

The Judgment of God and the Great White Throne!

Bible Text: Revelation 20:11-15

It is always a great privilege to be here today and to preach, to share God's Word with you. Please open up your Bible to the book of Revelation, chapter 20, verse 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. 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. 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. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, what a burden. Father, speak through your Word today. Through my weakness, Father, oh come north wind and blow upon this place. Come south with and from the east and the west. Come wind of God and blow upon this place. Bring these truths home to your people and to those who are not your people. Bring these truths home.

Father, help us. Strengthen us and we will be helped in Jesus' name. Amen.

The power of this passage that is before us is absolutely astounding and the love it requires to preach it is more than I have. You see, in the day that we live where men speak about wonderful, marvelous things and cry out, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace. Sometimes we are called upon to, in a sense, ruin everyone's party and to say, "Stop," or to scream, STOP!!! Think for a moment about the end of your days where you are heading, what Christ really says in the totality of his Word."

How is it that we are inclined just to give ourselves towards those things which most please the flesh so often and refused to look at the train that is coming? Yea, it might be a slow train, but it is a train and it is a certain train and it is coming, the day when all men will stand naked before God.

Everyone. As I often say, "I will not lose sleep at night because you don't have self esteem. I won't lose sleep at night because your checkbook isn't balanced or you can't keep up with the Joneses."

Men of God lose sleep at night because of this, the reality of this that is before us that is more reality than anything you can taste or touch or smell or feel this morning, the reality of the judgment of God.

Now first of all he starts out by saying, "Then..." Literally in the Greek it is, "And." And what John is doing is he is referring this text back to the one that precedes it. And what is going on in the text that precedes the judgment? God, once and for all, is putting an end to the devil. Once and for all he is putting down the devil and his works and he is doing so in order to cleanse his creation to prepare for a new creation.

Now there is nothing in itself startling about that until you follow up with the verses that follow and it is this. He is connecting this text back to the purging of creation and he is basically saying this. In order for the new heaven and the new earth to come about, creation must be purged of the great enemy the devil. And after he has put down the devil, then he turns to another enemy, man. Before creation can be brought in with newness and holiness and righteousness there must be a judgment and in that judgment after it falls many, most people will be swept away into hell for one sole purpose, to make way for what God plans on doing in his Son Jesus Christ.

Now, if you recall the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and he has some sort of an out of body experience and he is taken by an angel and he visits many households and he hears people speaking though they cannot see him. And he comes upon this house and he hears people gathered together saying terrible things about a certain man. Such terrible things they are saying that he almost has pity on the man even though he doesn't know him. And then all of the sudden Ebenezer's name is called and Ebenezer realizes that these people are thinking these horrible thoughts about him and they are saying these horrible things about him.

Now come with me for a second into the counsels of God, a great discussion going on and you hear as though you were a fly on the wall God saying, "Before we can bring in our new heaven and our new earth, we must rid creation of the vile, despicable being who has contaminated it so." And the words of God speaking this way causes you to tremble and then all of the sudden you hear your name. He is talking about you.

That before he can bring in the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth, he must rid creation of every thing that contaminates it and your name is called. And I want you to know your name is called if your name is not found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

I know these are horrible things. I know these are things that you have probably never heard, but you must hear them. It is this terrible. And it goes on. And John, when he comes into this vision that he has he says, "I saw a great white throne." In the Greek text it comes out a little bit different. He said, "I saw a

throne. I saw a throne.” And the order here in Greek is very, very important. It is giving supremacy and preeminence to the throne above all things. He says, “I saw a throne.”

One of the greatest need for believers today, for you and for me, is to see a throne. Isaiah had need of seeing a throne. When King Uzziah died he saw the Lord seated upon a throne. Ezekiel had need of seeing a throne. Jeremiah had need of seeing a throne.

Ezekiel, especially, had need of seeing a throne. You have need of seeing a throne. Believer, you have need. That there is a God and he has redeemed you, but that God who has redeemed you is Lord over you and he sits upon a throne that is so immense, so great, everything else disappears in comparison. You need to see a throne when you are thinking about doing things your own way. But you also need to see a throne when you are doing things God’s way and everything comes against you. You need to see a throne.

