

THE FOUR JUDGMENTS

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHY	SCRIPTURE(S)
Sheep and Goat	Gentile's who survive the 7- year tribulation	After the 7-year tribulation	On earth in Jerusalem	Those helping the Jews and entering the Kingdom	Matthew 25:31-46
Judging Israel	Jews who survive the 7-year tribulation	After the 7-year tribulation	On earth in wilderness	The saved will enter the Kingdom but those unsaved won't	Ezekiel 20:33-44
Bema Seat	The church as saved believers in Jesus	After the pre-trib rapture	In Heaven	To reward all the deeds done and all the words spoken	1 Cor. 3:10-15
White Throne	All those who never put their trust in Jesus	After the Millennial Reign	On earth	God's law broke words spoke reject conviction dismiss creation	Gal. 3:10, Matt. 12:36, Jn. 16:7-11 Rom. 1:18-20

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Pastor JD

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Heavenly Father, thank You. Worthy are You. Father God, thank You so much for the Prophecy Update. Lord, I pray that You will speak to our hearts. Give us understanding, Lord, and draw us to Your word for clarification. And as we get into, Lord, this next teaching, would You just — Holy Spirit would You calm our spirit and give us a focus, Lord. Wake us up, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Lord, thank You. We say Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. You can be seated. Those of you online, we're glad that you're joining with us as well. Before we jump in, I want to mention that our all-church prayer meeting is this Tuesday, upcoming, July 1st. Note the start time, especially those of you online, of 7:00 p.m. here in the sanctuary. And I want to kick it off, kick off the prayer meeting with a message about those times in our lives when, from our perspective, God seemingly and even unnecessarily delays, only to then miraculously answer my prayers. So we'd encourage you to make plans to come or watch online.

Now, today we're going to finish, Lord willing, *Chapter 20*, which is a real turning point, for lack of a better word, such that it marks the end of this divine outline we have in *Revelation 1:19*, where John is told to write that which he has seen, that which is now, and that which is to come after these things, 'meta tauta' in the Greek.

So in other words, to simplify, John is told, *John 1:19 — Revelation 1:19*, given this divine outline, as it's affectionately been referred to, to write that which is past, that which is present, and that which is future.

And here's what's cool. *Chapter 1* = past. John was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ crucified, buried, resurrected, glorified, seated at the right hand of the Father.

Chapters 2 and 3 = present.

We're at the end of *Chapter 3*. We're the last drop about to drip. You like that? In *Chapter 3*, which is the Church Age, the seven letters to the seven churches, literal churches in Asia Minor then, now modern-day Turkey, ironically.

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And these seven churches are representative and prophetic pictures of the Church Age. And interesting, the seventh church was the last days lukewarm Laodicean church.

And *Chapter 4:1*, boom! John hears a trumpet and is told to “**Come up hither.**” “**Come up here.**” And he's raptured. *Chapter 4:1*. And chap — that's the pre-Tribulation rapture. Because see, in *Chapters 1-3* the church is mentioned 19 times. In *Chapters 4 and 5* the church is in heaven, In *Chapters 6 through 19* — which we, wooh! finished, thank You, Jesus. Hallelujah! — are all about the seven-year Tribulation, the horrors of the seven-year Tribulation. And not one time in *Chapters 6-19* about the Tribulation is the church mentioned in the Tribulation. Why? Because we're raptured prior. Now *Chapter 20*, we're done with the tribulation. Good riddance. *Chapter 20* = The Second Coming, the Millennial Reign, Kingdom Age; 1000 years, and the judgment. And we're going to finish that today.

Now, what's *Chapters 21 and 22*? See, everything from *Chapter 4:1* is all future. We still haven't had *Chapter 4:1* happened yet, but it could happen soon and very soon with the way things are looking.

So here we are in the Church Age, lukewarm last days. This is the church, by the way, where Jesus is knocking on the door asking to come back in and sup with them and then with Him. He's not even in the church anymore. What an apt description of the last days church today.

Well, so *Chapters 4 and 5* = rapture, Heaven. *Chapters 6 through 19* = Tribulation. *Chapter 20* = Millennial Reign, Kingdom Age, 1000 years, Second Coming — this is after the Second Coming — and then the judgment which we're going to deal with today. And I say it that way for a reason.

