



Part 5 - Revelation
The Study of End Times
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Today we finish up the Revelation series, The *study of the end times*. Today we're looking at the Great White Throne. This is it. This is the final judgment of history following the close of the Millennial Kingdom.

How many of you don't like to be in trouble? I don't like being in trouble. It's not really my thing. Every now and then I will wake up to my wife having a dream that some would say a nightmare. She's like talking to people in the bed next to me. Does anybody else deal with this? Like you talk aloud when you dream. Like Travis Brawner says, "I can't be in trouble for things I do in your dreams." That's not how that works.

A couple of months ago, I woke up to her into a pretty serious meeting. She was in a meeting, and like getting after it. I couldn't really make out what she was saying, but then, crystal clear, in a passionate voice at 2:00 am, I hear her say, "There are going to be real consequences." I start praying, "Lord, let her be talking about the kids and not me. I don't want consequences. I don't like being in trouble.

And last month, when the flood the Ozarks and it took a chunk out of 76 right across from the Landing and they started diverting all the traffic through Kirbyville. I live on that side of the lake, and I need you to know this about that side of Taney County, we ain't built for that kind of traffic going the other way.

For a couple of days, we were diverted, and it was a lot of traffic. Amy and I got in a conversation. I said, I think during times like this, I don't have to stop at the stop sign because I think what our community would appreciate is just keeping the flow of traffic going. How many are with me? How many think that's what you should be doing?

Well, Amy said, "I don't think that's right at all. I think you still have to obey the stop sign." We got into a pretty big discussion, so I called Gary Hazel, the sheriff's deputy of Taney County and I said, "Gary, I need you to settle something for us. "During a state of

emergency, are we allowed to blow past stop signs to keep the flow of traffic going?" He goes, "Ah, no. Where did you get that?" I go, "Are you sure? We're not under marshal law or anything like that right now?" Gary didn't give me the answers I wanted so I'm like *I'll call Sheriff Rader. I'll find out what's going on.* He said that same thing. He wants you to stop at stop signs.

Here's why I started stopping and Amy reminded me. I don't want to be here. I've been in some court rooms. Some of you have been in some courtrooms. Some for misdemeanors, some for felonies. I remember one of my first trips in high school was to the DuPage County Courthouse. It was one of those scared straight type programs at the DuPage County Jail. It worked on me. I didn't want it. It was intimidating and it was scary.

Today, we're talking about a court date you want to miss, a court date you do not want to be a part of. We are talking today about the Great white Throne Judgment. And here is the comfort for every believer in the room. You will not stand before The Great White Throne Judgment. It is for those who have not placed faith in Jesus – Unrepentant sinners. Now this is important... Years ago, I was with a group of young pastors. An old pastor was kind of mentoring us, encouraging us. I know what he was trying to say. It didn't come out just right, but he said, "I want to encourage you guys. You've got to start speaking, preaching, teaching, more about the wrath of God. It's a topic that's missing in the church, along with the Holiness of God. It's missing and you need to bring it back. Start reminding your church more often about the wrath of God.

I paused for a moment. I didn't ask any questions or anything. I just said, "If you're talking about the church, who is the church? We are the church. We are believers in Christ Jesus. Not everybody that's gathered on this campus... because we have lost people on campus today, people who have not placed faith in Jesus. But the church is made up of believers. We're called the bride of Christ. We are called the Family of God. We're the children of God. And the only thing I need to remind the believer in Christ Jesus about the wrath of God is that you are no longer under it. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

John 3: 36 says it plainly - ³⁶ ***Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.***

The Theological term that we use is propitiation. That's what Christ did for you and for me, believer in Christ Jesus, he satisfied God's wrath against us. We have been forgiven. Our sins have been forgiven.

Today, as we come to the Great White Throne Judgment. This is where every unbeliever will stand before God. Every unbeliever since the beginning of time and for all of time. All whoever shook their fists at God, laughed at his Word, denied his way, rebelled at his sovereign rule, scorned his followers, rejected his Son, Jesus Christ, they will stand before the Great White Throne condemned and ultimately cast into hell for all of eternity.

