

Heaven Is For The Living

Revelation 20:11-15



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FOCAL Read Responsively 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. {12} **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.** {13} 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. {14} **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.** {15} **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

Why do we as the Church of Jesus Christ come together and meet each week? What is our purpose in going to a building and, with other believers, participate in “Sunday School” or “Bible Study”? Why do we meet on a regular basis to hear a preacher declare the message of this Book we call “The Bible”? Why do we have “revivals” and “evangelistic meetings”? Why do we schedule summertime “Vacation Bible Schools” where children and adults gather to study and talk about this Person we call “Jesus”? Jesus gave us the answer when He clearly defined His ministry. He said:

John 10:10 ... I am come that they {those who believe in Me} might have life, and that they {these who are truly Christians} might have it more abundantly.

Jesus Christ came to this earth **that we might have life**. This is what He – and we who believe in Him – are about. We are concerned about this thing called “life”. The local Church exists to lead those who are “**dead in trespasses and sin**” (Ephesians 2:13) to where Life is. The Office of the Pastor exists – not to wait on you like an attendant at McDonalds®, nor to exonerate you of sin - but to lead you to the Source of Life, and to teach you how to share that wonderful message with others. The Office of the Deacon, along with the Bible Teachers of the local Church, working together with the members of the Body, continually share these Words of Life within and without the Church.

John 1:4-5 In {Jesus} was life; and the life was the light of men. {5} And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Jesus Christ is the only Source of Life. The Church continually exalts Him and His Book as the only Way unto Life. People need to be taught life.

Life is much more than this thing we call “time”.

By the way, Life is not just “time”. A dear friend of mine – a Pastor – made the statement that “people consider *time* to be their most precious possession”. That may be so – but Beloved, time in itself has no value. I had a dear friend who, years ago slowly suffocated as cancer took away his lungs. He *existed* a long time, but he certainly didn't “live”. Life is much more than time. “Life” implies “time” PLUS “light”. This is why the Bible says that Jesus came to bring us both “life” as well as “light”. A

Christian is someone who has been “**born again**” (1 Peter 1:23), someone who has been “**quicken**ed” (Ephesians 2:1, 5), someone who has been “**made alive**” (1 Corinthians 15:22), someone who was “**darkness, but now is Light in the Lord**” (Ephesians 5:8). Christians are a people made spiritually alive. Spiritually alive people are bound to the same God Who saved them. Christians are *alive*, and every day are closer to the “time” when time no longer matters – but life continues on.

A Christian will never stand before the Great White Throne of God, for this is a place where dead things go to be judged. Blessed Believer, **you called upon the Name of the Lord Jesus** and were saved according to His promise (Romans 10:13). When you meet together as a local Church it is God's intent that you learn more about Life. You study about the Heaven that you will one day inhabit. You worship Him Who made a place for you on the other side of the Jordan. You will never be in this terrible Judgment Hall, nor will you run and hide from Him Who sits on that Throne. He is your Savior, your Redeemer, your Life, and your Light. Because of Christ your name is written in the Book of Life. He has said “**whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die**” (John 11:26). Jesus has promised that “**I will never leave thee nor forsake thee**” (Hebrews 13:5).

John the Revelator said “**I saw a Great White Throne**”. What did John *not* see. He did not see Saint Peter standing at the Pearly Gates allowing people to enter Heaven. He did not see the Gate of Heaven, for the

Throne of the Almighty stood in front of its portal. John did not see mythological demons, critters most heinous all dressed in red with horns and a pointy tail. He did not see these fallen angels tormenting those trapped in the flames of the Lake of Fire. In fact, John did not even see Satan before this Throne, for the Scripture says that

Revelation 20:10 ... the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever

He saw the devil and his henchmen in the lake of fire and brimstone, **tormented day and night forever and ever**. Satan has no time to accuse the Saints of God anymore, for he is cast into this terrible Lake along with all who followed after him.

What John saw before the Great White Throne was people who rejected the One Who sat on that Throne. Heaven is for the Living, not for the dead. It is a place without purgatory, a place where there can be no redemption. It is a place that no Christian shall ever enter – and a place that no Christian should want *anyone* to enter.