Chapters 21 and 22 = The new heavens and the new earth. Lord willing, next week we start *Chapter 21* about the new Heavens, the new Jerusalem, the new earth. What are you going to do after you finish *Chapter 22*? Well, the rapture is going to happen before, so... Okay, let's do this. You want to do this? Let's do this.

Chapter 20. We're going to begin in *verse 11* and go through to *verse 15*. Now if you're uncomfortable, unable to stand, no worries. Where you're seated is fine. But those wishing to stand for the reading of God's word, you can follow along with me as I read.

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Now keep in mind, *Chapter 10*, the thousand years have ended. Now we pick it up in *verse 11*, and John writes what he sees, as he was commanded to. And he says, **“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. [This sounds big] And [Verse 12] I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books [Plural] were opened. Another book [Singular] was opened, which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. [Plural]”**

The sea [Verse 13] 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. Then [Verse 14] death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone [Verse 15] [Anyone] whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.”

(Deep sigh)

We need to pray. Father, this is Your word. This was preserved in the canon of Scripture throughout all the ages for us, to us today. So, Lord, I pray that by the Holy Spirit, as only You can, You'll open up the eyes of our understanding. This is — this is tough stuff. But it's true. It's truth. So, Lord, would You open our eyes to the truth and how it applies to our lives in these days in which we are living? Only You can do that, Lord. Will You do that for us, Lord? We're asking You to. In Jesus' name, Amen. And you can be seated and thank.

So by way of a preface to both today's title and teaching, I have to confess, and I think you would agree, that this is arguably one of the most sobering and serious passages of all the passages in the entire Bible. Would you agree? And here's why, chiefly.

It brings to the forefront the paramount importance of putting our trust in Jesus and His righteousness and forgiveness for our sins instead of standing on our own righteous, which are, as Isaiah says, filthy rags. Because that, at the end of the day, as they say, is all that matters.

There are two kinds of people in the world today, and it's not Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative. Stop that. Forget that rubbish. Lost or saved. Period. And would to

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God — and this is — would to God, and I include myself in this, that we would stop seeing people through that lens and see people through the lens that God sees people.

Man looks at the outward appearance. God not only sees, knows the heart. And that's all that matters when it's all said and done. And whether we realize it or not, whether we like it or not, our names will either be found in the Book of Life or the books of death and judgment for all eternity. Forever and ever.

Are you okay so far? Is that too strong? Too soon? Too much? I'm starting this way because again, all of us, myself included, would do well to give the Lord our undivided attention concerning the profound eternal ramifications of this. That's an understatement, actually.

I pray that the enemy, who doesn't want you to hear this, will not distract you from this, get your mind wandering off of this. Would you, with me, commit to giving the Lord your undivided attention and ask the Holy Spirit to help you focus and concentrate? My hope and prayer is that as we go through this intense text — I was going to add emotional. It's kind of emotional too — that first, I'll be able, by the grace of God, to do my best to explain this, but by the power of the Holy Spirit that you'll be able to grasp this, the enormity, and the intensity of this.

So what follows are three truths. I want to say absolute truths, but that's a redundant redundancy when it comes to the word of God. Because Jesus is THE truth. God's word is the word OF truth. So three truths that speak to the urgency now *[Now]* for all eternity.

If you're lost, you need salvation. If you're saved, you need sanctification. And in order for that to happen, it has to happen only through the person of Jesus Christ who said, "**There is no way to the Father except through Me.**" "**I am the way, [Not a way] the truth, [Not a truth] the life.**" That kind of settles it right there. "**And broad is the way that leads to everlasting destruction, and many go thereof. But narrow is the way that leads to everlasting life, and few go thereof.**"

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So the choice is ours. Why? Because God's not going to force us. That's not love. God doesn't want — I need to preface more so before we get into this. But God doesn't want anybody in heaven who doesn't want to be there.

And by the way, on this — we'll talk about this more. I want you to really think about this and consider this. Hell was not created for you, for man. Okay, then what was hell created for? The Devil and his demons. Because it's not God's will that any should perish, but all should come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Repent is “metanoeō” in the Greek, which simply means you change your mind and your way of thinking. We've — well, I shouldn't say we.” I think the Devil has been met with smashing success in changing repentance into penance, like there's something we got to do. I got to clean up my act before. Well, do you take a bath before you take a shower? How ludicrous is that?

No. He cleans you. Once you've had that metanoia, that change of mind and thinking, then God changes your heart and changes you from the inside out. And He cleanses you, and He fills you and indwells you by the Holy Spirit to live a holy life. He does it for you instead of you. Is that too simple?

