



# THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED DEAD

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# The Final Judgment of the Unsaved Dead

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Revelation 20:11-15

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The Book of Revelation prophecies that at the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus comes with His saints in power and great glory to rule and reign here on earth for a thousand blessed years. Revelation 20 reveals the final judgment of the unsaved dead, where God settles the score and judges the sins of those who are not in Christ Jesus.

Whether you believe in Him or not, you are going to meet Jesus Christ. He is unavoidable; He cannot be deceived, disputed or discredited. There is no escaping Him. Adrian Rogers says, "If you don't meet Him as Savior, you will meet Him as Judge. He is the one who will be sitting upon this great white throne."

Notice those who are called to the judgment:

The out and out sinner who mocks 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. The evidence, the defense and then the verdict of the court will be handed down. And what waits at the end of a Christ-less life is eternity in hell.

But there is good news.

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which 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. Jesus became my Savior when He died on that cross in agony and blood and with His blood He paid my sin debt."

Through the blood of Jesus, your sin can be buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness, never to be brought up against you again.

## LIFE APPLICATION

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



# The Final Judgment of the Unsaved Dead

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) There is coming a time when God will put the final period upon the final paragraph upon the final page upon the final book of human history.
- b) The unsaved dead will be raised from their graves to stand before Almighty God to be judged.
- c) Revelation 20:12-15
  - i) The book of the Revelation speaks of Jesus, the Lamb of God.
  - ii) After The Great Tribulation, Jesus will come back with His saints in power and great glory to rule and reign here on Earth for one thousand years.
    - (1) The lion and the lamb will lie down together in peace.
    - (2) The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.
  - iii) We then come to the final judgment, which is the great white throne judgment where God adjudicates with righteousness and justice forever.
    - (1) Proverbs 28:5
- d) There are four basic things we find in this passage in Revelation about the final judgment of the unsaved dead.

## 2) THE FEARFUL SETTING DESCRIBED (Revelation 20:11)

- a) The great white throne of judgment is described.
  - i) It is called “great” because of its awesome power.
  - ii) It is called “white” because of its unsullied purity.
  - iii) It is a throne because its ultimate purpose is judgment.
- b) Those who stand before the great white throne are there to be judged.
- c) The judge is the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i) John 5:22
  - ii) Jesus Christ, who is today the Savior, will in that day become the judge.
    - (1) The Lamb will become the Lion.
    - (2) Jesus Christ is inescapable and unavoidable.
      - (a) If you do not meet Him as Savior, then you will meet Him as judge.
      - (b) You may have ignored Him, denied Him and disbelieved Him, but one day you will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - iii) Revelation 1:13-16
    - (1) The Lord Jesus is wearing the regal robes of a king and a judge.
    - (2) His white hair speaks of His purity.
    - (3) His eyes, like a flame of fire, tell us that He sees right through us; He sees and knows all.
      - (a) Hebrews 4:13
        - (i) The Lord Jesus cannot be deceived or discredited.
    - (4) His feet are like brass.



- (a) Brass is an emblem and a symbol of judgment.
      - (i) He is going forth to judge.
    - (5) His voice is like the sound of many waters.
      - (a) His voice is like one hundred cascading waterfalls.
        - (i) Can you imagine anyone talking back to Niagara Falls?
  - d) The awkward position of those who are going to be judged is described.
    - i) Revelation 20:11
    - ii) Everything stable and everything that we have known and depended upon is now gone; there is no place to run to or hide.
      - (1) Adam and Eve ran into the trees of the Garden to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord.
        - (a) Genesis 3:8
      - (2) There is no hiding place here at the great white throne of judgment.
    - iii) Those standing before the great white throne will be face to face with the Lord Jesus.
- 3) THE FORCEFUL SUMMONS DELIVERED (Revelation 20:12-13)
  - a) The people who are called to the judgment:
    - i) The out and out sinner
      - (1) These are people who hate God, hate Christ and hate the church.
      - (2) They boldly and brazenly shake their fists in the face of Almighty God.
    - ii) Self-righteous people
      - (1) These are people who think that the Gospel is for the drunkard, the murderer, the adulterer, the wife abuser, the blasphemer, etc.
      - (2) They are nice people who live in nice homes and who have nice manners.
      - (3) They attend church and sing hymns.
        - (a) There is no one so bad he cannot be saved, and no one so good he need not be saved.
        - (b) The worst form of badness is human goodness when human goodness becomes a substitute for the new birth.
    - iii) The procrastinators
      - (1) They intend to be saved one day.
      - (2) They know they are sinners and are not antagonistic to the Gospel, but they just do not intend to give their hearts to Jesus today.
        - (a) Proverbs 27:1
        - (b) If you are unsaved, please do not put off salvation.
        - (c) 2 Corinthians 6:2
          - (i) If you hear God's voice, harden not your heart.
        - (d) If you die without knowing Jesus personally, then you will spend an eternity in Hell.
    - iv) The unsaved church member
      - (1) These are people who have religion, but they do not have the Lord Jesus Christ.
        - (a) They are religious.
        - (b) They are not anti-God.



