

The Lake of Fire ~ The Second Death

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[0 : 00] Amen. All by grace. Take out your Bibles, if you have them, and turn to the book of Revelation.

You'll find it at the very end. It's the next to last book, right before concordance. And we're in almost the last chapter. We're in chapter 20. We're finishing chapter 20 today, Lord willing.

And then we get to the stuff my wife's been saying, when are we getting to 21? When are we getting to 21? So, a couple more weeks. This week, we finished chapter 20. Next week, we plan to do a review so we can kind of put the pieces together, kind of take a big, broad perspective of what we've been looking at in more detail over the last several chapters.

So, 17 to 20, we'll kind of review and wrap up there. And then I'm going to take a break, and Brother Mark will be teaching us on the fourth Sunday.

And then, beginning in March, we'll come to 21 and 22. So, excited, right?

[1 : 25] Amen. One more scary passage. One more. All right. Not necessarily scary, I guess. I guess it wouldn't think.

Well, if you don't know the Lord, it's a scary passage. Absolutely. So, let's read the text. We're looking today at verses 7 through 15 in Revelation 20. And we'll pray, and then we'll jump into it.

So, if you're able, please stand as I read Revelation 20, beginning of verse 7. And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle.

Their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

But fire came down from heaven and consumed them. And the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been cast.

[2 : 51] And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.

From his presence, earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what is written in the books, according to what they had done.

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

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.

[4 : 11] So it reads, let us pray. Father, grant us your eyes to see. Grant us ears to hear. And particularly grant us hearts to receive your truth.

We pray, oh Father, that you would cause your name to be sanctified. We pray that you would cause your kingdom to come to us.

We pray that you would cause your will to be done here as it is in heaven. Give to us today your daily bread.

And forgive us our debts. Just as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from the evil. This we pray in Jesus' name.

[5 : 17] Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Charlotte, North Carolina.

A lawyer purchased a box of 24 very rare and expensive cigars. Then he insured them. Against many other things, fire.

What's he thinking? Within a month, he had smoked all 24 of these great cigars.

And without yet having even made his first premium payment on the policy, he filed the claim against the insurance company.

In his claim, the lawyer stated that the cigars were lost in a series of small fires. Clever, huh? [6 : 20] The insurance company, of course, refused to pay. Citing the obvious reason that the man consumed the cigars in a normal fashion. The lawyer sued and won.

Delivering the ruling, the judge agreed with the insurance company. The claim was frivolous. The judge stated, nevertheless, that the lawyer had a policy with the company, which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable, and also agreed that they would insure them against fire, without defining what was considered to be acceptable fire, and was obligated to pay the claim.

Legalese. Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid the \$15,000 to the lawyer for the loss of his 24 cigars lost in the fire. Now the best part. After the lawyer cashed the check, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of arson.

Justice, huh? We're dealing with justice and judgment here. In our world, people use the law to twist it to their own ends.

[8 : 05] Clever lawyers. And we know this is not really justice. They burned in a fire.

Right? Not right. Yet it happens all the time. We hear of it. We read of it. Here we hear of another story. The story of the lawyer here illustrates that this false justice, here is false justice, that for once ended up in true justice.

He reaped what he had sown or burned or whatever you want to call it. Today, lawbreakers get away with things. And they even prosper.

And they even think they're okay. Can't be touched. No one will hold me accountable for this. I get away with it. Hey, it's America.

Just use the law, even if you don't use it lawfully. But what our text today reminds us of is that in the end, no one gets away with anything.

[9 : 26] Every single person will be held accountable. They will be held accountable, as our text says twice, according to what is written in the books, plural, according to what they have done, good or bad.

Now, question. Are we ready? Are we ready? Revelation 20 shows us here from 7 through 15, the last two events of history, essentially.

The very final, final, final battle. We've heard of final battles before. This is really the final, final one. Because after this comes the great judgment.

When all stand before the throne, the great white throne, and are judged. So we have the last war and the last judgment.