So we'll get to the first one in just a moment. But please, I implore you, I plead with you that the passage we just read and that which we're about to go through today, this is so serious. And from my heart, as a pastor, which is my privilege, profound privilege to be, I just open my heart to you and I say to you, lovingly, the truth in love because of love, I want to see as many of you as possible in glory.

I don't want to see anybody not receive the gift of God, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, that He purchased and paid for in full. And it cost Him everything in His blood shed in our stead.

We're going to — it's going to get a little intense. Okay, a lot. This first one: Jesus sits on the throne to judge. You know what's sad? We've been programed, for lack of a better word, to picture Jesus as this suffering, meek savior. No. When He came the first time, it was to save the world. Here, it's to judge the world.

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John writes that he saw a great white throne with Jesus being the one seated on it. And don't you find it a little bit interesting that John writes that the earth and heavens fled from it? If I was the earth and the heavens, I would too with what's about to go down. And there was no place found for them.

It's imperative we understand that all of us will stand before Jesus. And every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. However, and this is huge, for those of us who are born-again, it's for eternal salvation, whereas for those who are not, it's for eternal damnation.

Either way, that knee is going to bend, and that tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. And I can't wait. I've actually reserved a front row seat. I'm trying to add some levity here because of the intensity of the text.

Now, if you'll kindly allow me to, I think it's incumbent upon me to explain why this Great White Throne Judgment in *verse 11*, first, doesn't apply to born-again Christians. Praise the Lord. But it's actually one of four judgments. And one of the four judgments — not the Great White Throne — is for believers in Jesus Christ. And it's very, very different.

So what follows is, you guessed it, a chart. Yes, a chart. I haven't done one for a while. So it's kind of pent up. And this chart is of the "what, who, when, where, and why" of these four judgments along with the Scripture references. I'll go through them briefly.

And as we go through them, I'm trusting — again, this is from the heart, man — that the Holy Spirit will bring a much-needed warning and urgency for the lost, and with it a much-needed encouragement for the saved. It's a two-for-one. So you're ready for the chart? I sure hope so. I spent a lot of time on it.

Okay. Here's the what: Sheep and goat judgment.

Who: The Gentiles who survived the seven-year Tribulation. Do you realize there are going to be people that survived the seven-year Tribulation somehow?

When: After the seven-year Tribulation.

Where: On earth, in Jerusalem.

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Why: To separate saved Gentiles who particularly — those who helped the Jews during the Tribulation from those who weren't saved and didn't help.

That's — well, let's keep moving. That's the sheep and goat judgment.

Then there's Israel's judgment, Number 2. Who: The Jews who survive the seven-year Tribulation. So you have the Gentiles who survive. You're going to have Jews who survive the seven-year Tribulation.

When: After, of course, the seven-year Tribulation.

Where: On earth but still in the wilderness where they fled to.

Why: To judge the unsaved Jews who will not enter the Kingdom Age.

Again, you can — this is your homework, by the way. You'll be tested on this next week, the Scripture references. Now this one. That's what I'm talking about. The Bema Seat judgment of Christ.

Now we're going to need to have a whole paradigm shift here because we've been, again, programed, for lack of a better word, conditioned, brainwashed, whatever you want to use, to envision the judgment of God, the wrath of God. No, this is a whole different thing. The Apostle Paul used the games in Greece, which would later be known as the Olympics of today. And you know how at the Olympics, the winner in the competition would receive a gold or bronze or silver medal.

Well, back in Paul's day in the New Testament time, they were given a wreath, kind of like a lei that lasts for a day. Paul references that, by the way. So I want you to picture this. This panel of judges: Not to punish but reward. I want to get a gold medal and gold crown with lots of jewels. I'm going to cast it before Him anyway.

And by the way, we're all going to have different levels of rewards in heaven based on what we did on earth. You know that, right? So this is a panel of judges. And they're judging our, I'm going to use the word "performance," our lives, how we did in Christ on earth. And this is the church as saved believers in Jesus Christ. Because you see, *Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus."*

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Now where does this happen? In heaven. And again, why? To reward. I'm going to use it like this. All the deeds done — I'm not going to use "works," because that messes people up and I get — my inbox gets flooded. You're preaching works salvation. I am absolutely not. We bring nothing to the table of salvation. It is not by works. We're saved by faith alone — by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. Period. It is not of works lest anyone should boast. We will have no reason. Nobody in heaven after the rapture is ever going to say, hey, you know what I did to get here? And neither are you. It's to reward all deeds done, all words spoken.