- (2) They are counting on their church contributions, church attendance and ritual.
  - (a) Religion never saved anyone; it is only Jesus who saves.
  - (b) We need to stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation.
- (3) 2 Corinthians 13:5
  - (a) Do you know Jesus?
    - (i) This question is not asking if you are religious.
    - (ii) This question is not asking what denomination you belong to.
    - (iii) This question is not even asking if you know the plan of salvation, but do you know the Man of salvation, the Lord Jesus?
- v) Those who have never heard the Gospel
  - (1) Though one may not have enough light to save him, he has enough sin to condemn him.
    - (a) Romans 3:23
  - (2) There are degrees of judgment.
    - (a) Luke 12:47-48
    - (b) Mark 6:11
    - (c) Though they will each be called to the judgment, those who willingly and knowingly refuse the Lord Jesus will receive harsher judgment than those who have never heard the Gospel of Christ.
  - (3) This is why missions is so important; we must tell everyone we can about the Gospel of Christ.
- b) The places from which they are called:
  - i) Revelation 20:13
    - (1) Death has the body; Hell has the soul.
    - (2) The Greek word in this passage is "Hades."
  - ii) Death and Hades deliver up the dead that are in them.
  - iii) The graves and tombs will give up their dead.
    - (1) Out of the seas and desert sands they will come.
    - (2) Wherever men have died, they will be raised.
    - (3) There is a resurrection of the unsaved as well as the saved.
  - iv) When someone dies without Jesus Christ, his soul immediately goes to Hell, but he is not yet at the judgment.
    - (1) Luke 16:23
      - (a) The word "hell" used in this passage is a different word than that which is translated as "lake of fire."
      - (2) Hell can be described as a jail where the indicted criminal is held until the judgment; the lake of fire is the penitentiary.
  - v) The child of God who dies immediately goes to paradise.
    - (1) 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
- c) The authority and power of this summons:
  - i) The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees the judgment of the unsaved dead.
    - (1) Acts 17:31



- (a) The man that God has ordained is Jesus Christ.
  - ii) The God who raised up Jesus Christ is the God who is going to raise up the unsaved dead.
  - iii) We cannot hide from God.
  - iv) The summons is coming.
  
- 4) THE FATAL SECRETS DISPLAYED (Revelation 20:12)
  - a) At this judgment, there is going to come an indictment.
    - i) Our lives are recorded in God's book.
    - ii) Nothing has escaped His knowledge.
      - (1) Ecclesiastes 12:14
      - (2) Romans 2:16
  - b) Secrets that have been repressed:
    - i) These are secrets about us that no one but God knows.
    - ii) These secrets will one day be revealed.
    - iii) Hebrews 4:13
  - c) Secrets that have been recorded:
    - i) God's candid camera is recording.
    - ii) Matthew 12:36
      - (1) We will give an account for every idle word, every time we have taken the Lord's name in vain.
      - (2) Exodus 20:7
  - d) Secrets that will be revealed:
    - i) Luke 12:2
    - ii) Skeletons will come out of closets that even parents, spouses and children do not know.
    - iii) There is coming a judgment day when we will face the record.
    - iv) Things in our hearts and lives that we think we've covered up will be revealed.
  
