a judge. The Scripture before us describes the event and its significance. It is where all unredeemed human beings will eventually arrive. All who have died in their sins apart from the knowledge of God will be there from all of human history.

And for all through the centuries, since man sinned and fell in the Garden, Satan the liar above all liars has endeavored to deceive man about the reality of this coming event. He has done his best to convince men that there will be no final tribunal, there will be no final judgment. He has deceived sinners into believing that they can live any way they like and there will be no day of accounting, there will be no future punishment, no time of sentencing, no moment when they stand before the judge of all the earth.

Atheism or any invention of a religion that has a God who is benign and poses no ultimate threat to them is all part of Satan's deception. Evolution's popularity is also based on that deception. It suits man just fine that he came out of some piece of protoplasm. It suits him just fine that he emerged out

of some division of cells in the middle of some cosmic ooze. It suits him just fine that there is no God because if there's no God then there is no one to whom he is accountable. There is no one to whom he has to answer. There is no one to sit in judgment. And man is free from the fear of ultimate accountability and free to sin as he pleases and then just pass out of existence.

If there is no Creator, if there is no moral judge in the universe, that's just fine. And man will live as he wants to live and go into oblivion. But that's not the case. That is the deceiving lie of Satan and has been through the centuries. Either there is no God and there is therefore no accountability, or that the God who exists is not a God who is going to judge us at all. Or that there is a God but when we die, life is over and we go into oblivion and annihilation.

All of those are the lies of the enemy. The Apostle John must have shaken as he sat in a cave or on a hillside on the isle of Patmos and put his pen to the parchment to write down this vision, a vision of resurrection of the ungodly, a vision of eternal damnation. The language here is plain. The language is stark. The language has absolutely no embellishment. There are no gory details. It is missing the adjectives that might be stacked upon one another to make the terror all that it perhaps could be to frighten us. It is plain, simple, straight-forward, unembellished language.

The event that is described here in verses 11 to 15 is the event that Jesus called in John 5:29 the resurrection of damnation, or the resurrection of condemnation. You could translate it either way. And what John sees here in this vision is an event so spectacular, so immense, so great that it is really greater than any other event, so blazing in the display of glory. So powerful is this event that the entire universe disintegrates...the entire universe dissolves. And the fire that fell from heaven to devour the rebels of Gog and Magog, back in verse 9, the rebellious army of the world that collected itself under the power of Satan and his demons at the end of the thousand-year Kingdom, that fire that came and devoured all of those ungodly rebels now becomes the glory of God, blazing white energy that incinerates the universe. What you have here is uncreation, dissolution, utter annihilation.

As we look at this text a simple outline will help us grasp the description. First we will see the scene, and then the summons, then the standard, and then the sentence. Let's look at the scene, verse 11. "And 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." And I saw a great white throne and not only a great white throne, but in verse 12, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small standing before the throne." That's the scene.

In one brief straightforward unembellished statement, John sets the scene. A great white throne and standing before it all the dead, great and small. This is the uncreation of the universe and it is given in far-fewer words than was the creation. The creation has two chapters, Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. The uncreation, a handful of verses. And the God of creation becomes the God of destruction. The God who moved and brought into being becomes the God who moves and eliminates from existence.

Notice how the verse begins with the little phrase, "And I saw..." A very familiar phrase to introduce either a new vision or a new dimension to a vision. And as we have come down to the Second Coming of Christ, go back to chapter 19 and verse 11, "And I saw..." there it is, and he saw..."heaven opened and Christ coming." Go down to verse 17, "And I saw an angel standing..." And down to verse 19, "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth..." And into chapter 20 verse 1, "And I

saw..." In verse 4, "And I saw thrones..." And verse 11, "And I saw a great white throne..." And verse 12, "And I saw the dead..." And into chapter 21 verse 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth..."

Here is the sequence of visions or the sequence of changes within the visions that sum up the end of human history. "And I saw" triggers each new phase...starting with the return of Christ, followed by the thousand-year Kingdom and then the great white throne, the judgment, and the new heavens and the new earth.

