

THE REVELATION

NOVEMBER 3, 2024

Chapter 20:11 – 21:8

L. The Great White Throne from Heaven (20:11-15)

1. The Authority Over the Throne (20:11)

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Once the last battle is over, Satan will be eternally eliminated. The LORD will not take a chance on letting another sin occur on earth. This relatively simple verse should strike great fear in the hearts of everyone. We have seen the power of the LORD as He left heaven and arrived on earth to destroy His enemies in the valley of Megiddo. We have seen the power of the LORD as the King of kings and LORD of lords for 1,000 years. We have seen the power of the LORD to call down fire to devour His enemies in this last battle, and we have seen Him control Satan's every move and ultimately cast him into eternal flames. But here, we see all of earth and heaven in fear of the LORD as He sits on the "Great White Throne." He has absolute authority over everything, even the dead.

2. The Authority Over the Dead (20:12)

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

Suddenly, John sees all the "dead" standing before the LORD. John sees the "books" open. He sees the "Book of Life" open. He sees the dead, resurrected with transformed bodies from Hades' compartment called *torment*, and they are standing before the LORD to be judged for their deeds while alive on earth. Where have all these resurrected souls come from?

3. The Authority Over the Judged (20:13)

Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

At first glance, it seems three locations are giving up resurrected souls to stand before the *Great White Throne*, but that is not the case. The three, the "sea ... death ... Hades." Do you remember when John saw the *great red dragon* waiting for the *beast* to *come from the sea*? The *beast* did not come from the *sea*, but from the *ten countries* surrounding the *Great Sea*. The countries were made up of people who joined together as the *Revived Roman Empire*. When those people died, they were buried on the land around the *Great Sea*. John is using the word to a much larger extent to mean all the dead bodies or all those people whose names were not written in the *Book of Life* because they have rejected God during their lives. When the LORD summons the resurrection of the dead bodies from all the ages who have denied Him, there is no place for them to hide. Out of their tombs, they must

immediately appear ashamed and naked before the LORD on His *Great White Throne*. Naked, they came into the world, and naked, they departed this world! It does not matter what has happened to their bodies, buried in the depths of the water, covered by the burning sands, laid low in the black lands, left for the animals among the bush, the newly dead, and those whose bodies and bones are nothing but dust will be reassembled and coming forth in a resurrected body. No speck of human life is ever hidden from the eyes of the LORD. He knows where ever fleck of flesh can be found.

All those bodies are disposed of because the life that is in each passed through the portal of “death.” Death put their bodies in the vast “sea” of the graveyard of this world, every human before the flood and after. Death separates the clay of the body from the persona of the soul, which finds its place in the compartment of *torment in Hades*. The bodies come from the dust, and the souls come from Hades, ruined by the recorded history of their sins. At the *Great White Throne*, the bodies will be rejoined to the souls and stand before the LORD as their Judge. Risen in the *second death*, they have finally arrived at their appointed time of judgment. Each will explain to the LORD why he did not accept Him as Savior. Each will have the record of his life examined according to the books that contain every thought, action, and deed. Then, the *Book of Life* will be searched, and his name will be absent. No one standing before the LORD at the *Great White Throne* of judgment will find his name in the *Book of Life*. Regardless of the defense presented, each will be sent to the *lake of fire and brimstone*. That promise will come in a moment.

4. The Authority Over Death and Hades (20:14)

Rev 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

The portal of “death” will be thrown into the *lake of fire*. It is no longer needed. After the judgment of the *Great White Throne*, no human will ever die again. Yes, there are humans on Earth at this time in the story. They will see the LORD’s judgment of the *resurrected dead doomed to the lake of fire*. They will also see the LORD gather up the place called “Hades” and cast it into the *lake of fire*. It will never be needed again. No one will ever sin again or be sent to the place of torment of the living dead. Humanity will change after the *Great White Throne* judgment, later in the story.

5. The Authority Over the Book (20:15)

Rev 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

John sums up the results of the *Great White Throne* judgment in this verse to ensure that he is crystal clear. If a man’s name is not found in the “*Book of Life*” to the “*Lake of Fire*,” he is thrown for all eternity out of the presence of the LORD.

Sin has been dealt with for the last time at the *Great White Throne*. However, humans still alive in this world have a sinful nature. When the Judge strikes the gavel on the verdict of the last soul sent to the *lake of fire*, He will not allow one more sin to occur. It is time for a miraculous change in heaven and on earth. Sin has been dealt with, and it is time for sin in the heavens and on Earth to receive judgment. Peter spoke of this when he said the following.