So all through Revelation, I want to remind you, all through Revelation, we've been seeing previews of the end. Remember, all the way back in chapter 6 of Revelation, we have the seals, right, opened.

[10 : 57] 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 seals were opened in chapter 6. The six seals opened in chapter 6, verse 12. When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black asackla.

The full moon became like blood. The stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by the gale.

The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up. And every mountain and island was removed from its place. What's that sound like?

End of the world. Right? And the kings of the earth, the great ones, and the generals, and the rich, and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves.

Where'd they find caves? The mountains are gone. Calling on the mountains and the rocks, fall on us from the face of him who's seated on the throne from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath, of their wrath, has come, and who can stand?

[12 : 03] It's the day. That was way back in chapter 6, seal 6. You skip ahead to chapter 8. You have seal 7, the final seal.

Remember the scroll? It was all sealed up. Now the final one. So we're going to open the scroll. So chapter 8, the Lamb opened the seventh seal. There was silence in heaven for half an hour. Things begin to happen.

Look down to verse 5. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it on the earth. And it's the finale. There were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

That's the finale. That's the seventh seal. It's over. We've had a preview of the end before. Go ahead to chapter 11, verse 15, when we go through the trumpet judgments, right?

Now we come to the last trumpet, what Paul calls the last trumpet, the seventh trumpet, in chapter 11, verse 15. The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying, the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

[13:17] What's that sound like? That's it. And then the 24 elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, we give thanks to you, Lord God, the Almighty, who is and who was.

And they skipped the part, and who is to come. Now they say, for you have taken your great power. In other words, you have already come. Not is to come, but has come. You have taken your great power and begun to reign.

This is it. The nations raged, but your wrath came, the time for the dead to be judged and for the rewarding of your saints, the prophets, your servants, the prophets and saints, those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.

Then the finale. Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within the temple, and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and earthquake, and heavy hail.

The grand finale. It's over again. We've seen previews, signs of the end. The time for judgment has come. That's now 20. That's chapter 20.

[14:33] Time for judgment and reward has come. But we're not done. Then we come to the bowls. In chapter 16, God's pouring out the bowls, which are the last plagues, right?

Now we're done. Again. It pours out the bowls. So we get to the sixth bowl. Chapter 16, verse 12. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up. Why? To prepare the way for the kings of the east. They're going to come and invade. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, in other words, the unholy trinity, three unclean spirits like frogs.

They are demonic spirits performing signs who go out, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world. Remember, now it was just the kings of the east.

Now it's the kings of the whole world. To do what? To assemble them for what? For battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

[15:46] Behold, I'm coming quickly like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be exposed.

And they assembled, back to the assembly of war, and they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmageddon. The word for end of the world.

But it's just a place where they gather. So another, so final battle, final battle. No, that's not the final. No, we keep going. Actually, we forgot the finale.

The seventh bull, verse 17, the seventh angel poured out his bull into the air and the loud voice came from heaven saying, it is done. And then the finale, flashes of lightning, rumbling, the appeals of thunder, a great earthquake such as never had been before on the earth.

At the end of the seals, we have this finale, rumblings, thunder, lightning, end of the trumpets, rumblings, thunder, lightning, earthquake, end of the bulls, same finale.

[17:03] Is this repeated? Is this different? Getting the picture? It's kind of, we're seeing the same thing from different perspectives. Same thing. Really just one ending.

So now, then we come to chapter 19, right? We did that one. Oh, that's the return of Christ. That's the really, really ending, isn't it?

Yeah, that's how the rest of scripture understand. When Christ returns at the last trumpet, that's it. How come chapter 20 gets added on? Where's that fit? Right?

So we've looked at that. But chapter 19, verse 11, then I saw heaven open. Behold, a white horse, one sitting on it, who is called faithful and true. And in righteousness he judges and makes war.

His eyes are like a flame of fire. On his head are diadems, crowns, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He's clothed in a robe dipped in blood.

[18 : 00] And the name by which he is called is the Word of God. Have we figured out who this is yet? He's faithful, true, he has a name on Word of God. Word became flesh and dwelt.