- 5) THE FINAL SENTENCE DETERMINED (Revelation 20:14-15)
  - a) The sureness of the final sentence.
    - i) Revelation 20:12
    - ii) God swears by Himself that judgment is coming.
      - (1) Romans 14:11-12
  - b) The severity of the final sentence.
    - i) Revelation 20:12
    - ii) They were judged according to their works, not according to grace or mercy.
      - (1) If we want grace or mercy, we may have it; but we must have it in this day and in this life.
      - (2) We cannot wait and throw ourselves on the mercy of the court on the day of judgment.
        - (a) There is no room for mercy at the judgment.
        - (b) If you want mercy, you must have it today.
          - (i) Romans 10:13



## 6) CONCLUSION

- a) There are three parts to every trial.
  - i) The evidence is presented against you.
    - (1) The books are opened.
    - (2) Every word, thought, deed, dishonest thing, big things, small things, etc., will be presented.
    - (3) Nothing will be left out.
  - ii) You will make your defense.
    - (1) If your defense does not satisfy you, how do you expect it to satisfy a Holy God?
    - (2) What defense will you give?
      - (a) What can we possibly say for trampling on the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ?
        - (i) Matthew 11:28
  - iii) The verdict of the court is handed down.
    - (1) The judge is Jesus Christ.
    - (2) Matthew 10:33
    - (3) Matthew 7:23
    - (4) The sentence for those who have refused Jesus Christ will be an eternity in Hell.
      - (a) Revelation 20:15
- b) C.S. Lewis stated that everyone in the world falls into two categories:
  - i) Those who are like Satan who say to God the Father, "Not Your will but mine be done."
  - ii) Those who are like God the Son who say to the Father, "Not my will but Thine be done."
    - (1) For those in the first category, their souls will one day drop into Hell as a broken-hearted God says, "Not My will but thine be done."
- c) God does not want you to go to Hell.
  - i) John 3:18
  - ii) There is no condemnation for those who believe in Jesus Christ.
    - (1) Those who believe in and trust in Jesus will not stand before the great white throne of judgment.
      - (a) We have settled out of court.
      - (b) Romans 8:33
- d) Do you want to settle out of court today?
  - i) Jesus Christ paid your sin debt with His death on the cross.
- 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





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Be finding in the book of the Revelation chapter 20. We're talking about "The Final Judgment of the Unsaved Dead." There is a judgment day coming. There's coming a time when God will put the final period upon the final paragraph, upon the final page, upon the final chapter, upon the final book of human history. And the time of the final judgment will come and all that men had dreamed for and schemed for and sold their souls for will have turned to rust and dust and mold and corruption. The unsaved dead will be raised from their graves to stand before Almighty God and to be judged.

Let's read about it, Revelation chapter 20 verses 12 through 15, "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. 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 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 let's review just a little bit. Remember that the book of the Revelation is speaking of Jesus who is the Lamb of God. We've chosen the theme of this series, "The Triumph of the Lamb." There as we opened the book in chapter 1, we saw a vision of the glorified Savior and we talked about Him. And then we moved into chapters 2 and 3 and we talked about seven churches that are addressed that represent the Church Age, the age in which we live. And then there came the Rapture, when the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ rise and the rest of us are caught up to meet the Lord in the air to be with the Lord for the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Marriage of the Lamb. But down here on Earth is a period of time known as The Great Tribulation, as I understand it, basically seven years. And the Great Tribulation will end with Jesus this time coming not for His saints but with His saints in power and great glory to rule and reign here on Earth for a thousand blessed years. When the lamb and the lion will lie down together in peace, and the Earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters that cover the sea. And then we come, friend, to the final judgment, the great white throne judgment where God settles the score and where God adjudicates with righteousness and justice forever and forever.

Now, the message today is going to be straight from the Word of God. I'm aware that some will disagree with it but it will be because they will be disagreeing with God, what God has revealed here in His Holy Word. The Bible says, "Evil men; evil men understand not judgment."