2 Peter 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

The LORD had judged the whole world before when He sent a flood. By His word, He had promised that water would never be used again (Genesis 9:8-17). The following judgment will be by fire (2 Peter 3:7). We should *fear not* concerning this day! It will not occur at the hands of a lunatic president or king. It will occur at the hands of God Almighty! It is coming. Peter saw it coming. John saw it coming.

Chapter 21

M. The New Heaven from Heaven (21:1 – 22:5)

1. A New Heaven and Earth (21:1)

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

In John's vision, he "*saw a new heaven and a new earth*" with the old heaven and earth "*passed away*." What will change? Will the new heaven and earth be wholly new, or will it be a partial renovation?

First, the date of this renovation of heaven and earth has already been calendared on God's schedule. It will be the last stage of the LORD's verdict at the *Great White Throne* proceedings. We can rightly call it God's "*day of judgment*" (2 Peter 3:7). Men will not bring this change about. God will do it, and He will not need help. The creation of the world can burn everything in a flash. Scientists tell us that roughly 21% of the atmosphere is oxygen; it is highly flammable. Each atom of oxygen is being stored up by the LORD and kept in check for *God's day of judgment*.

Second, the Bible tells us that sin has tainted heaven and earth; therefore, both must be judged. Sin did not begin here on earth; it began in heaven and was imported by the *great red dragon* after he started the whole mess.

Third, the LORD has this judgment day on His calendar. It will not happen during the *age of grace*, *the age of the Church*, nor during the 1,000-year age of the LORD reigning as King of kings and LORD of lords. But it is scheduled for immediately after the conclusion of the 1,000-year reign. Once again, Peter tells us how that day will come.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

This passage does not refer to the *snatching away* of the Church to heaven, nor the *Battle of Gog*, the *Battle of Armageddon* or the final battle at the end of the 1000 years. But the Bible uses the word "*day*" in association with those three events and more. Perhaps this is a good time to survey how Scripture uses the word "*day*" in reference to the coming events.

First, we live in *man's day* (1 Corinthians 4:3). In general, man is in the business of judging man, and the LORD seems to be silent, although He is not because He is always working all things for our good as believers.

Second, because we live in *man's day*, the LORD provides us the *day of salvation* (2 Corinthians 6:2). In other words, we may be under the rule of man, but the LORD's sovereign grace is available to all who will receive it.

Third, Paul tells us about the *day of Christ* (1 Corinthians 1:8, 3:13; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6; 2:16). This day is the moment all Christians long for! It is the day of the great *snatching away* for told in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Fourth, we come to the *day of Jacob's trouble* (Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 8-22; Matthew 24:15-31). The Church has been *snatched away*, and the LORD has begun maneuvering events that will lead the *Nation of Israel* to turn to the LORD as Savior.

Fifth, the *day of the LORD* will arrive. It is mentioned repeatedly in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Malachi, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 2nd Peter, and the REVELATION. The *day of the LORD* is His day when He is King of kings and LORD of lords, reigning over the earth in total control and seen by men. His glorious 1,000-year kingdom on earth as we know it today begins with a battle and ends with a battle (Revelation 16:12-21; 19:11-21; 20:7-10).

Sixth, finally, we see the *day of God*. Peter gives another clue to this day.

2 Peter 3:11-13 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

After the *Great White Throne Judgment*, a great and mighty holocaust will change the work and boundaries of the LORD's creation, and the LORD will do it! Why? It will be needed to fulfill Paul's prophecy, which says the following:

1 Corinthians 15:25-28 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

When the LORD's reign is complete on earth, He will handle sin for the last time. It will be time for Him to purify creation and prepare it all for the arrival of God's home. In Paul's passage above, all this preparation will be for the LORD to gather all things that belong to Him and lay them as a gift at the foot of *God the Father*. In this action, the Triune God will be, as Paul says, "*all in all*." To get to that point, all things must be purified with fire! The 1,000-year reign will be terminated, and the *eternal future* begins. It will come to pass "*like a thief in the night*" (2 Peter 3:10). In other words, at the end of the *Great White Throne Judgment*, it will happen suddenly and without notice. The place called *heaven* will be destroyed in a flash and with a great noise, and all the elements of space will melt with the fervent heat. *Heaven* will be terminated. It will no longer be needed. Why? The answer is simple: *Heaven* comes to Earth. God is about to inhabit earth! But earth must be prepared too for this grand arrival. For that process, the earth's surface and its works, its "*elements*," must be burned (2 Peter 3:10).