But unbelievers also here today need to see a throne, not as a blessing, not as a support, but as a warning. You will one day stand before that throne and you will be judged before that throne in perfect righteousness.

Now he goes on and he says... First of all there is something that I want to make very clear here. This throne upon which God sits is a throne of sovereignty. It demonstrates his power and his rule over everything. But you also need to understand that this throne upon which God sits is a judgment throne. In Romans chapter 14 it is called the judgment throne of God. In 2 Corinthians chapter five it is called the judgment throne of Christ.

It is very, very interesting in our text here that this word in 2 Corinthians referring to the judgment throne of Christ is the word *bhama* (bay'-ma). And it says that when Christ was being judged by Pilate he stood before the *bhama* (bay'-ma), the throne, the judgment seat of Pilate. But isn't it an amazing thing that here everything is reversed. Now Pilate will stand before the judgment throne of Christ.

How do you think he will feel on that day when he treated Christ as though he were nothing? He used Christ to barter with Herod. He pawned around Christ as though he were nothing and now Pilate will stand before Christ.

And you say, “Oh, poor Pilate.”

No, my friend. Poor you because maybe you have done the same. You have judged Christ. You have heard the gospel over and over, but you have pawned him off. You have rejected him. Or you have taken Christ to yourself sort of in a nonchalant fashion, just enough Jesus to make you religious. But you don't understand. In the way you view Jesus right now you are judging him. In the way

you serve Jesus you are judging him. It is not just about disobedience. It is the way you look at Christ and the way you treat Christ.

It goes on. This throne is a great throne. The word that is used in Greek language is megav (meg'-as) from which word we get mega. It means something great. The word can be translated as appearance, dimensions, mass, weight, compass, extent, strength, rank, eminence, esteem, virtue, authority and power. Every thing summed up in the word greatness is found in the throne of our God and the judgment throne before which you will stand. This greatness is also manifested in the fact that, well, the foot stool of this thing, the footstool is the very earth.

Listen to what the Scriptures say. Isaiah says, "Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool." There has never been a king on the face of the earth that has owned an entire continent and kept it. Great kings before whom we would tremble and most of the world has trembled, but they didn't even own a part of the earth. And yet this king before whom you will stand, this king who will judge you is so great, his throne, that he puts his feet on this planet. He sets his feet here.

Then how great is his power? How great is his authority? How great is this one before whom you will stand?

Another thing that tells about the greatness of this throne is this. Now John comes into this vision. I want you to think about this. John comes into this vision and he says, "I saw a throne." But don't you know that there was almost an infinite number of humanity standing there before the throne? A sea, oceans of men as far as the eye could see. But John doesn't notice any of them. Do you see that? He doesn't notice them at all because the one on that throne is so great it makes everyone else disappear, totally and completely disappear.

Isn't it amazing how much value man places on man and how important we are to each other. But when God fully and finally reveals himself, all of us totally and completely disappear. This has so many... I mean there's books just on this word.

Can you imagine? You struggle with pride. You need a view of the throne of God. And all pride dissipates and disappears. Another thing about this throne that I want you to see, it is great because of the one who sits upon it.

Listen to what Scripture says. It says he is the I Am, the alpha and omega, the ancient of days, the eternal God, the invisible God, the blessed God, the mighty one, the holy one, the righteous God, the God of Gods, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the possessor of heaven and earth, the blessed and only sovereign, the lawgiver, the judge of all the earth, he who is to be feared, the Bible says, he who is to be feared.

Nebuchadnezzar said this. But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven. And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

This is the God of the Bible.

One of the reasons why I am preaching, this is the very thing that happened to Nebuchadnezzar. He said, "I looked toward heaven and my reason returned to me."

Those of you who possibly do not know the Lord, all you look at is the earth. It is your standard, the basis upon which you judge everything else. You need to look to heaven so that your reason might return to you. You need to look toward eternal things and realize what is happening.