Four basic things I lay on your heart. First of all, I want you to see what I'm going to call the fearful setting described. I want you to notice the setting of this judgment. Look again in Revelation 20 verse 11, "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." Now notice the setting. There is a great, white throne. It is called great because of its awesome power. It is called white because of its unsullied purity.



It is a throne, a throne of judgment which speaks of its ultimate purpose which is judgment.

Sometimes people foolishly pray a prayer like this. They say, "Lord, grant that someday we might stand before Thy great white throne." Don't pray that prayer for me please. And don't pray it for you if you have a modicum of understanding of biblical truth. Those who stand before the great white throne are to stand there to be judged. Now, notice who the judge is. The Bible says, "One who sits upon this throne." It may surprise you to know that the judge is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father is God; God the Son is God; God the Spirit is God but that Person of the Holy Trinity who will be upon this throne is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Key verse, John 5:22, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." That is, Jesus Christ, who today is the Savior, will in that day be the Judge. Now the Lamb will become the Lion. Because in the book of the Revelation Jesus is pictured both as Lamb and Lion, both as Savior and Judge. And so, I'm going to tell you something and listen very carefully. You may not be a Christian; you may never give your heart to Jesus Christ but one day you're going to meet Jesus Christ. He is inescapable, unavoidable. You will meet Jesus Christ. If you don't meet Him as Savior, you will meet Him as Judge. You may have ignored Him, you may have denied Him, you may have disbelieved Him, you may even have cursed Him but one day you will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, this is the One sitting on the throne. What is He going to be like? You talk about a judge that is awesome, what is He going to be like? I want you to put your bookmark there in Revelation chapter 20 and turn back to Revelation chapter 1 because we've already been introduced to the judge in chapter 1. Look if you will in Revelation chapter 1 verses 13 through 16, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks," the seven candlesticks represent seven churches, "One likened unto the Son of man," that's the Bible appellation for Jesus Christ, "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps of the chest with a golden girdle." These are the robes of a priest and a judge. Now notice Him; this is the One of the throne, "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 it 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."

Now, He's wearing the regal robes of a king and a judge. His white hairs speaks of His unsullied purity. His eyes like a flame of fire tell us that He sees right through us, He sees all and knows all. Put there by that verse Hebrews chapter 4 verse 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He cannot be deceived. He cannot be disputed. He cannot be discredited. This is the Judge with eyes like fire. And then the Bible says His feet are like brass. Brass is an emblem and a symbol of judgment. He is going forth to judge. His voice is like the sound of many waters, like one hundred cascading waterfalls. Can you imagine somebody talking back to Niagara Falls? This is the Lord Jesus who is sitting there upon the throne. Jesus Christ is the Judge. That's the one who'll be sitting upon this great white throne.

And notice the awkward position of those who're going to be judged. In verse 11 of Revelation 20 he says, "On this throne there is one sitting from whose face the earth and the heavens flee away."



Everything stable, everything steady, everything that we have known and depended upon is gone. And there you are standing before Him, no place to run, no place to hide. Adam and Eve ran into the trees of the Garden to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord. But there's no hiding place there. The old spiritual says, "I went to the rock to hide my face, and the rock cried out 'No hiding place, no hiding place down here.'" And there you are face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ. These, this is the setting described.

Now, second thing I want you to see. Not only the setting described and the fearful setting described but I want you to notice the forceful summons delivered. Notice in Revelation 20 verses 12 and 13, "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." Now watch this, "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," and underscore this next phrase, "every man according to their works."

Notice the people who're called to the judgment, the dead small and great. Do you know what that means? That means the up and out and it means the down and out. I think we could put these into five categories and I want you to listen as we call the roll here and see, unsaved friend, if you're in one of these categories.

First of all the out and out sinner will be there, the out and out sinner. These hate God, hate Christ, hate the church. They hate what we're doing now. They boldly, braggingly, brazenly shake their puny fist in the face of Almighty God and say, "God, if there be a God, You're not big enough to make me serve You." There're none like that here today unless you've come to mock. And if you have, may God have mercy upon you. But the out and out sinner will be there.