Now remember that after the total destruction of the rebels at the close of the Millennial Kingdom which destruction is described there in verse 9, after Satan is sent into the lake of fire where he will be forever along with the beast and the false prophet, after all earthly sinners have been destroyed, all of human history then since the Garden of Eden is ended. It's all ended. Satan is gone into the lake of fire, the beast and the false prophet are gone into the lake of fire. And along with Satan, of course, all of his demonic forces. All earthly sinners have now been destroyed. And all saints in the time of the Kingdom who were still alive at the very end would be immediately translated and transformed into glorified form and that's the end of humanity. Humanity no longer exists. A physical universe, as we know it today, then has no reason to exist, especially a physical universe that has been stained by sin, the sin of fallen angels who have polluted it to the vast reaches of heaven itself where they've had access to the very throne of God as indicated by the book of Job.

The whole universe has been polluted and we've already seen God begin the destruction process in the time of the Tribulation with all of those frightening events that we read about earlier in the book of Revelation. It's time for the whole cursed universe to be annihilated. The whole universe that was the theater of redemption, the earth and all of its environs which includes everything that we know in the vision that we can have and see and everything beyond that to the galaxies to the end of creation, the whole universe is annihilated. That's how comprehensive and massive this scene is.

Verse 11 he says, "First of all, I saw a great white throne." Nearly fifty times in the book of Revelation there is the mention of thrones. The book opened with a throne in chapter 1 verse 4, now it closes with a throne. But this is a very different throne. The throne in chapter 1 verse 4 is like the throne in chapters 4 and 5, it's the throne of God in heaven, the throne of majesty, the throne where He sits and reigns and rules. This is a throne of judgment. This is a throne of furious activity to annihilate the whole universe. It is not like the throne of heaven described in chapter 4. It seems to be a different throne. It is a throne somewhere in the midst of an uncreated universe because the universe has dissolved and the new heaven and the new earth are about to be created. But somewhere in there in the nothingness of that moment, the throne exists. Some special judgment throne set up in the unseen realm.

It is called a great throne, not so much because of its size as because of its significance, its elevation, its authority, its majesty, its power, its comprehensive adjudication or judgment. It is white because of purity and holiness and righteousness. From that throne comes absolute righteousness. It is the throne of majesty unlimited, it is the throne of sovereignty unchallenged. It is the final judgment seat for the judge of all the earth to sit and make His judgment. It is the final place of reckoning. It is a dazzling, blinding, blazing, pure, holy, divine throne of the presence of God where He sits in utter and absolute judgment.

Perhaps the psalmist had somewhat of a glimpse of this when in Psalm 9 verse 7 he wrote, "The

Lord abides forever, He has established His throne for judgment and He will judge the world in righteousness, He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity." And certainly Daniel had this throne in the vision that God gave to him in chapter 7 of his prophecy, when we find in verses 9 and 10, Daniel writes, "I kept looking until the 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, a river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands were attending Him...the angels, the holy angels...myriads upon myriads were standing before Him, the court sat and the books were opened." It's got to be the same throne.

And in fact, I think the Apostle Paul even in writing in Romans chapter 2 and verse 5 was speaking of that very same day, and that same throne when he said, "You are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgments of...judgment of God who will render to every man according to his deeds." There's the same throne described as a throne where men will be judged according to their deeds, as this throne is describing.

So the psalmist had a glimpse of it, Daniel had a glimpse of it, even Paul understood it...a great, blazing throne of divine holy energy that uncreates the whole universe and damns the whole sinning humanity. The immensity of it is incomprehensible.

And then writes John, "And Him who sat upon it." Him who sat upon it, and this is a marvelous statement and I want you to grasp it because it has tremendous implications. Throughout the book of Revelation God is the one sitting on the throne. You go back, for example, into chapter 4 and verse 2 and he was in the Spirit, says John, and the throne was standing in heaven, one sitting on the throne who was like a jasper stone and sardius in appearance and a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance. And he describes the throne and the lightning and the thunder and the Holy Spirit that is emanating there from the throne like fire burning. And the sea of glass like crystal and he paints the scene of the throne. And then he has the four living creatures and what do they say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty." And therefore we conclude that He occupies that throne. He is the one they praise. He is the one that they worship.

