

The Voice of Truth # 538

God's Character Forever Vindicated

Open your Bibles now to Revelation 20:11, and hold it there for just a moment. In our last study we saw how Satan challenged the sovereignty of God by the fivefold assertion of his own "I will", and design, against the sovereignty of God; and how the Lord God of heaven met him in judgment, casting him into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are and met his challenge and defeated him and forever established his sovereignty in the presence of the entire universe, when he sent fire down from heaven to consume the revolution Satan organized at the close of the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

When he cast Satan into the lake of fire, he forever rid the earth and the universe of Satan, sin, and rebellion. There is yet one last great enemy, death, that the Lord Jesus Christ must put under his feet, according to 1 Corinthians 15:24. Listen, **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.** Immediately following the vision John saw of Satan being cast into the lake of fire, a throne comes into view. Let's read Revelation 20:11-15:

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. 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.

Let's read again that 11th verse. **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.** Will you pray for me while I bring this message?

How much time elapsed between the time God cast Satan into the lake of fire and set up the great white throne, we do not know. But it seems that John's eyes beheld fire falling from heaven, and devouring the rebels, and seeing God casting Satan in the lake of fire, and then immediately turns to behold a throne coming into view. However, the time element is wholly God's hands, and we are to deal with the facts as recorded - **The great white throne and him that sat on it.**

Also, there seems to be no lapse of time between the throne being set and the fleeing away of heaven and earth. The setting up of the throne is the signal that God has risen up to judgment, and who can stand before Him. The scriptures tell us that the heavens are not clean in His sight and the earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws. Therefore, heaven and earth flee from the presence of God and are consumed with the fire before his face (Ps 97:2,3). The heavens, which are the atmospheric heavens surrounding the earth, are defiled with the presence of Satan and his principalities and powers, and the earth also is corrupted by a sinful race. At the passing away of the heaven and the earth, the resurrection of the wicked dead takes place. The unbeliever awakes to find himself standing before the great white throne judgment; And as he stands there with no foundation under his feet, he beholds the earth and the works therein being burned up. Everything that he leaned on, clung to, or trusted in, vanishes before his eyes, and there he stands before God, naked, no Christ, no hope, no God, because all his gods of gold and silver and precious stones, whatever he made a god, were wrapped up in the earth, and it has fled away, and no place was found for them. He stands before the Almighty Triune God of the Universe to be judged. What an awful scene!

The apostle Peter brings this truth out in his prophetic message in his second epistle; he saw the day of judgment and the passing away of this earth at the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men. He tells us that this world will be destroyed at the resurrection of the damned, which must take place before the

creation of the new heavens and the new earth, according to Revelation 21:1. Let's read 2 Peter 3:10. **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.** What an awful day when God literally destroys this earth, this planet that he has chosen as a theater to display the riches of his grace and his judgments toward human beings and to set forth the sovereignty of his grace and the sovereignty of his justice. As we have said, God gets as much glory in the exercise of his justice as in the display of his grace.

Now the Apostle Peter tells us how this world will be destroyed in 2 Peter 3:7. Listen to this. **But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (vs10) the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.** Let me give you a literal reading of these verses: But the present heaven and earth are held in check by the same word, stored with fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men... the heavens with rushing noise shall pass away, and the elements burning with heat shall be dissolved (or liquefied). The apostle Peter says here the earth is stored with fire, but it is guarded by the word of God, the same word by which he created it, until the day of judgment. We know this to be true. The earth is one giant bomb; it is like a hollow ball, having an outer crust and filled with molten liquid, seething and boiling in the heart of the earth. The crust varies in thickness in some places being thinner than others. This results in earthquakes and volcanoes belching out liquid lava to the surface. When the scripture says that this earth shall be dissolved, it means the elements will break up and under intense heat will become liquefied. Do you know that astronomers tell us that in the past few hundred years dozens of worlds have burned out before the very eyes of the scientists as they gazed up on the heavens through their telescopes? They tell us that worlds once traveled through the heavens which suddenly exploded and disappeared. My friend, why do you trifle with your soul and set your affections on the things of this world, when you're camping just a short time on the surface of an explosive bomb? How can you flaunt your rebellion in God's face when it is all held together and in check by the power of His Word? And that's true. When God gets ready to destroy this world, this earth, the only thing

He'll have to do is to open the crust and let the mighty seas and oceans drain their contents into the heart of fiery lava and there will be such an explosion that will blast this earth into non-existence.