In the armies of heaven, verse 14, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, are following him on white horses. From his mouth comes the sharp sword, not in his hand, but from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

And he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty on his robe and on his thigh. He has another name. He's got like four names in the name written King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

Any wondering who that is yet? No, we know that's Jesus. Then the war. Then, verse 17, then I saw an angel standing in the sun. Really bright angel.

And with a loud voice he called to the birds that fly directly overhead. Come, gather for the great supper of God to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of the horses and the riders, the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both great and small.

[19 : 13] So, call the birds then the battle. And I saw the beast. Remember the beast? First beast serves the dragon. The beast, remember, is not a single person.

It is the representation of all world rulers rebelling against God Almighty. The beast. I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

And the beast was captured and with it the false prophet who in his presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who had worshipped its image to be clear who these are.

These two, these two representatives, these two, the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came out of the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse and all the birds.

Oh, that's why the birds. Oh, now the birds come. The birds are called. Gather, gather. Why? Why? Is it going to be allowed? It might be a long battle. No, it's not a long battle at all.

[20 : 24] Gather because it's going to be quick. Gather. Ready, ready. Because it's going to go just like that. And the birds come and feast.

Image, image, image. We get images of these, of the end as catastrophic. Right? Everything is gone. The mountains, the sky, the islands are gone.

Now we get battle scenes. We get one in chapter 16, one in chapter 19. Each one talks about how they are gathered for battle. Same language.

gathered for battle. Chapter 16, they're gathered by these deceptive spirits that come from the unholy trinity.

Chapter 19, they're gathered by the beast. Who's the beast? The beast is the servant of Satan.

Now we come to the third view of this final battle in chapter 20.

[21 : 27] And now it's Satan himself who's released and deceives for the purpose of gathering the nations to battle.

And they gather where? Doesn't say Armageddon this time. This time it says they gather at the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

and once again, how long did the battle take? It's over before it starts. They just surround and suddenly fire comes down.

It's done. It's done. It's a quick ending. So we have these views and reviews and different scenes of the inn giving us different perspectives.

I think chapter 16 is an earthly perspective. The kings of the earth gather. I think chapter 19 is a symbolic view because here it's the beast.

[22 : 25] The beast is the symbol. And then now in chapter 20 we have one more view, one more perspective. It's the ultimate last final view where Satan, the real instigator of everything, whether he's going through demons, whether he's going through the beast, it's really him.

who's ultimately responsible. Okay? So now we see the final scene, the final end of Satan and the final end of earth dwellers.

So here's the last two events. How does everything end? John describes two final acts of history.

The final battle or war in verses 7 to 10 and the final judgment in verses 11 to 15 when it's all done.

What's the last? So one final rebellion and then the judgment. The judgment. When all come to be judged.

Okay, so let's take those one at a time. The final war, describe it this way, Satan's last deception. And he deceives, right? He comes, he's released, he deceives, for what purpose?

[23 : 41] For the purpose of gathering the nations to do what? To surround the holy or the beloved city, but it just ends in fire. He, so, so actually, Satan is deceiving them right into the fire.

He is deceiving and inciting them to rebel against God Almighty and his people which only ends in fire and ultimately the lake of fire.

See, remember, we've been told before, the dragon, he knows his time is short, right? And he knows that this last point when he's released he will have a very short time.

He doesn't have time to go mess around with deceiving all, but he deceives for one thing, gather a last rebellion so I can take out as many as I can with that. He doesn't have any, I think, he knows he's not going to win.

He just wants to take down as many as he can. Okay, so here we go. So, three parts here. We have the deceiver described in verse 7 and 8. We have the defiance, the gathering for war against God and his people in verses 8 and 9 and then we have the destiny of Satan in verse 10.

[25 : 01] So, he's described as a deceiver in verse 7. The Satan is released after the thousand years. Remember, he's been restricted. He's been held back. And we looked at that last time.

In what way is he bound? Is he completely bound like he has no activity? I don't think so. I think he's just been restricted. Because what it said when he was bound back in verse 3, right, is so that he might not deceive the nations.