If you have your Bible and want to turn with me to Revelation 20, we are going to look at Verses 11 - 15 today and point out four key aspects of this Great White Throne Judgment. Starting with what John Says. **11 Then I saw...** This is at the end of the Millennial Kingdom that Shay talked about last week. **...a great white throne...**

Great, speaking here of the scope and the intensity. All unbelievers of all time will stand before the Great White Throne. It's white... Speaking there of Righteousness and the perfect justice of God. I think that was part of Shay's message last week that kept resonating with me that we will see perfect justice here, and thrones, speaking of absolute majesty and Sovereign authority, It's here at the Great White Throne that every unbeliever's eternal destiny is determined and declared with ample truth and reason. It is an airtight case against the Unbeliever. **...and him who was seated on it.** We say that is Jesus Christ. **The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small...**

The dead speaking here of the unbeliever. Great and Small is a term the Bible uses. You see it five times in the Book of Revelation. It's speaking of all classes of people, small and great. That expression appears often, and it applies to rich and poor, famous and obscure. Powerful, weak, People you know, people you don't know. But they will stand before this throne. It will be religious people wanting to point out their works. And why they don't deserve hell. It will be philanthropists who gave a lot of money to a lot of great causes. There will be people there who did a lot of good things. There will be people there that avoided a lot of bad things in their life. But everyone who stands before this throne will be fully known. Their works will be fully known.

I was at the grocery store in town this week. A guy came up to me and said, "Hey!" and I said, "hey." We started talking. About a minute to a minute and a half into the conversation, I realized I wasn't who he thought I was. I'm somebody else, but because I'm always looking for ways to entertain myself in our little town, I just went with it. I start giving him answers to questions he's asking me. I'm not exaggerating, we were 2, maybe 3 minutes into our conversation before he realized, "Who are you?" I told him who I was... "Never heard of you." Visiting from out of town. We had a great conversation. We got to know each other.

I just want you to know this... I want every person who has never placed faith in Jesus that's listening online or is on campus right now. You will be known. If you do not place faith in Jesus and you stand before the Great White Throne, you will be known... and all of your works.

But some are going to point at what they did. In Matthew 7: 22-23, Jesus is very clear about this. ***22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'***

I know believers who really struggle with this text right here. They wrestle with it. "I have placed faith in Jesus, I am relying on Jesus." And they read this, and they are like, "What if it's not enough? Understand what Jesus is saying here. This is the person who cries out to God, counting on their works for salvation. And it's none of this that brings you into a right relationship with God. Jesus is the only one that bring you into this right relationship.

The scripture goes on to say ***22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'***

Going back to revelation 20. ***12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.*** One book we know of for sure. There is a lot of speculation around what the other books are. We get a little bit of information here in revelation. Greg Lori says that one of the books could be the law and Another book could be your works and your works will be compared to the Law. Whatever the other books are besides the Book of Life that we read in this text, we know this. It's an airtight case saying you're guilty.

Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

I want to be very clear what's going on here. Unbelievers will stand before the Great White Throne judgement, believers will not. Believers will stand before the judgement seat of Christ where we will be rewarded for our faithfulness in serving Christ. To go back to the chart... We've been going through this in this series. If you've been with us since the beginning, we started with the Church and the rapture. The rapture is Jesus returning for the Church. We're raptured out. The Tribulation takes place seven years of God's wrath being poured out upon the earth. This is where the Judgement seat of Christ takes place.

David Jeremiah teaches on this extensively. He does a wonderful work because we know we don't have the exact timing of it from the scripture, but we know it's when we are with the Lord that this judgement seat of Christ Takes place. Then we will return at the end of the Tribulation. This is coming for the church; the second coming is Jesus returning with the church. We will come back with him, the Battle of Armageddon, and then, as we looked at last week, the Millennial Kingdom. Christ will rule and reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years and you and I will rule and reign with him. And at the end of this time, as Shay took us to Verse 10 in Revelation 20 last week, Today, we are at the Great White Throne Judgment, and we will end with the eternal state.

But just to be clear. Believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, not the Great White Throne Judgement. We read about the Judgement Seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5: 10 - ***10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ... Speaking to believers... ...so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.***

Back to the Great White Throne. We just want to be so clear today because we have so many that are just brand new to church. And, honestly, if this is your first Sunday at this church, you're going, "WoW, is this what it's like every week?" We hope the name of Jesus is lifted high every week. Our desire is not to scare the believer today. Our job today is to make sure the believer leaves refreshed and encouraged, knowing what we've been saved from. We use the word *Save*. Can you think of anything more to be saved from than Judgement and hell? We have been saved. But this should strike fear into the heart of the person who does not know the Lord. I'm very sensitive to this because, again, growing up in an independent, fundamental, premillennial, King James version only Baptist church, we did revivals all the time. I went to revivals in the spring, in the fall, and we brought in a lot of hellfire and brimstone preachers. I've been to services in other churches when I was kid where they would stand up on the pulpit and preach about hell with enthusiasm and excitement. At 10 years old I was like, *"I don't think we should be that excited about this subject. We should be rescuing people from it."*