Do you think I would give my life for poetry? This is not poetry. This is reality. This is what is going to happen. It is the most certain thing that is going to happen. And those of us who are believers, yes, our hearts are renewed. Yes, we have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but never forget that Christianity is a process of sanctification. You can boast all day long about having a true gospel and I am very proud that you do. But you can still be mesmerized by this world, taken off course because you just look at the things of this world that sparkle, things so important to man today.

You need to look to heaven. You need to see a throne. You need to see reality that reason might return to you. It goes on and it says that the throne is white. It is a white throne.

When you have to speak about the righteousness of God you are left undone. There just aren't any words in the human language. First of all the human mind can't comprehend it and if it could comprehend it, it couldn't communicate it because our language is not strong enough. The blazing white brilliance of God's righteousness that not even angels can stand before it without covering themselves. And those angels that do stand in his presence, the seraphs, called in Hebrew the burning ones, they are not burning by their own fire. They are just the reflection of this glorious, horrible, magnificent God and his righteousness.

That throne that is going to judge you is white, not a spot, not a blemish. It is not off colored. No deals will be made with you. You will be judged by the pure white, hot, holy, character of God.

Now when we look at this throne we can understand many things about this throne in the book of Revelation chapter 20 by comparing it to the same throne in chapter four. And I want to do that just for a moment.

First of all, in chapter four there is something vaguely said of the appearance of the one on the throne. But here you have no appearance at all. There is nothing here describing God or telling you something about God. And do you want to know why? Listen to me.

The greatest judgment that can fall on a people is when God removes the revelation of himself from them. You see, you have sat here and sat there and heard mighty, magnificent words about the gospel of Jesus Christ, pictures drawn for you through preaching of the attributes of God, of who he is. But on judgment day it will all be taken away and you will see nothing there. There will be no revelation to learn from, no revelation to believe in. It is over.

God said, "I made myself known to you, but although you knew God, you did not honor me as God nor give thanks."

It is gone. You will grope in darkness and you will be given over to eternal darkness. Also there is no rainbow on this throne. On the throne in chapter four there is a rainbow. There is no rainbow here. A rainbow represents the covenants of God, the promises of God.

What did he say to you? "All day long I have extended my hands to a people. All day long, promise after promise."

I marvel in Isaiah 55 because in Isaiah 55 and 54 there are such great promises that God makes to wicked people based upon the work of the Messiah. In chapter 54 based on the works of the Messiah there are so many great promises given that in 55 God has to convince the people that it is really real. It is so good it is too good to be true, but he says, "No, it is true. I promise you this and that and the other. Everything in my Son, just come."

But they would not.

But on the day of judgment there will be no promise given. There will be no covenant made. No deals will be worked on that day. There is no rainbow. Also, there are no smaller thrones here in Revelation chapter 20. In chapter four there were smaller thrones also. God has withdrawn every other throne. And God is saying, "No. These people will deal with me alone. There will be no angels seated upon thrones to go at my beck and call to give a word to them, no one to minister to them, no. I am their God. I told them to prepare to meet with their God. They did not. Now they have me alone to deal with."

Also in that judgment throne there is no angelic choir, no joyful singing, not one voice of

gladness to be heard. Even the great creatures, the living creatures that are stood around the throne crying out, "Holy, holy, holy," day and night continually, they have been withdrawn. No word of encouragement. No hope, no help, no song.

Song after song in this church you have heard and in those songs promise after promise of the saving power of God in Jesus Christ. But in that day all songs will be detracted. There will be nothing for you to hear except the silence of slamming hammer, judged. Also there is no more lightning or thunder.

You say, "Well, that's a good thing."

No, it's not. It is a terrible thing. Let me share with you. "Why is that man always is preaching so hard? Why is he always saying things so hard? If he would just slack up a little bit, there would be a lot more people in the church. What is with all these hard sayings and hard words? Why does he bruise us so?" I want you to understand the thunder and the lightning were warnings thundering from Sinai.