Where do you get that? *1 Corinthians 3*. Very interesting. Again, that's your homework. You've got wood, hay, and stubble pile. My pile is going to be huge. And you got jewels and gold in the other pile. The same fire consumes the wood, hay, and stubble but purifies and makes more valuable the jewels and the gold. Did you make that connection?

As it's been said, soon one life will be passed. Only that which was done for Christ will last. Do you realize that the only thing that really matters, if you're a born-again believer, is what matters for all eternity?

And I think we would, again all include myself, all do well to ask ourselves the question: In light of eternity, what will this matter? How will this matter? Am I wasting my time on something that matters not for eternity? Or am I laying up treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy, thieves break in and steal? Because that's all that's going to matter in the end.

After a very well-known, very wealthy man died. One gentleman present at his funeral asks another the question, "I wonder how much he left?" To which the answer was, "Everything." You can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead. Job said, I came into this world with nothing. I leave this world with nothing. **"The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."**

Oh, I wonder, I ponder, what rewards were awaiting us that we forfeited? We can't lose them, but we can forfeit them. And I shudder to think — I'll speak of myself. Notice, I'm not looking at anybody or pointing at anybody. That would be even ruder. I just — how many

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opportunities, divine appointments, divinely orchestrated opportunities where I could have made the choice to lay up for myself treasures in heaven instead of laying them up here on earth?

Now we come to the fourth and final one. This is the granddaddy. This is the one that John saw and writes about. The Great White Throne Judgment. Hang in there with me. Who: Everyone, from Adam to the end who never put their trust in Jesus Christ and His righteousness, relying on their own self-righteousness, and as such, rejected Jesus, rendering them dead in their sins, and not in Christ.

Do you realize that anyone who was not born-again is on death row? And this is not just your run-of-the-mill death row, if there is such a thing. This is the death row for all eternity. You'll die in your sins if you're not in Christ.

Why? Well, it must be because you bought the lie that you're a good person. My good deeds outweigh my bad deeds. No, that's religion. That's what man does for God. That's not Christianity. That's not our faith. Our faith is what God did, already did, for man. Let me retry that.

Give me a redo, a do-over. Religion says man has to do this for God. Jesus says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I already did that for man. I became man, as God. I hope that connected because that's the best I got, and we need to move on. So did you get it? Well, I hope so because this is going to get a little more involved.

When does this happen? After the 1000 years. After the Millennial Reign. Where: On earth. Why: A lot of reasons. God's law broken. All words spoken, rejecting conviction, and deliberately dismissing creation bearing witness to God. Romans 1. They worship the creation, not the creator.

Wait, wait, wait, wait. You know, I heard this illustration. Best one. If you got a better one, let me know. You go in for surgery. Successful surgery. You come out of the anesthesia and the recovery, and you ask them, "Where are the surgical instruments?"

They say, "Well, they're still in the OR." Well, then you get up and you go over to the OR, and you start thanking and kissing and praising and worshiping the instruments. Here's God

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going really? That was the instrument. I am the Great Physician. What's the matter with you? I created the instrument. I guided the hands of the physician who used the instrument. And you're giving all the credit to the instrument? Wow. I see how it is. That's a very loose paraphrase of Romans 1.

So let's talk about God's law broken. Remember now, God's law is perfect, and we've all broken it, the Ten Commandments. In fact, we've invented even more and broke all of them too, truth be made known. And what if I told you — this might jam your gears, or mess you up, or whatever metaphor you want to use.

What if I told you that the law, the Ten Commandments were never given for us to keep? Because who's gonna — nobody can. This is why you never had to teach your young toddlers — “Sit down, boy, This is how you lie. I'm going to teach you how to lie.”

No, it is ingrained in their nature. You have to teach them to be truthful. So — and this is like not a surprise to God, obviously, who knows the end from the beginning. So why was the law given if it wasn't to be kept? Because God wants us to look into the perfect mirror of God's law so that He can show us: Us as He sees us.