But then they would give an invitation. I can remember standing in my little church; growing up and standing with my parents at 10 years old. The evangelist would get down to do an invitation and no one would come forward on the first verse. I'd be like *this ain't good. We have to get somebody up there real quick.* On the second verse, no one would come forward. And then a lot of times, and I saw it plenty in my life, the evangelist would turn on believers. He'd say something like this, "Do you know that you know that you know. I'd be like, *Well I thought I did. You put it like that, I don't know, probably not.* But I can remember looking around my church on a Tuesday night revival. There would be 80 to 100 people in there. I know everybody in here. We've all been saved multiple times. We've all been baptized multiple times. I look at my dad and go, "If I go up there, can we go home. I'll take one for the team. Let's get this going."

There were times I, at 10 years old, would be like Hey, "I'm here every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. I'm marching in the Lord's army. I'm flying ore the enemy, I'm shooting the artillery, I got it going on." Whenever I do that, there are always new people that are like, "What was that the artillery thing?" "Oh, we took up arms early. Five years old at our church we were bearing arms for Jesus." We were in the Lord's army, I'm like, *I'm in.* Why would you ask me to doubt?" Causing the believer to doubt is not the goal of today. You should leave here encouraged and challenged and strengthened, with a new fuel for evangelism and a new passion for missions, saying we have to make sure people don't stand before the Great White Throne.

But let's be very clear to everyone listening right now, speaking of the Great White Throne Judgement. On this day, before this throne, if your name is not in this book, the Book of Life, you will be cast into hell for all eternity. Standing before this throne, you will not need to make a defense. The books have been opened. There will be no defense, there will be no plea bargaining. There will be no appeals. There will be no second chances. There will be no more opportunities to accept Christ as Savior. This is it. This is final.

But here's the good news. Your opportunity to receive Christ is right now. You do not have to stand before this throne that we speak of today. Your name is not in the Book of Life because of your giving. Your name is not in the book of Life because of your Church attendance. Your name is not in the Book of Life because of all the good things you think you've done or all the bad things you didn't do or stopped doing. Your name is not in the book of Life because of your family heritage or your family of origin Your name is not in the Book of Life because of the denomination that you put your name under.

Acts of service does not put your name in the Book of Life. Your name is in the Book of life because you placed faith alone in Christ Alone. You're not counting on your works. You're not counting on your good deeds. You're not counting on the absence of your bad deeds. You have claimed the name we have been worshipping today and say that is my only hope for salvation, the name of Jesus. And if your name is not in the Book of Life, there will be no more second chances. It says, and it's very clear, you'll be passed into the Lake of Fire.

There are five viewpoints of hell. I want to just share them with you briefly. The first one is **denial**. Almost three in ten adults in the United States say there is no hell. Gallop did this study last year, 2023. Almost 30% say there is no hell. What's interesting is the same people, many of them believe there is a Heaven. So, a lot of people want a heaven, but they want no hell.

There is another view that people have, number 2. **It's the here and now**. Hell is what we are going through right now on Earth they would say. It's the suffering, the loss, the pain,

There's another one, and I personally have known pastors that have chosen this way. **Universalism**, which teaches that ultimately everyone will be saved. In the end, all will be saved. Think about the worse person you can think of. Even Adolf Hitler will ultimately be saved. That's what Universalism teaches. As God redeems and restores creation, with it, at the same time, he will restore and redeem all mankind.

Just so we're clear, the Bible doesn't teach any of these three. None of these three. You may remember a name.... It was in the New York Times, and it was on NBC, ABC, it was on all the shows you can think of about Carlton Pearson, the Pentecostal preacher from Tulsa who said the Lord told him... He lost his church. It ultimately closed down. He grew it to like 5,000 or 6,000 people. He passed away last year at the age of seventy. Here's how he recounts it. He was watching a program on the history of the Rwandan genocide, and how people were being raped and killed by the thousands upon thousands. Pearson was holding his daughter on his lap and started to talk to God, and he said in his mind, "I don't know how you're going to call yourself a loving God and allow those people to suffer so much and then just suck them into hell." Then in his mind he heard God speak back. You know this is a passion of this church. If you want to hear God speak, open your Bible, read your Bible. I love what Adam Donyes says, "If you want to hear the audible, spoken words of God, read it aloud.

