

# Study Guide: The Great White Throne Judgment

**Text:** Revelation 20:11–15

**Main Idea:**

Every person will stand before the righteous Judge. Those whose names are written in the Book of Life face no condemnation, but those who reject Christ will face eternal judgment.

## 1. The Great White Throne (v. 11)

John sees a *great white throne* and the One seated on it. The earth and sky flee from His presence, emphasizing His holiness, glory, and authority.

**Key Observations:**

- The throne is **great**—signifying God’s majesty and absolute sovereignty.
- It is **white**—symbolizing purity, righteousness, and perfect justice.
- The One seated is most likely **Jesus Christ**, the appointed Judge of all (John 5:22, Acts 10:42, 2 Tim. 4:1).
- Creation itself cannot stand before His unveiled glory—“earth and sky fled away.”

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does the description of the “great white throne” reveal about God’s character?
2. Why is it important to recognize Jesus as the Judge as well as the Savior?
3. How does the fleeing of earth and sky emphasize the seriousness of this moment?

## 2. The Dead Standing Before the Throne (vv. 12–13)

John sees *the dead, great and small*, standing before the throne. Books are opened—records of human deeds—and another book is opened, *the Book of Life*. Each person is judged according to what they have done.

**Key Observations:**

- The phrase “*great and small*” shows that all people, regardless of status, must give account.
- The *books* represent the record of every thought, word, and deed.
- The *Book of Life* contains the names of those redeemed through Christ’s sacrifice.
- No one escapes this judgment—death and Hades give up their dead; all stand before the Lord.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why is it significant that both “books” and “the Book of Life” are opened?
2. How does this scene show that God’s judgment is both personal and perfectly just?
3. What emotions does this passage stir in you—fear, awe, gratitude, urgency? Why?

## 3. The Identity of the Judged (vv. 12–13)

Who are “the dead” standing before the throne? Many interpreters conclude these are the **unbelieving dead**—those who refused God’s grace and now face the consequences of their sin.

### Key Observations:

- The “first resurrection” (vv. 4–6) refers to believers who reign with Christ.
- “The rest of the dead” (v. 5) are raised at the end of the millennium for judgment.
- Those who are in Christ have already passed from death to life (John 5:24).
- The “dead” here stand condemned because they rejected the only way of salvation.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does understanding the “first resurrection” help clarify who faces this judgment?
2. What does this passage reveal about God’s justice toward sin and rebellion?
3. How should this truth shape our compassion for those who don’t yet know Christ?

## 4. The Final Defeat of Sin and Death (v. 14)

After the judgment, *Death and Hades* are thrown into the lake of fire—this is the *second death*. Evil, sin, and death are finally and fully defeated.

### Key Observations:

- This marks the **end of death’s reign**—“the death of death.”
- The lake of fire represents eternal separation from God.
- Evil’s power is utterly destroyed; God’s holiness prevails eternally.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean that “Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire”?
  2. How does this picture of final judgment reveal God’s victory over all evil?
  3. Why is it good news that God will one day judge and end sin forever?
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## 5. The Book of Life and the Promise of No Condemnation (v. 15)

John concludes with sobering clarity: *If anyone’s name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.* But Scripture assures believers: *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* (Romans 8:1)

### Key Observations:

- The Book of Life lists all who belong to Christ through faith.
- Judgment is avoided not by merit, but by **mercy**—through the cross of Jesus.
- Sin must be punished—either in Christ on the cross, or in the sinner in judgment (Spurgeon, Sproul, Rogers).
- For those in Christ: no condemnation, no fear, only eternal life and peace.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How does Romans 8:1 bring comfort and assurance to believers when reading Revelation 20?
2. Why can’t salvation be earned by deeds recorded in the “books”?
3. How does this passage motivate us to share the gospel with urgency and compassion?

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## Final Discussion & Application

1. What does this passage reveal about the holiness and justice of God?
2. How does the promise of “no condemnation” for those in Christ give you peace and gratitude?
3. What practical ways can we live today in light of the coming judgment?
4. How can your group pray for and reach those who do not yet know Christ, whose names you long to see written in the Book of Life?

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### Key Takeaway:

The Great White Throne Judgment reminds us that sin will be judged, death will be destroyed, and God’s righteousness will prevail. But for those in Christ, there is no condemnation—only grace, life, and eternal victory.

*“Either your sin is on Christ, or it’s still on you.”*

— Adrian Rogers

*“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

— Romans 8:1