The day of judgment when God judged Adam and Eve, don't you realize that those judgments were also acts of mercy? He said, "You are going to live in a fallen world and every time you sweat and every time you suffer it is me calling out to you, 'Fallen, fallen, turn, repent, come and be saved.' Every time a woman gives birth in pain it is God calling out, "You are fallen, fallen. Return to me and be saved." Every thunder, every lightning from Sinai was, "You cannot keep this law. You need a Savior."

Every thunder and lightning in preaching, every hard word is God saying, "Look, this is real."

But here the judgment of God is shown in that the thunder and lightning has been removed. There is no longer need for it because there is no longer a need for warning because you only warn men to run to promises, but when there are no promises left then there's no need for warning.

Also there are no seven torches representing the Spirit of God. It is gone. The Spirit of God is the only means by which a man can be saved. All grace and all knowledge of God is communicated to men through the work of the Holy Spirit. But here on judgment day the Spirit is gone. And without him no hope of salvation. Also there is no celestial pavement making the way back to God and there is no sea of crystal representing peace with God. It is gone. There are no angels flying with burning red hot coals to sear the sin from men's mouths. It is gone. And it is gone because there is no lamb now looking as though he had been slain because that one who had been slain is now seated upon the throne judging the world as God's king and God's Messiah.

And there is no trumpet voice saying, as in verse one, "Come up here, draw near."

There is only a two edged voice saying, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you."

Can you imagine? I don't say this to hurt you or scare you. I don't say this to step on your toes or make you have a terrible day. But you have got to see the seriousness of rejecting Christ.

On that day God himself will say, "You trampled under foot my Son. You called the blood of the covenant unclean as though it were a pig's blood. You offended my Spirit of grace. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity."

It is going to happen. It is going to happen. Him who sat upon the throne... Who is the one seated upon the throne? Well, as I have said, the Bible says that God is sitting upon the throne, God the Father. The Bible also says that Jesus Christ his Son is seated upon the throne. It is called the judgment seat of Christ and the judgment seat of God and here is John's purpose. It is not to delineate or to divide or to be specific. It is simply to say this. "On that day you will be judged by the fullness of deity."

It won't be a carpenter's son. It won't be meek and lowly Jesus. It won't be a shepherd with a nook. It will be God in all the naked fullness of deity blinding you with holiness and righteousness. Also we should notice that the one who is upon the throne is seated. Just look at that. He is seated. The fact that God is seated upon the throne represents a settled, a perfect, settled sovereignty. He is not bothered. He is not anxious. This did not take him by surprise. It is the world that will be caught off guard on that day, not God. He has planned this from all eternity.

It reminds me of that passage in Psalms chapter two which says: Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

Do you realize that on the day of judgment if every creature in hell and every creature that has ever been on earth, the full lot of all of creation, were to rise up against this one seated upon the throne, they would not have the strength of the weakest among them arising up by himself. It would be like a mite beating his head against the world of granite. This is the God with whom you must deal, every one of you.

Does it make you afraid? If the blood of Christ is not your hope, it must make you afraid.

Now it says here in our text that "...from whose presence earth and heaven fled away." This word "fled" comes from the Greek word feugw (fyoo'-go) that means to literally flee away or to seek safety by flight.

Heaven and earth itself is doing everything in its power to run away from this one who is seated upon the throne.

The Lutheran scholar Seiss says... Now listen to this language. This is old language. This is old language about God. "This throne has an awful occupant." When was the last time... Well, here you do. But in other churches when do you hear that God is awful? "There is no name, no figure, no shape: but only an awful, mysterious, and composed presence, which can be nothing less than the one, unnamable, indescribable, eternal Godhead." There is nothing but the naked presence of almightiness so dreadful that the very earth and heaven seem to be fleeing before it.

Now this is very common in biblical language. Let me give you a few verses. In Psalms 75:2, God speaking he says, "When I select an appointed time, It is I who judge with equity. The earth and all who dwell in it melt." Psalms 97:5, "The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." It is terrifying. So many men boast of greatness. They will melt before him like a tiny wax figurine before a blast furnace.