I'll tell you who else will be there. These are not out and out sinners, self-righteous people will be there. These are people who think they're too good to be damned. They think that the Gospel is for the drunkard, the murderer, the pervert, the harlot. They think that the Gospel is for the wife abuser. They think that the Gospel is for the blasphemer. But they're nice people. They live in nice homes. They have nice manners. They are nice neighbors. They work in the PTA. They attend church. They sing the hymns. They are nice people. They will be there. I've said it before, there's no one so bad he cannot be saved and no one so good he need not be saved. Most of the people in America are egomaniacs strutting to hell thinking they're too good to be damned. The worst form of badness is human goodness when human goodness becomes a substitute for the new birth. The self-righteous person will be there.

I'll tell you a third category of person who will be there. These are neither out and out sinners nor self-righteous, these are procrastinators. They intend to be saved. And there's some like that today. You know that you're a sinner and you are not antagonistic to the Gospel but you just don't intend to give your heart to Jesus, at least not today. Now the Bible says in Proverbs chapter 27 and verse 1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." If you're an unsaved person, I beg you in the name of Jesus, don't put away the day of salvation. The Bible says in Second Corinthians 6 verse 2, "Behold, today is the day of salvation." Today, if you'll hear God's voice,



harden not your heart. Can you feel your heart beat up there, that little heart beat? As someone has said, "A muffled drum beating a funeral march to the grave." That little heartbeat that's all there is between you and hell. It starts beating, by the way, in the mother's womb, that little heartbeat. There is the beautiful baby; there is the cuddly child, there is the tender teen, there is the mighty man. He's looking around. He sees that girl. And then he goes from the tender teen to the tired thirties, feverish forties, frantic fifties, sagging sixties, solemn seventies, aching eighties, nagging nineties. But he may not go that far. He may not go that far. I've conducted a funeral for a little baby and I've conducted a funeral for a man approaching his nineties. That heart somewhere will stop beating and when your heart stops, if you don't know Jesus, you're going to hell. You say, "That's plain speaking." I mean to be plain. You're saying, "Are you trying to frighten me?" I would to God I could. I'd rather frighten you into Heaven than lull you into hell. Who will be there? The out and out sinner will be there. Who will be there? The self-righteous person will be there. Who will be there? The procrastinator will be there. But there's another category of persons that don't fit into any of these categories and this is the unsaved church member.

These are people who have religion but they don't have the Lord Jesus Christ. They're religious. They're not anti-God. They've not put it over; they've just put it away. They've just simply been deceived. Somehow they're counting on their church contributions. Somehow they're counting on their ritual. Somehow they're counting on their church attendance and whatever to be saved. Friend, religion never saved anybody; it is Jesus who saves. It'll be a great day in America when people stop enduring religion and start enjoying salvation. Do you know Jesus? I've said it many times. The devil had rather send you to hell from the pew than from the gutter. And there're many people who will die and go to hell surrounded by baptismal certificates, receipts for church offering, Sunday School attendance pins and all of the rest of it, lost church members. That's the reason the Bible says in Second Corinthians 13 verse 5, "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith." Do you know Jesus? I'm not asking are you religious. I'm not asking are you a Baptist. I'm not asking do you know the plan of salvation. Do you know the man of salvation, the Lord Jesus? Are you truly saved? Lost church members will be there.

I'll tell you another category of persons who'll be there and don't fit into any of these other categories. And these are those who've never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now some people say, "Well, now wait a minute. If a person has never heard, how can he be condemned?" He may not have enough light to save him but he has enough sin to condemn him. Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But there are degrees of judgment. Hell will not be the same for everybody. Put this verse down, Luke 12 verses 47 and 48, "And that servant, which knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did things according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, that is he didn't have the light, "and did commit things worthy of stripes," he does the sin, "shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more."