You come into chapter 5, it's the same thing. There is the one who sits on the throne and a book is in His hand and it has to be God because He later hands that book to the Lamb who is Christ. Come down to chapter 5 verse 13 and they're blessing the one who sits on the throne and the Lamb, so it is surely God who sits on the throne.

Chapter 6 and verse 16, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne and from the Lamb." Chapter 7 verse 10, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne." And again in verse 15 mentions the throne of God.

God then is the one who sits on the throne. Back in chapter 19 verse 4, it says that the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne. It was God in Daniel 7 who sits on the throne, and it was God in Romans 2 verse 5 that Paul referred to as well.

And Jesus adds to this when He says in John 8:50, "I do not seek My glory, there is one who seeks and judges." And that would be, of course, God His Father.

So the judge who sits on the throne is none other than the eternal and almighty God. But, there is

something really marvelous about this because of some other Scriptures. In Revelation 3:21 it says, "He who overcomes I will grant to sit down with Me on My throne as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." There is an indication that when God takes the throne, He's not on the throne alone. That is the throne of sovereignty and not necessarily the throne of judgment. But it makes the point that where God sits in judgment...where God sits in sovereignty, Christ sits in sovereignty as well. And certainly we could assume that where God sits in judgment, Christ sits in judgment also. In fact, if we understand what the Bible teaches and we grasp the great reality of the identity of Jesus Christ, we understand the words of John 10:30 to be true, where Jesus said, "I and the Father are...what?...are one." So if God is on the throne, so is Christ on the very same throne.

In fact, in chapter 22 we again see the throne of sovereignty. Chapter 22 verse 1, it says, "Coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb." Verse 3, "The throne of God and of the Lamb." And we noted that earlier in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, it's not just the throne of God, it's the throne of God and the Lamb. He and the Father are one, their sovereignty is equal.

And so we look to the throne and who do we see? We see God absolutely, but we see God in the form of Jesus Christ. We see God in the form of Jesus Christ. In the Kingdom, Christ is on the throne. At the bemajudgment, the judgment of believers' works, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, Christ is on the throne. And here, I believe, when John looks and sees one sitting on the throne, certainly it is God but it is God revealed in Christ.

You say, "Why is that to be believed?" Well because He and the Father are one, for one thing, but listen to this, John chapter 5 and verse 22, listen as I read. "For not even the Father judges anyone but He has given all judgment to...whom?...to the Son." How interesting. He has given all judgment to the Son. Verse 26 of John 5, "Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself and He gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man."

In other words, the reason the Father gives the judgment to the Son is because no one knows humanity better than the Son of Man. For He was one of them.

And so, "Do not marvel...he writes in verse 28...at this, an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice and come forth, those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, and those who committed the evil deeds, to a resurrection of judgment." It is the Lord Jesus Christ who summons them to judgment, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who sits as judge. It is God then in the form of Christ.

In Acts 17 and verse 31, listen to this. It says, "God is now...verse 30...declaring all men everywhere to repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed." He will judge but through a Man He has appointed. What Man? Having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead, the Man He raised from the dead, none other than Jesus Christ. God is the judge and God sits on the throne in the form of Jesus Christ and judges through Christ.

That's a tremendously important statement, my friends, because beyond contradiction it affirms that Jesus and God are one. The denial of which is he mainspring of most aberrant Christian cults.

In Romans chapter 2 and verse 16, it says, "On the day when according to my gospel God will judge the secrets of me through Christ Jesus." God judges through Christ. That's exactly how it works.

So John looks at the throne, back to chapter 20. And Him who sat on it, it is God in the form of the glorified Christ who sits in judgment. Why? Because He is the one who has the best perspective, the best vantage point as one who was man to judge man. So John sees the blazing throne and the judge.

Then comes the startling reality. John says, "From whose presence earth and heaven fled away and no place was found for them." This is an incredible statement. From the very presence of the one on the throne, earth and heaven fled away. Sin cursed the whole universe, as you well know, we've seen it again and again. It was restored in the Kingdom. There was a restoration and a refreshing and a restitution of all things and a time of the regeneration of the world. And you remember the globe was reconfigured, remember that? And so was space because of the collapse of the sky and the rolling up of heaven like a scroll and stars flying around wildly and comets crashing into earth. The earth was reformed. Mountains were flattened out. Islands fled away. And the Lord prepared the earth in a restored fashion for the Millennial Kingdom.

But it is still the same sin-cursed universe. And so it has to be obliterated because you cannot have sin stained universe...a sin-stained universe throughout eternity. It can't live eternally. Anything sin touches does...what?...dies, disintegrates. And so it has to be destroyed. And chapter 21 verse 1, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth passed away." Gone.

John is looking at the uncreation. It's like it never happened. And there was no place found for them. It doesn't mean they went somewhere, it doesn't mean it was reshaped. It was uncreated. It utterly goes out of existence. Here is the sudden, violent termination of the universe.

God never designed it to last forever. It can't. It's very temporary. Fled away...you see that term, "fled away," that is exactly the same Greek term as is found in Matthew 24:35 where Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will...what?...pass away," that is repeated in Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33. Gone. Jesus said it would happen. Here it happens.

I want to take you to another passage. Second Peter chapter 3...2 Peter chapter 3, verse 10, "The day of the Lord...remember, the day of the Lord has an element of it at the end of the Tribulation, but the final expression of the day of the Lord doesn't come till a thousand years later, the day of the Lord comes at the end of the Tribulation, but the final expression of the day of the Lord waits a thousand years, that shouldn't be a problem because it tells us right there in verse 8 that one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day with the Lord....so the day of the Lord can certainly stretch across a thousand-year period...the final day of the Lord will come like a thief." What does that mean? Suddenly, unexpectedly, and devastatingly...that's how a thief comes. And what's going to happen? "The heavens will pass away."

Now here is the first time we get any kind of indication of any attendant phenomenon. It says it will pass away, the heavens will pass away with a roar. That's an onomatopoetic word, that means it's a word that sounds like what it means. It will pass away with a whizzing, it will pass away with a crackling, whistling. It's...it's gone. And then the elements will be destroyed or they'll melt with intense heat. The elements, <u>stoicheo</u>, what does it mean? The basic elements, the atoms, the electrons,

protons, neutrons, the substance of which matter is composed and whatever might even be smaller than that that we don't know about. The basic elements, the fundamental parts, the components will melt. Literally the verb luo, they will dissolve, disintegrate. And the earth and its works will be burned up. Literally that means...it's a compound verb, it means to be totally consumed. That's a very, very graphic description of the end of the universe, as we know it.

Go down to verse 12, 2 Peter 3, again he adds, "The heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat." And then verse 13 says, "There will come a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." You've got to get rid of the cursed universe.

Folks, there's no reason to save the earth. As I have said before, if you think we're messing it up, wait till you see what God does to it. Now science comes along and science says...Matter can't be destroyed and matter...they say...cannot be, in fact, created. What scientists like to say is it can only be altered. But it was created by God and the same God who could create matter can uncreate it. Matter was created once by God and it will be uncreated by God. Not just altered. And I think that is inherent in the statement there and "no place was found for them," in chapter 20 verse 11. No place, they were non-existent. What else can that mean? It doesn't mean they changed their shape or their form, they weren't anywhere. Again Matthew 5:18, "Until heaven and earth pass away...," they're gone...there's no place for them. They don't just change their form, they are non-existent.

In Isaiah chapter 51 verse 6, "Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to the earth beneath for the sky will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants will die in like manner." It's not a permanent earth. It's not supposed to last. It has a very short life span. Isaiah 65:17, "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth." And you know something wonderful? "The former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."

People always ask me, when we get into the eternal heaven will we remember the past? No, because any memory of the past would be tainted with...what?...sin. It's going to pass away, it's gone, out of existence, just like it came into existence by the creative power of God, it will go out of existence. In the book of Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 10 it says, "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the works of Thy hands, they will perish. But Thou remainest. They all will become old as a garment and as a mantle Thou wilt roll them up, as a garment, they will also be changed." One garment is taken off and it's gone, another one put on. But You're the same.