Last night my wife and I were watching some kind of home improvement program thing and they went in this apartment of these college students and they were going to fix their apartment. And the one of them laughed and said, "What is this?"

And they said, "Well, we call our apartment the temple of the red velvet Jesus." And they had bought at some yard sale or something a statue of Jesus that was about two feet tall covered in red velvet with a little space in its... it was a piggy bank where you could put money in.

And they said, "That's why we put this here in the center of the room and that is why we call our place the temple of the red velvet Jesus."

A piggy bank. I don't know who I feel sorry for more, them or the foolish person who in the name of Christ made this thing thinking somehow it would honor Jesus and Christianity.

But you listen to that. You go, "Well, that is absolutely disgusting that someone would do that." But, physician, heal thyself. Don't you know that you do the same thing.

So often I do the same thing. Don't you see that, not realizing who this is? Playing, as Vance Havener used to say, playing marbles with the diamonds of God.

It is one thing to touch something precious to me, to spoil my home or to ruin my clothing. Lay a hand on my child, it is another whole thing. Disregard my child, it is another whole thing. It is a violent reaction.

This God loves his Son and those who have treated his Son as a red velvet piggy bank will melt before him on that day.

Now what does this mean? I want you to think about something. Imagine you are being led, young person, old person. Imagine you are being led into the throne room of God. And as you are being led in and cannot stop, they make you go. As you are being led in you see heaven and earth running in the other direction screaming, "Flee, flee, flee from the wrath of God. Flee from the one who sits upon the throne. Who can behold his presence? The rivers dry up before him and the mountains melt."

And you, insignificant mite, are now going to go in and face the one that creation runs from in terror.

And then think about this as you are marching yourself in, proud of all your accomplishments. And, Christians, this is a good word for you, too. Proud of all your accomplishments and all things you have and titles and ownership and this and that. As you are marching in to that great room you see everything of this world that is not eternal passing by you in the other direction toward destruction.

You will be saved, but as by fire. Everything lost. What does this mean? It means this. "The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." 1 John 2:17.

This word here where it says, "The world is passing away..." it means literally, it can also be translated, "is being pushed out."

All the things that people so much strive after, the things that will not last. God even now in judgment is pushing them out. And he goes on and he says now the next statement. "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne." John says, "I saw the nekrov (nek-ros)." That's horrifying. "I saw touv nikrouv (toos nek-roos). I saw the dead ones," referring to that entire multitude of people. He called them only one name, the dead. "I saw them there."

Seiss writes, "The great and the small, the big sinners and the little sinners." That's the word you need to adhere. Not just the big ones. Not just Hitler and Mussolini, Fidel. He

says, "I saw big sinners and little sinners, rulers and subjects, nobles... the learned and the ignorant, the refined and the vulgar, the civilized and the barbarous, emperors and beggars, all alike are there."

We read of no white robes, no spotless linen, no palms, nothing but naked sinners before the naked majesty of enthroned almightiness awaiting their eternal doom.

Now why does Seiss, now twice that we have read him has mentioned naked? There is a very important concept in judgment. I don't want to be trite and I hope you won't chuckle at this, but you know if you were to all of the sudden come to senses and found yourself in the middle of this church right now at this moment naked, you know the shame that you would have. It would be terrifying. It would be absolutely terrifying.

And you know that if you were fully clothed and yet you had to stand before God and caught just the glimpse of his glory, him covering it with a certain clothing, you would still be terrified.

Look at Isaiah. In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord.... high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. And above him stood the seraphs each having six wings, with two they covered their face, with two they covered their feet and with two they did fly. And one cried unto the other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him who cried and the house was filled with smoke." Then said I, "Woe is me for I am undone, for I a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips.

That was just a glimpse. That wasn't what you see here. That was a glimpse, covered deity and a protected man and a man who, furthermore, was a saint, was a Christian, belonged to the redeemed. And yet in such a presence he pronounces a curse upon himself in Hebrew.