Guilty as charged. I've transgressed the law. I've broken the commandments. I've fallen short of His glory, His perfect standard of righteousness. I'm in deep kimchee. Again, that's for the locals. What do I do now? This doesn't look good. It's not. Because you'll be sentenced to death. **“For the wages of sin is death.”**

But here's the good news. Jesus, God the Son became a man, fully God, fully man. And He walked into that death row you're in line in and said, Hey, Bruh — again for the locals — Good news. I will go to your death in your stead with My blood shed I will pay in full. And it is finished. Period. Not comma. Period. Sealed in His blood.

“Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. I don't have to do anything?”

“No, He did it all.”

“I don't have to pay anything?”

“No, He paid it all. Paid in full.”

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“What did He pay for?”

“Oh, He has a gift that He purchased and paid for.”

“Oh, wow. What's the gift?”

“Eternal life. He paid for it.”

“What'd it cost Him?”

“Everything.”

And here's all of creation bearing witness to it. The trees, the birds praising their creator, the rocks crying out to their creator, the whole earth moaning and groaning because of sin as God's creation. You can't look at the world, the earth, and these places, these wonders of the world, as they're called, and not see the designer's handprint.

The Psalm says, **“The fool has said, 'There is no God' in his heart.”** I don't think there's anything wrong with calling an atheist who says there's no God, “You're a fool, man.” How foolish. Because here's creation.

And by the way, Peter fills in a very important detail. He says they deliberately forget. Forget what? That God destroyed the world with a flood, the world He created. But at the end, it won't be a flood. It'll be a fire that will melt the entire earth to make way for the new earth for all eternity. This notion of deliberately forgetting, they've made a conscious choice not to remember that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is.

And as Romans — again, Paul, this is so powerful — says, they will be left with no excuse. You gonna try that one? You're standing before the judge of the universe, the creator of the universe, and you plead not guilty. And you lay out your case and you say, “Well?”

“You don't have a case, do you?”

“No.”

“What evidence do you have?”

“Actually, I — I don't have any evidence.”

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You know, God, with a broken heart, a grieved heart, has sent the Holy Spirit, who will not strive with man forever, Genesis says, to, in that still, small, refining voice, convict us from within and creation to demonstrate from without. So I mean, four things. You're going to stand there in your own righteousness, pleading not guilty. I've got quite a list of transgressions and sins.

And this one's interesting. We'll talk about it more in just a moment. All words spoken. Have you ever thought about that? Let that sink in. Every — I am of the belief that the books, plural, contain a record in heaven of every single word we spoke and every single post we posted on social media. I'm just saying. And if you're not in Christ and you're pleading not guilty, well then, let's pull out the evidence, the books. (Taking a sip of water) Pardon me.

See, now, with the Bema Seat judgment, my name is in the Book of Life. What does that mean? That means I have eternal life because of the Lamb of God. So every time the accuser of the brethren, the Devil, who's actually — he was thrown into the lake of fire last week. I hope you were here for that. That was so cool.

But as the accuser of the brethren, "Yeah. No. He's guilty."

"No, no, no, no. He's been washed as white as snow, though it was scarlet, and forgotten and remembered no more, and removed as far as the east is from the west. He's not guilty in Me. And that's why his name's in the Book of Life."

Well, now we go from book to books. That's a lot of books I don't want to know. No wonder, the heaven and the earth tried to run and flee. I mean, I don't know where we are. I'm trusting the Lord is not going to have us witness this because that's horrific. But every word that was spoken, especially those that were against Christ or blaspheming or accusatory or gossiping or murmuring or complaining.

You don't think complaining and murmuring and gossiping is serious? I would encourage you to revisit the Epistles of Paul, where he includes in the list of things that people will practice. That's their lifestyle. And because of it, not enter the kingdom of heaven. Get this. Murder, sexual immorality, gossiping.

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Wait. There must be a mistake. That goes on a different list.

No, no, no, no, no, no. It's right here in the book with all these books. In other words, gossiping, Jesus said — He took it to a whole new level — in Matthew 5, He said, **“You have heard it said that thou shalt not murder. [Not kill. Murder] But I say unto you that if you hate your brother in your heart, you have murdered him.”**

You're guilty of murder. Oh, man. I'm — I'm baked, shaked and baked, and whatever else rhymes with that. But God is so merciful, so longsuffering, so compassionate, so unwilling, and again, remember, now you have to understand that the basis upon which we know that it's not God's will that any should perish, is because of God's love for us.