Toward the end of the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 12 verse 26, "His voice shook the earth then but now He has promised saying, Yet once more I'll shake not only the earth but also the heaven." And this expression "yet once more" denotes, listen to this, the removing of those things which can be shaken as of created things...all the created things gone.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse said, "There is to be an end of the material heavens and earth which we know. It is not that they are to be purified and rehabilitated but that the reverse of creation is to take place. They are to be uncreated. As they came from nothing at the Word of God, they are to be sucked back into nothingness by the same Word of God."

You say, "Well, is science wrong when they say matter cannot be destroyed?" Of course they're wrong. Matter can be destroyed. And the non-eternity of matter is discussed in the Bible. For

example, I'm thinking of some statements in the Psalms. Psalm 97:5, "The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." There's another picture of the disintegration of the universe, of...starting at that particular point with the earth. Psalm 102, I think it's verse 25, "As of old Thou didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands, even they will perish." Matter is not eternal. It's not going to last forever. Pass away.

So that's an immense scene. The whole universe disappears. And there in the middle of the nothingness between the end of this universe and the new heaven and the new earth is this judgment. Verse 12, "And I saw the dead." Now remember, there's no living people left, I mean, because there's no universe, right? There aren't just people floating around like those astronauts that go outside their spaceship because there's no universe for them to float in. There's no nothing.

You say, "That's hard to comprehend." No, that's impossible to comprehend. But there's nobody living left. At the defeat of Gog and Magog in verse 9, sinners were all killed at that time and there weren't any sinners left. You say, "What about the saints? What about the living righteous believers in the Kingdom, what happens to them?" Well they certainly wouldn't be killed in that battle. The saints would be protected and the armies that came after them would be killed. What happens to the saints? Obviously they're immediately translated, glorified, like Elijah, or raptured like the church into a state of resurrection glory. And I think that's been going on all through the Kingdom. Do you ever ask yourself what happens to the believers who die in the Kingdom? There's only one explanation, they would have to be immediately transformed. So a funeral would be a wonderful event. Someone would merely pass out of earthly existence into glorified form. And so, at the very end, God would just glorify all the remaining saints because there's no universe for them. And the earth beneath them and the universe above them goes out of existence.

But John says, "I saw the dead...I saw the dead." You say, "Who are they?" Well they can't be saved people, can't be. You say why? Well, I'll give you several reasons. First of all, the church has already been glorified, right? The Rapture's already occurred way back before the thousand years, is that not true? At the end of the time of the Tribulation the Old Testament saints were raised, weren't they, at the coming of Jesus Christ and they were ushered into the Kingdom.

Not only that, the martyrs during the Tribulation have already been raised as well. Back in chapter 20 verse 4, we saw the thrones and we showed you that sitting on the thrones would be the resurrected church, the resurrected Old Testament saints, and then are described there the martyrs who died during the Tribulation. So the judgment of the martyrs is already over. And they've been translated into glorious form, the church has been raptured, the Old Testament saints have been transformed and resurrected at the coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom, as Daniel pointed out. And as I said, when any saint dies during the Kingdom, they would be transformed on the spot and taken into their eternal form.

I mean, to look at it another way, thrones have already been given to the saints in chapter 20 verse 4, the bride already has her garments and has met her bridegroom in chapter 19 verses 7 and 8, the guests are already at the wedding who would be the Old Testament saints, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb has already embraced all the redeemed of all the ages and been going on in its fullness through the Kingdom. The godly have already received their eternal reward. The first resurrection has already passed. Verse 6 says, "Blessed and holy are those who had a part in it." So they've already been blessed and they've already been made holy, and that leaves nobody left but the dead unbelievers. That's the dead that John sees. Just the unbelievers.