Now imagine the naked majesty of God. No firewall, nothing standing between you and the fulness of deity and then you standing there naked, not just physically so, but every filthy, rotten thing you have ever done is open before the fires of God's holiness.

Now it goes on. I think that the most devastating reality here when John says, "I saw the dead." You don't understand, do you? This is the only time you come out in the Bible. This is the only time you are mentioned. Don't you understand what I am saying? John saw you. John saw your face. You were standing there. I hear so many people saying, "Oh, I just wish, you know, those characters that come out in the Bible and they are there in the Word of God and their names are mentioned, how glorious that must be..."

Here you are mentioned. Who do you think John was looking at, someone else? When he said, "I saw nekrov (nek-ros), when I saw the dead," he was looking right in your face. This is the great multitude of humanity and you are not taken out of this group. He sees you there. Don't you understand? This is you. This is your history. You are Ebenezer Scrooge. This is where you are.

He says, "I saw them. I saw you." And it says that the great and the small... Now when great... it is the same word used to describe the throne of God, but when great is used with regard to God it is an absolute terms. He is great. But when greatness is ascribed to a man it is relative, great in comparison to other men, but not in comparison to God.

Let me read you God's opinion of the greatness of man, "a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." Not even substance, just a vapor. Psalm 62.

"Men of low degree are only vanity and men of rank are a lie; In the balances they go up; They are together lighter than breath." And then one of my—I won't say favorite, but it is a text that truly for me says it all about man. "Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?" God is saying, "Man is nothing but one nose full of air." And when that expires he has no guarantee for another.

He also saw the small. This word is the word from which we derive the English word micro, the small. Now here is something that is very important. There have not been in this world a lot of great and mighty sinners simply because they did not have the power at their disposal to show their sin. We have the Hitlers and the Mussolinis and on and on, the Stalins. And one of the things that happens is you compare yourself with other men and you think, "Well, I am not as great a sinner as he is." But, you see, here is your flaw. The standard on judgment day is not the most wicked man who ever lived on the planet. The standard on judgment is the most righteous man who ever lived on the planet.

There is a sense in our reformed brethren, they are always saying this that men will be judged by the law of God, that you will have a great balance and here will be the law of God and man will be placed in the scale and found wanting.

I have got something more terrifying for you. You are standing in the scale and on the other side is not the law of God. It is Jesus Christ. To whom will you compare him?

So those of you who are small sinners, beware, because those tiny foxes can still ruin a vineyard. And it goes on and it says that they are "standing before the throne."

I preach so often and literally if it wasn't from the grace of God and knowing that I have

been in the same place and if it wasn't for my friends in christ who have taught me some civility, I would literally go out into the congregation at times and grab people up by the back of their neck and say, "At least sit up straight while I am preaching the Word of God." They just sit there nonchalant and laid back, giving you some sort of eye of disdain.

I want you to know something. You will not be slouching on that day. You will not be nonchalant on that day. You will not be talking, laughing, passing notes or any of the like. You will stand before the judgment throne of God. And if one muscle in your cheek twitches it will terrify you that you have been spotted.

But know this. You have been spotted. You will stand before the throne of God and there is something I want to point out here. Do you know what makes this doubly more terrifying? It is that you were warned. You have no excuse. You were warned. That is what makes it terrifying.

Amos told you, "Prepare to meet your God." Jesus Christ told you: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Paul told you, "For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God." You see, you were warned that you would stand before him and that the books would be opened.

Now I think the idea here of books in plural is very important. It is letting us know something about their volume. Every thing you have ever done is known before God.

In Scripture God is called the God of knowledge. It says in Job 37 his knowledge is perfect. Psalms 147, "His understanding is infinite." God alone knows the heart of all men, 1 Kings eight. "God tries the hearts and minds," Psalm seven. God knows the thoughts of men, Psalms 94. "God will judge the secrets of all men."

I dare say that if you knew that I possessed all knowledge of everything you have ever thought and done and said and was standing here right now and gave the announcement that I am going to tell everyone every thing about you, that would be the closest you would ever come to murdering another man. You would do everything in your power to stop me.

