

## Revelation 20:10-15 The Great White Throne Judgment

### Verse 10

*And the devil...was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also* – Notice the beast and false prophet have been there for a thousand years (19:20). Satan finally receives his final destiny. God's judgment, given in Genesis 3:14-15, that Jesus would deliver a fatal blow to Satan, is now fulfilled in its entirety. *And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever* – It is clear that death is not annihilation and that the wicked exist forever in torment. The expression *day and night* shows that there will be a conscious experience of time, and "forever and ever", literally "to the ages of ages" shows that this experience will never end.

### Verse 11

*And I saw a great white throne* – Great because it is God's throne, *white* because the judgments that proceed from it are pure, holy, and righteous. *"...Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne..."* Psalm 97:2  
*And Him who sat upon it* – God in the person of Jesus Christ. The Father has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). *From whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them* – The present heavens and earth are destroyed and will be replaced with the new heavens and earth (21:1, Matthew 24:35, 2 Peter 3:10-13). God has now finished His dealings with this earth as we know it.

### Verse 12

*And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne* – The "dead" appear to be the unsaved of all time, now resurrected to stand trial (note verse 5). *Great and small* denote that they come from all classes of humanity.  
*And books were opened* – Books that keep record of our deeds or life are often mentioned in Bible (Psalm 40:7, 56:8, 69:28, 139:16).  
*And another book was opened, which is the book of life* – This *book of life* is referred to seven times in the New Testament (Phil. 4:3, Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27). A *book of life* is mentioned once in the Old Testament in Psalm 68:28 but probably refers to those who are alive as opposed to those who have died (note the parallel in Exodus 32:31-35

where being blotted out of God's book means an untimely physical death).

*The book of life* – This book is a roll of all who are saved and have eternal life. It is contrasted to the *books*.

*And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds* – Because their deeds are judged, there appear to be degrees of punishment for unbelievers. Just as there are degrees of wickedness, there will be degrees of punishment.

### Verse 13

*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them* – Some understand *the sea* to be literal, denoting unusual burial and decomposition. Others take the sea to be figurative of the sinful nations of the earth (17:15).

*Death and Hades* refer to the *state* of death and the *place* of death. Hades is the temporary abode of unbeliever's spirits until the Great White Throne judgment.

*And they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds* – God/Jesus will judge all people, unbelievers and believers on the basis of their deeds. However, in both groups, it is not their deeds that determine their eternal destiny. As we will see in verse 15 it is the book of life that determines the eternal destiny of all mankind.

### Verse 14

*And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire* – From this point on there will be no more death and Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 will be accomplished.

*This is the second death, the lake of fire* – This will be the final abode for all who have rejected Christ. As believers have *eternal life*, unbelievers will have *eternal death*. All believers are exempt from the second death (20:6).

### Verse 15

*And if anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire* – A person's eternal destiny is determined by whether or not his name is found written in the book of life. Some believe everyone's name is in the book of life but removed if they do not believe in Jesus. Others think believers' names are added to the book of life when they believe.