Oh, that none under the sound of my voice would enter this place! Blessed Holy Spirit, move over this congregation today. Touch hearts and cause every person, whether small or great, to examine themselves. Take my feeble efforts and, through Your Divine Power, move on the hearts of those here, telling them whether they have Life or whether they are yet dead in their sins. Blessed Spirit, move them I pray. Compel Your Church

to focus on growing so that we can lead others to Life and away from this place of death You call **the Lake of Fire and Brimstone**, a place that our Lord Jesus called **Gehenna¹** or **The Valley of Hinnom**. It is a place of death, a place of torment, a place where **“their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44)**. Lead all in this place today from that place, in Jesus' Name we humbly pray. Amen!

1. A Loving God Sends No One To Hell: We Send Ourselves

Heaven is a place where the Living go when they leave this current life. **Dr. C.I. Schofield**, once said **“No man who is wrong with God is really living”**. That is absolutely true! The Lord has done everything He could possibly do to keep man from going to Gehenna. First of all *God warned Adam* not to sin in the Garden of Eden. The Lord told Him:

Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

God loved man, but man loved himself more than he loved God. He ate of that which was forbidden, he sinned against his Creator. **In Adam all die (1 Corinthians 15:22)**. Adam brought spiritual death on all his children, seen by the fact that all of Adam's children sin.

¹ γέεννα, *geenna*, *gheh'-en-nah*, Of Hebrew origin ([H1516] and [H2011]); *valley of* (the son of) *Hinnom*; *gehenna* (or *Ge-Hinnom*), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: - hell.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

How many have sinned? ALL. How many come short of the glory of God? ALL.

God says to ALL **“you are not fit to enter My Heaven. My Heaven is a place of Life, and you are dead in your trespasses and sins. You prove it by your lighthearted approach to sin. You are all dead things – and I will provide the Remedy”.**

Our Loving Creator spoke through the prophets to tell us that the Way to Life is only through Him. Almighty God would enter His creation at a place we call **Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)**, The Lord would use a virgin to carry His humanity (**Isaiah 7:14**), and foretold that great kings – Magi - would come to worship Him (**Psalms 72:10, 15; Isaiah 60:3**). We were told that a Great Messenger would go before Jesus to proclaim Him (**Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6**), and that Christ's earthly ministry would be marked with great, miraculous healing (**Isaiah 35:5-6**) of the blind, the lame, and the deaf. Jesus would live a perfect and sinless life on this earth. He would be betrayed by those who professed to love Him (**Psalms 41:9**), and unjustly tried.

The greatest promise that God made to *whosoever would believe in Him* was that He would take the just punishment of our sins on Himself.

Isaiah 53:6-7 ... the LORD hath laid on him {Jesus} the iniquity of us all. {7} He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Spat on, beaten, accused of crimes He did not commit, Eternal God the Son would say nothing to defend Himself.

Isaiah 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Beaten, judged, *damned* for you and for me, Jesus took all that could be placed on a human frame.

Isaiah 53:3-5 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. {4} Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

God Himself intervened for us. Adam sinned, we followed, and we were all but dead things. We were given opportunity after opportunity to come to Jesus, to give ourselves wholeheartedly to Him. What more could

God do?

FOCAL Revelation 20:11 **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it**

John saw a **Great WHITE Throne**. Who sits on this Throne but **Almighty God**? The Throne is Great because God is Great. The Throne is White because God is pure and holy. The Christian has had his sins judged and laid on Jesus Christ. Now these who have rejected Him stand before this **white and pure Throne** to be judged by the **Righteous God**:

Psalms 71:19 **Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high ...**

Whisper as you read these words and think of the horror of this Judgment. Look at the reaction of those being judged:

FOCAL Revelation 20:11 **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....**

Almighty God – Jesus Christ our Lord – sits on this Throne. This is no Throne of Grace, but a place of Judgment, of Damnation, of Vengeance, of Retribution.

John 5:22-24 **For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: {23} That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son**

honoreth not the Father which hath sent him. {24} Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Oh dear ones, the Great White Throne is not a place where the righteous will be judged. Jesus Christ will sit on this Throne and judge those who repeatedly rejected Him as the Way of Salvation. All those who said **“I’m not a bad person”** will stand before Him to be judged.

All those who said “there are many ways to God” will stand before this singular Throne – **A Great White Throne** – and will be judged. All those who had no time for Jesus in this life will find that He has no time for them in the next life.