And yet God... who am I? Another man just like you with the same problems you have, with the same dark secrets you have carried. You don't want it exposed before us even though we are just like you. It would kill you to know that your darkest secrets were made known even to the likes of us who are just like you? Then imagine it being known to a God whose holiness cannot be contained, seen or described.

It says, "And another book was opened, which is the book of life."

And you say, "Oh, none of this has anything to do with me. I am in the book."
Oh, my dear friend, how do you know you are in the book? How do you know? I've traveled all over this country preaching. The great majority of all the people that I preach to, church members, believe they are in the book because one time they prayed a prayer. Or... because they believe Jesus died and resurrected for them.

And if you ask them, "Are you saved?" they won't even say things like, "Yes, because I am looking unto Christ and growing in sanctification."

No, their whole hope for eternity rests on, "I was sincere one time when I prayed with an evangelist, or I believe so I am saved

And that is the only evidence they can point to to say that their name has been written in the book of life.

But I want you to listen to something even AT Robertson writes, "We are saved by grace." As AT Robertson, probably the number one Greek scholar in the Southern Baptist Convention and its history, he says, "We are saved by grace, but character at last is the test of the fruit of the tree."

He is saying that all throughout Scripture, even though Scripture teaches salvation by faith, salvation is a work of God. It is attributed to grace. You need to understand that salvation is the supernatural work of God that changes the character of a man and it will produce fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Matthew 7:19-20.

These people who are cut down and thrown into the fire are the very ones that in the following text are going to say, "Lord, Lord." And he is going to say, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

Psalms 62:12, "You recompense a man according to his work."

Jeremiah 17:10, "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds."

Romans 2:6, "Who will render to each person according to his deeds."

1 Peter 1:17, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth."

Yes, salvation is only by faith. It is blasphemous to say that salvation is through any work, but my dear friend if any man be in Christ he is a new creature and new creatures live different ways.

So the test is: Are you a new creature? Are you?

Again, Seiss writes, "Heaven keeps record of all the deeds of people, and of all the thoughts and feelings under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, the deeds they did, the thoughts and tempers they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books of eternity.

"Oh man, oh woman, whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item with every secret thing. There is not a ill thought, a mean act, a scene of wrong in all your history, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech or a base feeling that ever found entertain in your heart, but is there described in bold hand by its true name and set down to your account to be then brought forth for final settlements. If not clean, blotted out through faith in Christ's blood before this present life of yours is ended.

Think ye that fear not God and make nothing of trampling his laws, how your case will stand when the books are opened."

He goes on and he says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them."

Do you know what is going on? The earth at the command of God is delivering over its criminals to him. God gives a command to the earth and the earth says, "I will raise them up and give them to you.

Israel was warned, "When I bring you into the Promised Land if you live in idolatry and sin and you rebel against me, then the land itself will vomit you out." On the day of judgment it is though the sin, the grave, death itself vomits out the sinner as Jonah was vomited out of the mouth of a fish to be cast before the throne of God and made to stand.

Think about this for a moment. After David, after the rebellion of Absalom and David was restored Sheba the son of Bichri he decided that he did not want to follow David. He wanted to rebel against authority and so he tried to amass a group of men and finally David's men came after him and he went and hid in the city of Abel Beth-maacah. And David's men came close and they were going to

tear down the walls of the city and all of the sudden a wise woman comes out and kneels outside the window and she says, "Why are you besieging our city?"

And they said, "Because of Sheba."

And she said, "Well, we will hand him over to you. Don't destroy us."

Can you imagine the terror, the terror in Sheba's mind when he heard those words, that the entire city is coming after me. They are going grab me, kill me and throw me over the wall lest they, too, be judged.

God will command the sea, "Bring them forth." God will command the grave, "Bring them forth." God will command hell itself, "Bring them forth."

And I would submit to you that the presence of God on that day is so terrible that those in hell would rather remain there.

"And they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds."