Now, if you hear the Gospel preached from a church platform or you hear it in your Sunday School class, and yet you refuse the Lord Jesus Christ willfully, knowingly; friend, I would not want



to be in your shoes at the judgment. In Mark chapter 6 verse 11, Jesus said, "When you preach, when you testify, if somebody will not hear you," Jesus said, "Shake the dust off your shoes for that dust will be used against you in the Day of Judgment." It'll be a testimony against you. You might stand in the judgment and say, "Oh God, have mercy. I didn't have a chance." God will say, "Angel, bring exhibit A." "What is exhibit A?" "The dust on the shoes of Adrian Rogers that morning that he preached on the final judgment and you sat there in the church. Don't say that you didn't have an opportunity. There are those who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God deals with them one way. But God deals with the person who arrogantly, willfully, deliberately, knowingly says no to Jesus Christ. Those who've never heard will be there. And my how we ought to want to tell them; that's what missions is all about. Now these are the persons who are called.

And notice the places from which they are called. Look again, if you will, in Revelation 20 verse 13 and see those who are called from these places. Where it says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which are in them." Death and hell, death has the body, hell has the soul. The Greek word here is Hades. Death and Hades deliver up the dead that are in them. And so, the graves will give up their dead and out of tombs the dead will come. And from the depths of the sea, as the sea heaves its bosom and its swells give up the dead. From the Arctic waste they will come, from the desert sands they will come, from the tropical jungles they will come. Wherever men have died, they will be raised. There is a resurrection of the unsaved as well as the saved. From this age and every age and all who've ever lived since Adam who do not know redemption will come. Because death gives up the body. Now hell has the soul. When a man dies without Jesus Christ, immediately his soul goes to hell but he's not yet at the judgment. Read Luke 16 verse 23, "The rich man died and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment." The word hell is a different word than the word that is translated lake of fire. Think of hell as a jail where the indicted criminal is held until the judgment and then think of the lake of fire as the penitentiary. He's taken out of the holding cell there; out of the jail and finally put in the penitentiary. Now, so a person who dies without the Lord Jesus Christ goes immediately to hell. Immediately to the place that the rich man went to in Luke chapter 16. The child of God who dies goes immediately to paradise. Second Corinthians chapter 5 verses 6 through 8, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." But all of that does not mean that there is not coming a final judgment. There is coming a final judgment. Revelation 20 verse 13, "The sea gives up the dead which are in it. Death and hell deliver up the dead which are in them and they were judged every man."

I want you to see the authority and the power of this summons. Sometimes when an earthly judge may issue a summons the criminal refuses to come. Oh, he may disguise himself. He may flee to another country. He may seek asylum somewhere else or he may even commit suicide to keep from coming to judgment. But you will come to judgment. The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees the judgment of the unsaved dead. Put in your margin Acts chapter 17 verse 31. It speaks of Almighty God and it says, "And He hath appointed the day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." Now, remember the man that God has ordained is Jesus Christ. "By that man whom He hath ordained." Now, can we be sure it's Jesus?



Yes. "Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He raised Him from the dead." The One raised from the dead is going to be the judge.

Now, Jesus Christ walked out of that grave. You can't hold court if the judge is dead. And you can't hold court if the defendant is dead. Now what He is saying here with logic is this, "That the God who raised up Jesus is the God who's going to raise up the unsaved dead." You can't crawl up in the grave and pull the dirt over your face and hide from God. There is coming a judgment. That's the reason I've often said, "I'll never understand why unsaved people come to celebrate Easter." If you don't intend to get saved, don't celebrate Easter. Don't put on your glad rags and celebrate Easter. Now, I'm glad you come because I want to shoot you full of Jesus but I'm telling you that's ridiculous for an unsaved man to celebrate his doom. You're celebrating the final judgment when you come to Easter if you are on the wrong side of Calvary, if you refuse to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. The summons is coming, a forceful summons.

Now here's the third thing I want you to see. I want you to see the fatal secrets that will be displayed. At this judgment there's going to come an indictment. Notice what it is. Revelation chapter 20 and verse 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," now watch this, "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."

Did you know that God is keeping a book on you? Did you know that God has your life recorded in His book? Did you know that not a thing has escaped His knowledge? And one of these days you'll face the record? Put this Scripture down, Ecclesiastes 12 verse 14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing," Did you notice that? "With every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

And then put this verse down, Romans chapter 2 verse 16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to My Gospel." These are secrets, things that nobody else knows about but God knows. You know most of us, if there were a glass window on our hearts, we would want a stained glass window. We wouldn't want anybody to be able to look into our heart.