Look again at our text:

FOCAL Revelation 20:12 **And I saw the DEAD, small and great, stand before God**

Those who stand before this Throne are **the dead, small and great**. They run, but they cannot hide. **They had no room for Jesus at the inn. They had no room for Jesus in their hearts. Now Jesus has no room for them in His Heaven!** They are dead things – animated but spiritually barren, unable to commune with God. They are not sons and daughters, for no King judges His sons and daughters from the Throne in view of the public. The King judges His own in private, in the castle, and ever

stands ready to love the returning Prodigal. Not so these – these are **the dead**.

Jesus stood speechless before the high priest and Pilate, bearing our sin in ever blow that fell on Him. Those before His Throne stand speechless before Him, for their sin is yet upon them. Sin's Solution is gone, gone forever!

2. It Is Not Our Works That Save Us, But THE Work of Calvary

FOCAL Revelation 20:12 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.**

We see **books**, and we see **a Book**. We see **the books were opened and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works**. Can a person do *any* work that will earn him or her salvation? May I ask this question: “Have you ever seen a corpse do anything to add to the quality of *your* life?” These are **the dead**, and they are being judged **according to their works**. These are the people who said “I’m a good person, very moral and upright. Certainly I have done nothing to deserve a home in Gehenna”. Here is God's answer to works. They are **judged according to their works**. But do any of these works give them a pass into God's

Heaven? What does our text say?

FOCAL Revelation 20:12, 15 ... {12} 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. ... {15} And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

Their works were judged, but **whoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire**. It is not the works that determine whether you enter Heaven or not. It is whether your name was **found written in the Book of Life**.

Those who stand before the Great White Throne are **the dead**, and certainly there are none of their names in the Book of Life. They rejected Life when they rejected Christ. What did Paul preach before the Athenians, people who worshiped false gods and idols? Paul said:

Acts 17:30-31 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but **now commandeth all men every where to repent: {31} Because he hath 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.**

God will judge the world by that God- an that He **raised from the dead**. It is Jesus Who sits on the Throne of final judgment, Jesus Who looks in the Book of Life.

And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life is cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the terrible “day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Romans 2:16).

Oh Beloved, do not try and enter God's Heaven by works! You cannot come from death to life by your works. Learn the lesson that Israel never learned before it is too late.

God saved His Israel *apart from the Law*. Israel was released from Egypt by faith, crossed the Red Sea by faith, and was supposed to enter the Promised Land by Faith. God has always said:

Habakkuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

The **just shall live by his faith**, not in himself but in God. The **righteousness of God** can only come on a person by clinging to the Christ by the hand of faith (Romans 1:17). Israel, saved by faith, refused to live by faith. She murmured, she complained, she found fault, she relied on her own works. Because she rejected a life by faith and a relation by faith in God the Lord carried her to Sinai and gave her the Law. The Law was written on tablets of stone. When the Law was violated there was no recourse, no solution that did not require punishment. The **Law was a curse brought on Israel because Israel rejected the Christ**. What does the Scripture say?

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

While under the Law Israel spent her time repenting and seeking to pay for her sins via animal sacrifices.

Our sins damned us, for they proved we were unable to keep God's Law. The Law – like a thermometer in the mouth – proved us dead. We could not keep God's Law therefore all of our works were *dead works*.

We **must have a Redeemer**. God would have to redeem us, for we could not redeem ourselves. The Scripture says:

Galatians 3:11-14 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. {12} And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. {13} Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: {14} That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Jesus Christ was made a curse for us – we who believe – that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith in Him. Calvary shouts to all “by Christ, in Christ, through Christ” thou shalt be saved. He is our

Redeemer.

So now the choice is up to you. The Scripture makes it plain that:

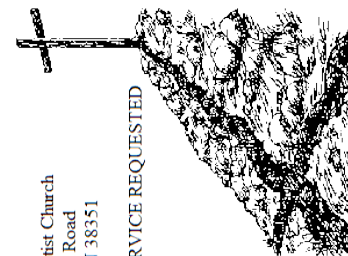
Titus 3:5-7 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; {6} Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; {7} That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

No **heirs of God** will ever stand before this Great White Throne. **Justified by Grace, we have peace with God.** Dear friends, focus on the mission of God's Church. Focus on sharing the Gospel message with all who will hear. **Today is the day of salvation**, for tomorrow will be too late.

FOCAL Revelation 20:15 ... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Do not, I beg you, be part of the **whosoever** that is judged and condemned. Call upon Jesus Christ while there is time!

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED