

The Great White Throne Judgment

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Many people mistakenly believe that God's judgment is the same for everyone. The Scripture describes three different judgments:

1. The Judgment of sins on the cross. Jesus paid for the sins of the world when He died on the cross so that we have the opportunity to be saved. Those who [receive Jesus Christ as Lord](#) have been forgiven of all their sins and will escape punishment.

2. [The Judgment Seat of Christ](#). This is a judgment of saved people—not a judgment of our sins but an examination of our faithfulness during life on earth to determine our [rewards in heaven](#) and our eternal assignments. (1 Cor. 3:11-15)

3. The Great White Throne Judgment. This is a judgment of lost people in Revelation 20:11-15.

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.

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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

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

The Time of the Judgment

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.

This judgment will take place after the Millennial reign of Christ when the earth, the atmosphere, and the universe are destroyed by fire. "The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

Books Opened for Judgment

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.

"The dead" are those who rejected salvation through Jesus Christ, so they must pay for their own sins for all eternity. **The Book of Life** is opened to show that their names are not written in it (Rev. 20:15). The **other books** are records of all their sins to determine their level of torment based upon the amount and nature of the sins they committed. Saved people will receive differing degrees of rewards in heaven, and lost people will receive varying degrees of punishment in the lake of fire.

Every sin must be accounted for. Although the lake of fire will be terrible for all, some people will receive harsher sentences than others. Adolf Hitler will receive a greater punishment for his sins than many people because of the terrible atrocities he committed. Jesus taught there are degrees of punishment in hell. Several passages confirm this truth:

- "For this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin." (John 19:11)
- "Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 10:15)
- "Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you." (Matt. 11:22)

- “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.” (Matt. 11:23-24)
- “The men of Ninevah will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.” (Matt. 12:41)
- “The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” (Matt. 12:42)
- “And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but a few.” (Luke 12:47-48)
- “...these will receive greater condemnation.” (Matt. 23:14, Mark 12:40, Luke 20:47)
- And they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. (Rev. 20:13)
- Therefore it is not surprising if his (Satan’s) servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. (2 Cor. 11:15)
- Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. (2 Tim. 4:14)
- But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds. (Rom. 2:5-6)

These verses tell us that people will be held more accountable before God at the judgment if they have received more information about Him and rejected it. People in the United States will have a harsher judgment than many people in foreign countries because we have an abundance of Bibles, Christian literature, churches, and Christian radio and television. Judas committed a greater sin because he traveled with Jesus and witnessed His miracles, but still betrayed Him. Jesus told the unbelieving people in Capernaum that Sodom would have repented if they had witnessed His miracles. Therefore, Capernaum will be judged harsher than the people in Sodom because they had more information about God’s truth but rejected it.

Lost People Will Receive Resurrected Bodies

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

“Death (physical bodies) and Hades (lost souls) were thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14). Whether they died on land or at sea, their bodies will be resurrected and reunited with their souls for all eternity. Hades (hell) is the place where dead people’s lost souls are currently being punished while they await the resurrection of their bodies. At the great white throne judgment, the people in Hades will receive their horrible resurrection bodies and then will be cast into Gehenna, which is the lake of fire. Although much is said about glorified resurrected bodies in heaven, very little is taught about lost people receiving hideous resurrection bodies for eternity, but it is in Scripture.

Paul said, “There shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked” (Acts 24:15). Jesus said there will be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment (John 5:29). Gehenna (the lake of fire) is the place of punishment for a wicked person’s soul and body after the resurrection. The prophet Isaiah described lost people’s resurrected bodies as “worms.” God says, “Then they will go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched; and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind” (Isa. 66:24). Jesus also referred to their resurrected bodies as worms in Mark 9:43-48.

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