The word “*element*” comes from the Greek *stoicheion*, which means *the letter of the word*! Amazing! Peter is talking about the components into which the LORD divided everything when He spoke it into being. In other words, all the *words* of this world will be burned.

Peter’s use of the word “*melt*” is interesting, too! It is the Greek word *luo*, which means *to break up*. In the Gospels, it is translated *unloose* (Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:27). It is translated in the words of John the Baptist as he was not worthy to untie the shoes of Jesus. John, the writer of this REVELATION, uses John 11:44 to indicate that the LORD instructs the bystanders to *loose* Lazarus from the grave clothes. In other words, it means to *set free from the bounds that have been binding*.

When Peter said, “*a great noise*,” it is the Greek word *rhoizedon*, which means the *sound of an arrow passing by* or *a roaring flame*.

Peter’s word for “*fervent heat*” is the Greek word *kausoo*, a medical term meaning *to have a fever*.

Rightfully, we can insert Peter’s prophecy and words into the REVELATION’s outline and story. How did Peter know all that John would write in this book? Peter wrote years before this REVELATION was delivered. Yet, the LORD delivered the message to Peter, and He delivered the message to John, too!

After the *Great White Throne Judgment*, in a flash, in a whiz, heaven will pass away suddenly like a “*thief in the night*,” never to be needed again. And then, with the fervent heat of the Word of the LORD, this earth will be purified once and for all, not by water, but by fire.

But the city of God will not be harmed—never! In John’s vision, it must have been on its way to its new home when John sees heaven, which has been the city’s home destroyed, the place it has been since the first day of creation.

2. A New Jerusalem (21:2)

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

Picture this: Heaven is passing away for everyone in a blast. It must be an incredible backdrop for the arrival of the “*Holy City, New Jerusalem*.” God’s home is transitioning to its new location after 8,000 years. To John, it is as beautiful as a bride parading down the aisle to take her husband’s hand.

3. A New Dwelling (21:3)

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

The “*loud voice from the throne*” makes this proclamation. Please do not think that this REVELATION has occurred yet, for it has not. The LORD is still on His throne during the complete delivery of this vision. The LORD on His throne makes this announcement to John so he can write it down. GOD, the home of GOD, the throne for GOD, and the city of GOD had jarred loose from its mooring in heaven just in time to leave its bounds, transverse through the entire universe, headed for one target, earth, new earth, sinless earth. Once there, all the saints of all the ages will dwell in that city for all eternity in the future.

4. A New Thing (21:4)

Rev 21:4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Here, we arrive at the words misquoted so many times in Christianity. "*He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death ... mourning, ... crying ... pain.*" Those things are all part of the "*first things.*" In REVELATION 21:1, we are told that the "*first earth*" is passed away. Finally, with the first heaven gone and the first earth purified, tears, death, crying, and pain will not occur again because those are elements, words of the way life existed on the first earth, not the second.

5. A New Command (21:5)

Rev 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

John hears the voice from the throne saying, "*making all things new. ... Write....*" Not now, not in this Church age that we are living now, but in the future, when His reign on earth is over, and the new heaven and earth arrive, full of sinlessness, and the earth is the same.

6. A New Completion (21:6)

Rev 21:6a Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

That is the story, John! That is the vision. That is how Israel will finally make the LORD its Savior. The LORD will arrive at His *Second Coming* and rule as King. He is the great "*I Am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.*" You now know the whole story, from the start to the finish! Write it down, John. "*It is done!*"

a) Water for the Thirsty (21:6b)

Rev 21:6b I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

Then, the LORD returns to speak to the souls who will hear the message of this vision through the years to come in the Church age until the *Second Coming of the LORD* and after that. The first promise from the LORD is "*water of life without cost.*" Free satisfaction of the thirst for life with the LORD that will never run dry will be given to those who seek it. This opposes those who hate the LORD and will find their thirst unquenched in *torment* and, ultimately, in the *lake of fire and brimstone*.

b) Inheritance for the Overcomer (21:7)

Rev 21:7 "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

The second promise from the LORD is a grand inheritance from God. The promise of an eternal relationship with Him! The promise also includes all that has been offered in eternity future by the LORD.

c) Fire for the Second Dead (21:8)

Rev 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

But the all-knowing LORD must address those who choose not to be saints. This vision was given at the beginning of the Church age so no one would be without excuse. For those mentioned in this verse, they are headed to the *Great White Throne Judgment*, which will end in the second death in the *lake of fire*. *They are doomed!* They are alive but dead forever!