Listen to the Apostle Peter: **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.** The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. The Apostle was not fanatical when he said the heavens and the earth shall pass away. He was thoroughly scientific. I call your attention to another fact. Did you ever stop to think that the heaven above is a storehouse of fire ready to explode at the command of God? My friend, the atmosphere is composed of gases, including oxygen and hydrogen. Hydrogen is highly explosive in the presence of oxygen, and when you have the proper conditions, and God can bring this to pass, you'll have an explosion that would all but rock the universe. Listen to Isaiah 13:13. **Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.**

The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 24:35, **heaven and earth shall pass away.** Did you notice those words, "shall pass away"; as John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:11 the Lord Jesus Christ came not only to baptize with the holy ghost, but with fire and to thoroughly purge his floor and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Isaiah 65:17 says, **For behold I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.** Isaiah 66:22 says, **For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.** The universe must be thoroughly purged and cleansed from every taint of sin and rebellion before redemption from sin through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can be fully realized. God does this through judgment. Therefore, the Great White Throne judgment is set and the heavens and the earth pass away. But just as God removed Noah and his family from the destruction of the earth by water, so God will preserve his people from the destruction of the earth by fire, and he will remove the unbelieving dead from the earth by resurrection of their bodies from the graves and they will be united with their spirits in Hades; and they will stand before him at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Judgment always precedes a new age, because through judgment God sweeps away all the ruin and devastation of sin, wickedness and corruption. The fact of the judgment is sure according to Acts 17:30. **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.** The apostle is referring to the Great White Throne Judgment here. He is also referring to it in Hebrews 9:27, when he said, **It's appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment.** So, the Apostle John is given a vision of that judgment as it takes place. I want you to lay aside all your unbelief, all your preconceived ideas, and let's look at what the Word of God says. There is not a more awful scene set forth in the Word of God than this of the judgment of the wicked dead. But my friend, remember that it is no more awful than the depraved heart that rebels against the infinite and holy God. God's judgment is just, and it is meted out in proportion to the sinner's crime, which is the murder of the Son of God.

Now let's look at the Great White Throne. The book of Revelation opens with a throne in chapter 4, and closes with a throne here in chapter 20. We want to contrast the two. The first is a throne of mercy from which judgment is administered mixed with mercy. The Great White Throne is absolute justice, from which judgment is administered without mercy. The first throne was circled with a rainbow, the token of mercy and the covenant promises. The Great White Throne is naked, for there is no mercy and no covenant promise to fulfill. From the first throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices, which speaks of disciplinary judgment and warning; but nothing is ascribed to the second throne but greatness and whiteness, which speaks of pure, undiluted justice. In connection with the first throne, we see other thrones occupied by living ones, with a host of angels all taking part in the administration of affairs connected with the throne. But on the Great White Throne, there's only one, because the business of this throne has to do with but one class of people, the resurrected, wicked, doomed and damned dead. Around the first throne, there were seven burning torches representing the Holy Spirit in his complete work, which speaks of grace in connection with the administration of justice. But there are no torches around the Great White Throne, God's mercy is administered to mankind through

the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The one God on the Great White Throne speaks to the fact that man, who is now to be judged, has insulted and injured the Divine Majesty, trespassed his moral government, and trampled the goodness and holiness of God under his unhallowed feet. Around the First Throne was a grand celestial pavement, but here - a Great White Throne. Nothing more, just a throne. No celestial landing place, for it offers no salvation to the prisoners of hell. Their day of grace has long been over. Then around that first throne there was singing and giving mighty praises unto God and the Lamb. But around this throne there's no song, no voices of gladness or praise, for it is simple, and only a place for stern justice to be meted out to damned souls. My friend, there'll be no singing in hell. Never again will you hear the song, There's a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Emmanuel's veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty and stains. No longer will you hear Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me. You'll hear only the wailing and gnashing of teeth of the damned. What an awful scene is that final scene, the Great White Throne judgment of God.

Now let's look at each word of that phrase, Great White Throne. That word great means the infinite before whom the finite must stand, and will stand. Stand unforgiven, stand naked before God. White, means the unveiled, undimmed blaze of divine holiness, pureness, and justice of the triune God. Then, in the word Throne, we recognize majesty unlimited, in which inheres absolute right to dispose of the destiny of his creatures. Around that Great White Throne is no rainbow to break the awful solemnity, no celestial pavement to lend reassurance, no voices to fill the deathless silence, no songs to solemnize the occasion. Before such a throne the creature cannot stand, but he must stand, and he shall stand, even every individual who rejects the Son of God as Lord and Savior. Many of you who are listening to me think it's miserable and wretched to be under holy spirit conviction as God is dealing with your heart and showing you the hell of your own bosom, but you ought to praise God that he has opened your heart and letting you stand before him now in judgment where there is mercy, instead of letting you turn down the truth and face him in judgment without mercy. How awful it will be for you preachers to wake up in hell with your congregation. How awful for you teachers to wake up in hell with your classes, because you will not have the truth and you do not want your heart opened so that you and others may come

to rest before a sovereign God in the dust of repentance and be justified in Christ in reality.

I want us to notice something in that 11th verse. Look at it with that 11th verse again. **And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it.** There is no name. There is no figure. There is no shape. **Him that sat on it.** That is the awful mysterious presence that can be nothing more or less than the one indescribable, eternal Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. The thing that stands out there is the great white throne. It's the judgment throne. It is set up, no doubt, somewhere in mid-heaven. On it is the eternal Godhead. If it were the Lord Jesus Christ only, as the God-man or as the Son-of-Man, we would have had some description of Him. I know the scripture says that all judgment is committed unto the Son of Man and therefore it is the Lord Jesus Christ here who judges, but listen, hold it, but he does it under the authority and in the office and the presence of the enthroned Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. What an awful presence for a poor, old, wretched, doomed, damned, hopeless sinner to stand before. The one on the throne in Revelation 4 had a particular appearance, for there it says that he was like a jasper and a sardine stone, which was attractive even in its awfulness. But here on the Great White Throne there's nothing - nothing but the naked presence of the omnipotent, almighty, eternal God, so dreadful that the very earth and heaven flees away. It is Jehovah God who assumes his eternal power to dispose of his enemies forever and forever, and to execute the final stroke of ridding this earth and the universe of every rebel, forever disposing of sin, and bringing the last enemy, which is death, under his control, to destroy it forever before he brings into being the new heavens and the new earth. As we gaze upon the awfulness of this presence, we see absolutely nothing of hope for those poor objects on which judgment falls. It is absolute, it is awful judgment without mercy. There is no language that can describe the awfulness of this judgment. I'm glad I won't be there because I'm under the blood of the Son of God.

Why has God sworn that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess? My friend, now you get this one eternal truth that may mean the difference between life and death for you, Christ must and will be justified by every believer in the universe. God must be released from the responsibility of every human

being. Listen, Satan's sin consisted of two aspects. First, the five-fold "I will" of rebellion against God's sovereignty. And second, he questioned God's integrity and his character. Every individual is a child of Satan. He has the nature of Satan. He's a rebel by nature. He is a malignant slanderer of the character of God. My friend, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ? I praise the Lord that one day, 24 years ago, He brought me before the great judgment bar of God, stripped of everything in the world, guilty, condemned, and no hope outside of the death, burial, and resurrected Christ. Those were awful hours. I rested there at the feet of the sovereign God, taking all the blame, crying unto Him to become my Savior. pleading nothing but to shed blood of the Son of God for my sins. Everything I had fled away. I had nothing to hold to. I had nothing to rest upon. I was a condemned sinner on the road to hell, and I knew it. And I deserve to go to hell, but God in his infinite mercy gave me grace to relieve him of all responsibility of my sins and depravity, and bow to his will, confess Christ as Lord, and my Lord, and he forgave me of my sins, pardoned me from all iniquity, and I rest today at his feet as his child. My friends, it's Christ! My Lord, do you know him?