Peter Lord, who's preached from this pulpit, said, "It never bothers me when anybody says anything bad about me, I just say, 'Thank God, they don't know any more.'" Thank God they don't know any more. Well, we all know the evil that lurks in the human heart, secrets that are going to be revealed. Put this verse down, Hebrews 4 verse 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." That's the reason He has these eyes like a flame of fire. There're secrets that have been repressed.

And then there're secrets that have been recorded. Is not the recording interesting? This service is being recorded. The cameras right now are recording me and what I'm saying and doing will be put in a vault, enshrined on tape. I was rummaging through some things and I found some old sermon tapes that I'd preached almost half a century ago. Now I said, "I'll put one on and listen to what this fool will say." And listened, and to think, all those words that I said so long ago were still there, the words that I said. "Every idle word," the Bible says that men speak, "shall they give account



thereof in the day of judgment." God's candid camera is moving. God's tape recorder is playing.

Matthew 12 verse 36, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, shall they give account thereof in the day of judgment." You've taken God's name in vain. You've asked God to damn this. You've said, "Oh, Jesus Christ;" "Oh, Lord;" "Oh, this;" "Oh, that" and taken that precious name and mixed it in the muck and mire and slime of the sewer. And now you've forgotten it. God hasn't forgotten it. You say, "Well, I didn't mean anything by it." Then you're twice condemned. That you could take that Name in vain and not mean anything by it, no more to you than an idle curse word. And God says in Exodus 20 verse 7, "I will not hold him guiltless that taketh My name in vain." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "Every idle word that men speak shall they give an account thereof." Secrets that have been repressed. Secrets, friend, that will be revealed. This verse says that these things are open.

Luke chapter 12 and verse 2, "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, and that shall not be known." Skeletons will come out of closets: things that your mother didn't know; your father didn't know; your wife didn't know; your husband didn't know; your children don't know. It'll be shouted from the rooftop. Think about it. There's coming a judgment day where we will face the record.

I once talked to my missionary son and daughter who were in Spain. And they had a sewer backup and they called the man to come and work on the sewer. And said, "He went out in the street;" and you would have to know sweet Kelly to understand how this would affect her. Said, "He went out into the street and took the manhole cover off," and she said, "Papa, thousands of roaches came out and ran all over the streets." I said, "Poor Kelly." I tell you, one roach would drive me up the wall. Friend, when God takes the lid off, there're thousands of roaches that are going to come out. Things in your heart, things in your life that you have repressed and you think you've covered up.

Now, let's go the last point here. I want you see not only the fatal secrets that will be displayed but I want you to see the final sentence that will be determined. Look in Revelation 20 verses 14 and 15, look at it, "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, were cast into the lake of fire." Now think, think with me about this final sentence. Think of the sureness of it. The Bible says in Revelation 20 verse 12, "They were judged." You won't bribe this judge. No shrewd lawyer will put a spin on it. God swears by Himself that we will come to judgment. Romans chapter 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 judgment is coming. That's the sureness of it.

Notice the severity of it. They were judged according to their works, not according to grace, not according to mercy. If you want grace, you may have it. If you want mercy, you may have it. But you must have it in this day and in this life. You'll not have it then. Don't get the idea that you're going to throw yourself on the mercy of the court. The day of mercy has ended. There's no room for mercy now at the judgment. In this day, there's room for mercy. The Bible says in Romans 10 verse 13, "For



whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

In every trial, there're three parts to every trial. First of all, the evidence is presented against you. The books were opened; your words, your thoughts, your deeds, every dishonest thing, every nickel you stole from your mother's dresser, every gray hair you gave your father, every wrinkle you pinched into the brow of your wife. These things, big things, small things, the books are opened. Not only things that you have done and things that you have thought and things that you have said but things that you have left undone. James 4:17, “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” And when those books are opened, you will step back and say, “My God, no.” But there will be the record; every idle word, nothing left out, the evidence is presented against you.