And I am running out of time here, but listen to me. I plead with you. This is like in the voice of the man that they come across who is wild with terror in the darkness of the sea and they ask him, "What are you afraid of?"

He is floating around there by himself and the ship comes and picks him up and rescues him and he says, "Run, flee, fly from this place."

And they say, "Why?"

And he says, "This is the place where all your dreams come true."

And they said, "Well, what's bad about that? That's wonderful."

And he said, "No. You are not hearing me. All your dreams come true."

They turned that boat around with every sailor's might they had and they took off with terror in their faces. You see, they didn't hear him the first time. The Bible repeats this.

"They shall be judged by their deeds." And then again, "They shall be judged by their deeds."

And why is it doing this? You are not listening. If you are not found in Jesus Christ you will be judged by your deeds. Oh that the Spirit of God would make that known to you, that he would make that known to you.

It says, "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." For the true Christian this is great news. The Lamb has overcome. Death has been put away. Are you a true Christian. For the sinner this is terrifying because as they watch God through death into hell it is just a prelude of what God is going to do to them.

Alfred, the Greek scholar writes, "Second death. As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death, so after that death there is no more life."

I want to bring up one thing before I read a final word from Seiss and it is this. Mark in this place who it is that is doing the throwing. I have heard so many preachers say, "God doesn't throw anybody into hell."

My dear friend, he does. Jesus told us that he does. Fear him who can not only kill the body, but afterwards take your body and your soul and throw you in hell.

It is God who throws in hell. You say, "Well, I just don't like this kind of Christianity." I'm sorry. It is the only one that you got.

I am going to finish with these choice words of Seiss, "Listen, ye unbelieving men, ye dishonesty men, ye profane men, ye lewd men and women, ye slaves of lust and appetite, ye scoffers at the truth of God, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Ye men of business, ye whose souls are absorbed with the pursuit of gain, ye people of wealth without riches toward God, ye passengers on the voyage of life without prayer, without church relations, without concern for your immortal soul, hear. Hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure and your glory and your multitude and your pomp and your rejoicing shall descend into it. Listen, you almost Christians lingering these many years on the margins of the kingdom, looking in through the gates, but never quite ready to enter them, intending but never performing, often wishing, but never... but still postponing, hoping but with out right to hope, the appeal is to you. How shall ye escape if ye neglect so great a salvation?"

And you who call yourselves Christians, but have forgotten your covenant promises, you are like Lot's wife. You have stated out of the place of sin and death, but you have hesitated half way and stayed to look back. You are a baptized Judas. You through coveting and feigned words, you make merchandise of the grace of God. Ye, see ye not that your judgment now of a long time lingereth and your damnation slumbereth not and if there be anyone oblivious or indifferent towards these great matters, asleep amidst the dashing waves of coming retribution, the message is for you.

What meanest thou sleeper? Arise. Call upon thy God if so be it that God shall think upon thee that thou perish not. For if anyone was not found written in the book of life he was swallowed up."

I have purposely asked that I not be given away to emotion so that attention be drawn to my piety, that there would be no tears or no outburst to make you think on the piety of men. It is just raw boned, naked truth. It is not all the truth there is.

There are other great and glorious truths about the love of God and the mercies of God, but this is a truth and an important one. Flee today.

There are going to be men standing at each one of these entrances over here. We will stay all day with you. We will talk to you about the things of God. Maybe you are angry. Then let your anger drive you to ask questions. But don't leave here without Christ.

You see, this is the work of a preacher, a spectacle, a fool. You will live or you will die and it all has to do with Jesus Christ and him. Choose you this day whom you will serve. The arms of mercy are very, very wide. The ones who come to him he will in no wise cast out. Salvation freely offered and freely given, enough grace in the cross of Christ to save 10 billion worlds of ours.

Come to Jesus today. You will not be dealt with harshly. You will not be bludgeoned with questions. We will sit there with the Scriptures and help you hopefully find the way of truth.

Let's pray.

Lord let this congregation have ears to hear the word you have delivered through me today. Let it be a blessing to each person here rather than a curse, through Jesus' name. Amen