He said he heard God tell him... God did not tell him what I'm about to share with you. "Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you think? He said it came as a revelation. From that moment, he believed that God had saved everyone through the work of Christ on the Cross. And it didn't matter if they accepted him as their savior, professed faith, or believed. It didn't matter if they were Christians. And there was no hell.

What's interesting is he declared all this to his church during an evangelism series. That makes no sense to me at all. Universalism says that all will be saved.

Here's another one that has been around for a while, but it can be trendy. It's annihilationism. Progressive Christians kind of take this because they believe it's a kinder, gentler judgment. So, they believe there is a final judgment, yes, people are separated from God, but they are burned up like that and they will not live on in eternity. But the Bible teaches none of these four. The Bible teaches number 5 – eternal torment. You can read it in the scripture. In Matthew 25, Jesus is very clear. He calls it everlasting punishment. In Hebrews, we read eternal judgment. In Matthew 18, it's eternal fire. And even the passage that Shay ended with last week referred to the eternal torment.

In Revelation 20 : 10, we read ¹⁰ ***And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.***

So, as we declare today, Christ is returning to earth one day soon to judge and wage war. There will be a final judgment known as the Great White Throne, and every unbeliever of all time will stand before it and stand condemned, and stand judged. At the end of that, they will be cast into the lake of Fire. Make no mistake, hell is real. And if you are not a Christian, you will spend eternity there.

But that is not where your story needs to end. The good news is Christ died for you. Christ gave his life for you. If you will confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that he's been raised from the dead, you will be saved. You are saved from all of this. Repent of your sins, place faith alone in Christ alone to be saved. And you do not have to stand before the Great White Throne.

John Walberg from Dallas Seminary says it this way, *"When we put our trust in Jesus Christ, we transfer from the road to Armageddon to the Road to Glory."*

The wonderful fact is that Christ is going to come one of these days, perhaps very soon, and take his church out of the world and into Heaven before the road to Armageddon comes to its finale and the world is judged for its sin and unbelief.

And all God's people said... Amen. We are saved from all of this, believer in Christ. And, believer, you will not stand before The Great White Throne.

At the end, Revelation 21: 1-4 it leads us into the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal state. You have probably heard this passage at a funeral at some point in your life if you've been on this earth a few years.

– Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” And this is something as believers we rejoice in.

You hear it in sermons all the time. We know how the story ends. We certainly do. And it should cause us to rejoice. But also, when we say that, we're saying we know how the story ends, and it doesn't end well for a lot of people. This personally should be a charge to you and to me to pick up the phone today and call that lost family member or friend. And say, "I gotta tell you about something." Your like, "Ted, how do I enter into a conversation about the Great White Throne?" Just read it and say, "Hey, you know where I stand, you know what I believe," Don't get into politics, just declare for them the truth that Jesus saves. And he wants to save them from this.

David Jeremiah speaks of the new heaven and the new earth. He said, *"The common misconceptions that was held by many teachers, was that God was going to destroy the earth at the end of the millennium and create a new one. But that is not accurate. The coming new earth is the one that we live in now, but it will be completely renovated and refreshed. All signs of disobedience, disease, and inherent evil in the world will dissolve, producing a state of perfection we've never experienced. The New Heaven, the New Jerusalem are holy city with golden streets and pearly gates we hear about will come down to earth. God is not going to destroy the world, he's going to purify from all its old corruption. What a glorious day that will be."*

And at the end of Revelation Chapter 22: 20 - ***He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."*** And we say, amen, come Lord Jesus.

In Matthew 25: 6 we hear about this midnight cry. And Jesus is very clear. Here comes the Bride Groom, come out to meet him. ⁶ ***"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'"***

It's my favorite part of a wedding. You know I love weddings. I stand up there at the beginning with the groom and the groomsmen and half my job is keeping them from doing things – just stand there and quit taking all the glory.

But then the bridesmaids walk down and then flower girls sprinkle the flowers. There's always this grand reveal. And it's something. We have so many great venues in the Ozarks where a barn door opens and the bride is revealed. That's a big moment. Everybody stands and they turn and they face the bride. It's a very emotional moment. For me, personally, a more emotional moment is when the bride gets about halfway, I turn to the groom and say, "Hey, go get your bride." He's usually pretty emotional. I'm pretty emotional. He goes and gets his bride. Here's why I love that word picture. I can see it. I'm looking forward to this. One day, the Father is going to turn to his Son and say, "Son, go get your bride." I hope that day is soon before November elections. And all God's people said... Amen.