So in His love, by His grace, the Holy Spirit's working. And it is sometimes an indistinguishable voice because the volume of our lives is so loud, and we can't hear. But He's speaking and He's nudging and He's prompting and He's trying to convict, not condemn, convict you so as to draw you to the savior you desperately need. His greatest deed was for your greatest need.

And then to dismiss, ignore creation, which shouts of a creator. And you're sitting there telling me, you fool, that there was a big bang? Actually, that's faith, man. It takes more faith to believe that than it does to believe in Jesus. No. Think about it. I like this illustration. Again, if you got a better one, let me know. Big bang. Boom! And then all of a sudden you have a Boeing 777 fully operational.

Come on. And you're calling me the crazy one? How crazy is that? I actually have an alternative view. There was a big bang when God said, *[Bang!] let there be light.* And there was. Was that too much? Okay. Let's leave it at that, move on to number 2, and we'll be done with the third one as well.

Verses 12 and 13. And again, I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of this. Everyone, all, anyone will stand before His throne. And John makes this very clear where he writes that he saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books, plural, were opened, along with another book.

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The other book is the Book of Life. I'm in that one. However, the books had records, again, of everything they did and everything they said. I mean, they're standing there representing themselves. They've entered a not guilty verdict, so we have to judge the case. So let's open up the books. And boy, I tell you; if anyone's there about this point, it's too late now. But they are going to bend their knee and confess with their mouth. But it's too late for salvation. It's for damnation, as we talked about.

But if I'm there, I'm just hypothetically speaking, and I see these books, or really scrolls — just I mean, here's a scroll, "JD." And that thing is like, (Sound of it rolling open) Ariel, narrow font, size 6. And that's just one of them. I'm thinking this isn't going to end well. No, it's not.

Now it's even more interesting because we're told, additionally — and this is important and I don't want to overcomplicate, nor do I want to oversimplify this — but the sea where many perished, many ashes were spread, gave up their dead.

And Hades, which is a holding place known as Abraham's bosom, pre-resurrection, Hades gave up the dead, and each and every one of them was judged according to what they did and what they said, from Adam to the end. That's a lot of people and a lot of books. And I ain't going to be there. And you better not be either.

Third, and lastly, and this one is — the Lord knows my heart when I say this. There are no pastors, me included, that want to teach this. But it's the truth, the word of truth in *verses 14 and 15*. Heaven and hell are forever and ever. If heaven is forever, hell is forever. And these last two verses should send shivers down the spine of everyone, chief of whom are those whose name is not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

And here's why. We're told that they will be thrown into the lake of fire forever and ever over Jesus' crucified, buried, and resurrected body. Do you know that God never sends anybody to hell? They send themselves there. It's their choice. God always gives us a choice, free will.

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This is hard. And this is why many a pulpit today will stay as far away from this as possible. Or worse, they'll teach falsely universalism or annihilationism. What's that? Universalism is everybody gets saved in end. Everybody's going to go to heaven.

"Oh they're in a better place." That's false. That's not what the Bible says. Or annihilationism: Oh, you know, once you die, you're just, you're non-existent. That's not what the Bible says. And it's even more involved than that. If you look at Luke's gospel — I forget chapter and verse or passage right now — Jesus says that some will be beaten with few stripes and some with many stripes.

So stay with me on this. If there's different levels of rewards in heaven, wouldn't it stand that there would be different levels of punishment in hell? So you got grandma, tutu, who never put their trust in Jesus, and she spends eternity separated from God, outer darkness, gnashing of teeth, lake of fire. Her stripes, her punishment will be infinitely less than someone like, say, Stalin, who killed millions, Hitler, and all the others like him.

That fits, doesn't it? It's just, isn't it? This is righteous. Here's the thing. Nobody in heaven is going to be looking at somebody else's mansion going, Ho! They got a way more better one than I did. That's not heaven. I think that's the other place. Because there's no more sin. There's no more death. There's no more cockroaches or termites or night. No need no sleep. That alone is worth the price of admission, which He paid. Right? Am I right? Indescribable.

Paul said it would almost be criminal to try to describe the glory that awaits. He even goes as far as to say the sufferings of this life are not even worthy to be compared with the... And he was caught up to the third heaven, and he wouldn't dare utter a word about it for 14 years. And when he finally does, he does so in the third person. And God had to — God gave him a glimpse.