And then you have a chance to make your defense. Now, what will your defense be? What're you going to say? Think it through. Does it satisfy you? If it doesn't even satisfy you, how do you expect it to satisfy a Holy God? I can hear people standing at the judgment. “Now wait a minute, Lord, don't judge my sin. I didn't know which church to join. There was a Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, Church of God, Church of Christ, Church of God in Christ, Episcopalian Church, the Catholic Church, Mormonism. 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.’” “But God, it was Adrian Rogers. I went to hear him on a Sunday morning. I wanted to feel good and he preached on judgment and hell and I didn't like him.” I'm sorry about that. He'll say, “I didn't say, ‘Believe on the preacher.’ I said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’” “But now wait a minute God, I'll tell you why I wasn't saved. I wasn't going to be a hypocrite. I wasn't going to go down there and walk down that isle and give my heart to Jesus in front of all those people and not be able to live it.” And He will say, “I didn't say, ‘Believe on your self.’ I said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’” “Well, but that Bellevue Baptist Church is full of hypocrites. I know a hypocrite in that church and that's why I didn't give my heart to Jesus.” “I didn't say, ‘Believe on the hypocrite.’ I said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’” What defense will you give? What can you possibly say for trampling beneath your feet the precious blood of the Lord Jesus and despising the spirit of grace when He stretches forth nail-pierced hands and says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I'll give you rest.” Matthew 11 verse 28.

The evidence, the defense, and then the verdict of the court is handed down. Who is the judge? The judge is Jesus. And a broken-hearted judge will say, “Him that denies Me before men, the same must I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.” Matthew 10 verse 33. And Matthew 7 verse 33, “Depart from Me ye that work iniquity I never knew you.” And your soul will drop down into hell. For in Revelation 20:15 the Bible says, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” And you say, “Well, I don't believe in hell fire.” Five minutes after you get there you'll believe in it. This is Bible, either it's true or it's not true. There is a lake of liquid fire and friend, the sadness of it is, that you don't have to go.

C. S. Lewis brilliantly said that, “Everybody in the world is in two categories. Those who are like Satan who say to God the Father, ‘Not your will but mine be done.’ And those who are like God the Son who say to the Father, ‘Not my will but thine be done.’ Now those in the first category who say to





the Father, not your will but mine be done, who are autonomous and live this self-concerned, self-controlled lives will one day drop into hell and a broken-hearted God will say, 'Not my will, thine be done.'" God doesn't want you to go to hell.

A smart aleck asked a preacher one time, said, "Oh, you believe in hell. Tell me where is hell?" The wise pastor said, "Hell is at the end of a Christless life." That's where it is. You die outside the Lord and you're going to come to a judgment and you will determine that the Bible is indeed true.

But I've got wonderful news for you. The Bible says in the Gospel of John chapter 3 verse 18 of the Lord Jesus Christ, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." Now there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. I'm not going to stand before the great white throne and I'll tell you why. Do you want to know why? I settled out of court. I settled out of court. Oh, Jesus became my Savior when He died on that cross in agony and blood and with His blood He paid that sin debt. And the Bible says in Romans 8 verse 33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Isn't that wonderful? Your sin can be buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness, never, no never to be brought up against you again.

Bow your heads in prayer, every head bowed and every eye closed. And I want you to pray today that God's Spirit will move in this invitation. And if you don't know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, I want you today to settle out of court. I want you to receive the One that I received as a teen boy. The One who saved me and the One who's kept me now these many years. And the One who fills my life day by day with blessedness and joy. I want you to know Him, the One who has assured me an eternal Heaven.

Would you pray a prayer like this? "Oh God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin. Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me. Lord Jesus, thank You for Your shed blood on that cross. Thank You that You paid my sin-debt so that God can be both just and the Justifier of those that believe in You. Lord Jesus, I turn from my sin. I'm sick of it; I am tired of it; I turn to You. I open my heart, by faith I receive You into my life as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me, Lord Jesus. Save me, Lord Jesus. I receive the gift of salvation and thank You, Lord, that it is a gift because I can never deserve it nor earn it. Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith and that settles it. Now give me the courage to make it public for if I believe in You, I'll not be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray. Amen.



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