That's the way he's bound. He's bound from deceiving Gentiles. He's bound from deceiving the world any longer. They've been held under darkness until Christ came.

Where do the Gentiles come from all of a sudden? When Christ comes, all of a sudden they start coming. We see that explodes in the book of Acts. All of a sudden the Gentiles are coming. They came in little bits in the Old Testament.

We saw Gentiles come. God brings them in but there's not very many. And then an explosion. So Satan's been bound. He's been bound from blinding them so universally.

[26 : 08] Okay. And of course Christ starts reigning, right? He starts speaking and demons are fighting and he just, you know, see ya. No fight. So, he incites rebels to the lake of fire.

So the deceiver, he's released from his restraints. Why? Again, we have the same, kind of the opposite now. He was restrained from deceiving. Now when he's released, what does he do? Verse 9.

To deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog. To deceive the nations for what? To gather them for battle. To gather them for battle. That's his deception.

It's just one aim, one intent. He's released to deceive the nations for the purpose of gathering them for battle. One last rebellion. Take them down. Now it says, notice how it says the nations.

Who are the nations? Here in verse 8. He come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth. Where's the four corners of the earth?

[27 : 12] Well, that's a biblical way of saying it's every direction. North, south, east, west. Four corners. It's universal. The whole world. And then what does he call these nations that are at the four corners of the earth?

He calls them Gog and Magog. Who is, what? Who's Gog and Magog? What are these guys? Where do they come from?

They're only in two passages in the whole scripture. Here in Revelation 20 and in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Oh, it's in Ezekiel. I've got to go read Ezekiel to find out. That's kind of tough reading Ezekiel. No, we're going to go there. It's actually not that tough. Are those old enemies of Israel, Gog and Magog? No. Nope. Nope.

Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope. You won't find them. Oh, there, there, there, it's probably, it's probably Russia. That's what I was told is Russia.

[28 : 15] China. Because they're coming from the north. Well, that's not what it says here. They're not coming from the north. Here it says they're coming from all corners of the earth. So they're just, these are just symbolic names.

We'll get into that in a minute. We'll go further. But clearly what these Gog and Magog are, they are the earthly leaders of the rebellion. They're the ones bringing it. Okay. They're the term. And maybe, I'm thinking it's, Gog is another name for the beast.

Possibly. I won't die for that one. They seek to devour God's people. That's what the dragon wants to do all along. Remember when the dragon first appeared on the scene? What's he want to do with Adam and Eve?

Deceive them. What's he want to do when Christ is born, right? He's, I'm going to kill that child. Chapter 12 of Revelation. That's his aim. He stood before the woman to devour her child.

Oops, he got away. So then he goes to make war on the woman. And when he can't get to the woman because she's protected in this wilderness place, then he goes after her offspring, which are Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus.

[29 : 27] Church. That's his mission. So here's the end of the mission. Okay? He gets one last shot. Full deception.

Not restrained. His full power comes to bear to bring them all against God. So, so how does he do it?

So he gathers them for war, verse 8. This is a defiance. They are gathered. They're surrounding, right? The camp of the saints and the beloved city. They're coming from the four corners.

It's everyone from everywhere. And note, what's the number of them? Verse 8. The end of verse 8, they're numbers like the sand of the sea. Anybody counted the sand of the sea lately?

It's innumerable, right? So he's picturing it's just a mass of people is the picture surrounding we think of Israel, right?

[30 : 32] If we pick in the picture from chapter 12, Armageddon is that great plain between Jerusalem and the sea, you know, between the Mount Zion and Jerusalem and then the plain that goes all the way to Mount Carmel by the sea.

Huge plain. Just flat. Good battlefield. Good battlefield. That's just where they gathered. That's where they come.

But here, this picture now is not just on the west. Now they're all the way around. They surround it. Sea of people. Okay? Who are they targeting?