Man, I'm so glad God didn't give me a glimpse. I would've went on a speaking tour, wrote a book. I saw — I got a glimpse of heaven and got caught up to the third heaven. No, that would have went to my head. Well, it could have went to Paul's head, but God allowed Satan to buffet him with a thorn in the flesh that he pleaded with God to remove.

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And God said, Paul, you don't want Me to remove it. And Paul accepted it. Why? It was to keep him down to earth, humble, completely relying upon the Lord. We call it our cross to bear, our thorn in the flesh. And you know that's purposely left undefined by God's design. You know why? Because if we knew what that literal thorn in the flesh was — speculation abounds, right? — we would say, well, I don't — that's not an issue for me. So we dismiss it.

Whereas if we don't know precisely with a definition of exactly what that thorn in the flesh was, it leaves room for the Holy Spirit to fill in the blank. It's not Paul's thorn in the flesh. It's what is your thorn in the flesh. And why has God allowed it? It's to keep you completely humble and reliant and fully devoted upon Him because you've had a taste of heaven.

Okay, back to the sermon. We're almost done. I don't know who that was for. Whoever it is, it's your fault. Let me just end. I actually, shockingly, probably... The strength of this passage speaks for itself, doesn't it? I mean, what can I add to it? I can try to insert levity and, you know, sound doctrine, but it really does it no justice. I think it speaks for itself.

You know that the text at the end of this chapter is more real than the chairs you're sitting on right now? Why do I say that? Because we all have this propensity to disconnect ourselves, disenfranchise ourselves from the reality of a passage like this because it seems so wow, out there, and it's hard to wrap your mind around. So we have this proclivity to just kind of like, yeah, okay, well...

Don't do that. Don't do that. See, I'm gonna have to give an account before the Lord. As a pastor, James says I'll be judged more strictly. You know that line in heaven, they're going to have a pastor's line. And then there's going to be a different line. Would you wave to me because your line is going to move a lot faster, you know, like the store lines or the other lanes in the road. I'm — would you — you know, please don't like, "I've never seen this guy before in my life." Don't do that. That would really hurt my heart.

But the pastors and teachers will be judged by a much stricter standard. Why? Because we're — (Getting emotional) we're dealing with souls for all eternity. And I'll have to give an account to God for what I did, as is my privilege to every week in preaching the Word and the Gospel and staying the course and fighting the good fight and finishing the race.

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And I want to take as many of you. That's not probably correct. But I want to see as many of you — I want to see all of you up there. I'll waving at you. "Hi. I hope it goes well, dude," you know, "enter in good and faith" — "he went to — oh, you went to that church on the windward side of Oahu with that — ho! Bruh, enter in!"

Don't get too excited. I don't know about that. But when I'm standing there before the Lord, I long to hear those words: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter in." Notice it's not good and fruitful, good and popular, good and successful. No, good and faithful. You were faithful with that which I entrusted you to. And to whom much has been given, much is required. I have been given much. I have been given the most amazing church in the world. And that's not hyperbole.

I tell people often and they get a chuckle out of it. I'm serious. If I wasn't the pastor of this church, this is where I would go to church. You guys are the real deal. You can't feign that, the way you love one another. Man, I — I'm like, God, I'm not worthy. And God says, you're not. That brings me down a couple notches. (Stumbling over words)

But I am. And actually, JD, I felt really sorry for you, and I just looked at you and I said, man, this guy needs all the help he can get. So I'm going to send the angelic host, the angels given charge concerning him, to surround him with the most amazing people and the most loving church. And He did. And I thank you for making the pastorate a joy. I'm sorry for the emotions.

And I'm done. Kapono, come on up. You can stand up.

There are no words, Lord, to speak in the English language, as faulty as it is. But there will come a day, very soon, we believe, with the way things are going in the world, that we will have all eternity to bow before You and sing to You, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty. And we will cast our crowns before You and we will worship You. Because You alone are worthy as the Lamb who was slain, forever and ever. We have plenty time.

But this is gonna have to do for now. Just take what is in our heart — because You know our heart and what's in our heart — unto Yourself by the Holy Spirit. All the praise, all the glory, all the love that we have for You.

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And Jesus, I lastly, ask, plead for anyone that might be here or watching online that will be at that Great White Throne judgment, unless they do something about it today. Please, Lord, I pray they will make the most important decision of their life for eternal life so they're not there and they're at the Bema Seat instead with us. In Jesus' name. Amen.