

Doctrinal Summary of The Great White Throne Judgment

In Revelation 20:11-15 John records the judgment of all those whose name is not found written in the book of life. This judgment occurs on a great white throne with the King of Kings sitting upon it according to Revelation 20:11.

“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.”

The word “throne” is translated from the Koine Greek word *θρόνον* (“thro-non”) which literally means, “official seat belonging to a position of authority from which judgments and edicts are carried out, based on initiation.” Thrones represented authority and power of the one who sat upon it. Typically the *θρόνον* consisted of a high seat back with armrests and a matching footstool. The design of the throne was intended to demand honor and respect for the one who sat upon it. In Revelation 20:11 John identifies the throne upon which Jesus will sit after the millennial reign as being “great” and “white.”

By the descriptions of “great” and “white” John identifies that Jesus will judge the world in integrity and righteousness with total purity and justice to His judgments. God has appointed Him to sit upon the great white throne and judge the world on God’s behalf (cf. Acts 17:30-31). Thus, God will judge the entirety of unbelievers through Jesus the resurrected Messiah in Whom the fullness of the deity dwells (cf. Col. 1:19), distinguishing their condemnation through discernment after evaluating the available evidence according to Revelation 20:12.

“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”

In the evaluation of the unbeliever (the “dead”) Jesus opens different types of books. The first type of books are identified as being a collection of writings that contain, apparently, a list of the unbeliever’s deeds. It is in accordance with the norms and standards of the works accomplished from their own flesh that their evaluation takes place. Since the works of their flesh are dead works, lacking the necessary component of spirituality in their production, the unbeliever’s works do not match up with the standards of God’s design. At the great white throne judgment unbelievers will be evaluated based on their own works and found lacking in regards to the righteousness of God. The conclusion after their works are evaluated will result in their condemnation.

According to Revelation 20:15 the book of life will be opened to see if the names of unbelievers remain written in it. Yet, their name will have been blotted out, not having been written in such a way that it remains there for eternity (cf. Psalm 69:28, Rev. 3:5) because they have not trusted Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for the sins, including their self-righteous works. Since their names do not remain, they are thrown into the lake of fire. Had they trusted Christ as their personal savior then their names would have remained and they would have been spared judgment in the lake of fire.

The great white throne judgment is the final judgment of man before the new heavens and the new earth are ushered in for eternity. He will judge man for their works, condemning them for their lack of spiritual life because of their failure to trust in Him (cf. John 3:16-21).