And that is why it is called the resurrection of damnation. It can't be saved people. They're already taken care of. And furthermore, the Bible says that Jesus said in John 5:24 that those who belong to Him do not come into judgment. And in John chapter 3 when our Lord was talking to Nicodemus, there in verse 18 He said, "He who believes in Him is not judged." And in Romans 8:1 Paul says, "There is therefore now no judgment to those who are in Christ." We're not going to stand before the great white throne judgment. We've already been to the bemaseat, received our rewards, gone into our glorified form. The godly have already been transformed.

There are two resurrections. Go back to John 5 in your mind again and remember, Jesus said there is a resurrection unto life, and a resurrection unto damnation. There are two resurrections. So we would conclude there are two judgments. There is the judgment of the works of believers described in 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians chapter 3. And there is this judgment.

Who are the dead then? Billions of ungodly sinners from all of human history, all brought to the great white throne. The sweeping mass of everybody who lived since the fall of man that does not know God.

And to show the breath, he simply says in verse 12, "The great and the small." The somebodies and the nobodies. Position means nothing. God is no respecter of persons. The judge has no favorites. The rich and the famous stand along with the poor and the obscure. John Phillips writes, "There is a terrible fellowship there, the dead, small and great, stand before God, dead souls are united to dead bodies in a fellowship of horror and despair. Little men and paultry women whose lives were filled with pettiness, selfishness and nasty little sins will be there. Those whose lives amounted to nothing will be there, whose very sins were drab and dowdy, mean, spiteful, peevish, groveling, vulgar, common and cheap. The great will be there, men who sinned with a high hand, with dash and courage and flair. Men like Alexander and Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin will be present. Men who went in for wickedness on a grand scale with the world for their stage and who died unrepentant at last. Now one and all are arraigned and on their way to be damned. A horrible fellowship congregated together for the first and last time."

All the ungodly sinners of all human history. And what are they doing? Verse 12 says, "Standing before the throne." That is the judicial scene. "Will the prisoner please rise," says the judge, "and approach the bench to be sentenced." And as Hebrews says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God." That's the scene.

You know, I really thought we'd get through this whole text. But we didn't. That's the scene. We're going to look into the details of that scene next time...the summons, the standard by which people are judged, and the final sentence.

Father, we thank You tonight that we can know Christ and in knowing Him there is no condemnation. We thank You, Father, that we have been saved from the wrath to come, all of it, that which is described here and that which is eternal, we thank You that there is no condemnation for us. We thank You that we participate in the first resurrection, not the second. If there is a first resurrection, there has to be a second resurrection. There therefore have to be two judgments, one for the first and one for the second. Thank You that we will be in the first resurrection and the first judgment

which is not a judgment of sin but a judgment of our deeds to see what our reward will be. When that judgment is over, all of our wood, hay and stubble will be burned up and all that will be left will be the gold, silver and precious stones by which we'll be rewarded. And then we'll have praise from You.

We thank You that the only judgment we'll ever experience is that determination of our works that will grant to us an eternal weight of glory because the judgment of on our sin has already taken place at Calvary and Jesus bore it fully. But, Lord, knowing the terror that awaits men at this judgment is indeed frightening. What an unbelievable scene and we would ask, Lord, that You would kindle afresh in our hearts devotion to the souls of men to bring the message of saving grace, a message of hope, to show them the gospel of escape from the fury of the Great White Throne. May we live in the light of these realities, Lord, and may we not be distracted by the foolishness of this world from the things that really matter. May we like the Apostle Paul look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen because the things that are seen are temporal but the things that are unseen are eternal. May we get our eyes on the souls of men, on the eternal God, on the Lord Jesus Christ and live for those things which will really matter forever and ever.

We pray, Father, that the knowledge of these things will be a great motivation to us. We know it causes us to be more responsible and more accountable. And should there be any attitude of indifference in us toward those that face this day, we pray that You would forgive it and replace it with a zeal and a passion like the Apostle Paul who said he could almost wish himself accursed for the salvation of his people. And may we knowing the terror of the Lord persuade men. Thank You for this revelation. Thank You for letting us know the end. And now, Lord, enable us since we do know to live in the light of this reality. Again thank You for Your Word and for the grace that is ours in Christ by no merit of our own, the grace that saves us and delivers us from this judgment. We praise and thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2017 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).