Verse 9. Who are they coming after? So they marched up over the broad plain of the earth, not just Israel, but the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

So it's described in two ways. They surround the camp of the saints. And both of these are new descriptions in Revelation. We haven't heard of this phrase camp of the saints before. It's a military term, like a military base, military camp.

[31 : 35] Okay? It's just a term for that, a base of operation, something like that. It was the word for the camp of the Israelites in the wilderness. Right? They camped, when they camped, they had an order to it, right?

They had a structure to it. The ark is in the very middle, right? And then they camped around it like that. So it's that kind of camp. The host.

And then it's called a beloved city. We've not seen that phrase before. We've seen city. We see the great city. We've seen a holy city.

We see a new city. We haven't seen a holy city before. It's probably the same as the next chapter in verse 2. Chapter 21-2.

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven prepared as a bride. So it's both, city is both referring to a place and a people.

[32 : 32] It's both a city and a bride. So likely here, when we're talking about they're surrounding the camp of the saints and the beloved city, he's probably not talking geography.

He's probably talking an image of they're surrounding all believers. They're attacking one last attack on all the saints who God considers his beloved city, his camp, because he's in the midst of them. Could be a place, but this makes more sense. It's a people, I think. How does it end? Fire comes down. Fire from heaven comes down.

Again, fire. So what's Satan's destiny? We see that he's, in verse 10, the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were.

Now my translation says were. In the original, there's actually no verb there, just where the beast and the prophet, the implication is, are also cast.

[33 : 43] Could be saying that they were all cast at the same time. Okay. Since this is just a retelling of the same event, doesn't matter, but where they are, what happens to them there, they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

They will be tormented. Now remember that Satan, what kind of being is Satan? Is he a physical being? Spiritual being.

now the beast and the false prophet, remember those are representative of people, but when people have died, they do not any longer have their physical body, so they don't go in a physical sense to the grave, or excuse me, to Hades or to this lake of fire, right?

So it's not a physical, not a physical torment. It's a mental, psychological, spiritual torment. It was described before as this restlessness without relief.

And he adds to it here in verse 10 as he says they're tormented in two different time references here. They're tormented day and night, so that means it's without ceasing, and then forever and ever, that means it's unending.

[35 : 10] Unceasing, unending, no break. So can you imagine worse scenario? That's the scary stuff, right?

So Revelation is not the first place to talk about this whole last battle. John, a writer of Revelation here, is picking up on an earlier prophecy.

Since he entered, he says, right, verse 8, to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, he puts in there Gog and Magog.

And that only comes from one place, Ezekiel 38 and 39, which is Ezekiel's vision, apocalyptic vision of the very end.

If you read through Ezekiel, which is, you know, kind of fun, it kind of follows the same order as Revelation. Talks about God gathering his kingdom and then a final battle and then chapter Ezekiel 40 and on, talks about the whole new temple, God's restoring everything.

[36 : 30] It's a similar picture of the end. And as you read it, you see the repetition of language. You see the echo of the language.

So let me just read an excerpt from this, okay, and read the whole thing. It's not that, it just flows. It gets wordy a little bit, but that's prophets, they get wordy.

Because they're just describing what they're seeing. I'm trying to describe this amazing vision. So here's Ezekiel, let me just pick it up in Ezekiel 38, 14.

I'm trying to pick verses that really kind of, you know, what do you call that? Summarize, something. Okay, capture.

So 38, 14, he says, therefore, son of man, talking to Ezekiel, prophesy and say to Gog, okay, there it is, say to Gog, thus says the Lord God, on that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, excuse me, will you not know it?

[37 : 39] You, Gog, will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army, okay, picture of a battle.

You will come up against my people Israel like a cloud covering the land. Okay, same image as in Revelation.

Numbers like the sand of the sea, like a cloud covering, you know, just everywhere. Okay, same picture. In the latter days, oh, when's this going to happen?

In the latter days, latter, latter days, I will bring you, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute, I will bring you. How they said they will come.

Yeah, who's behind them coming? Well, in Revelation, isn't it the devil? Isn't it the devil that gets everybody to come? Who released the devil?

[38 : 45] Who's really in charge? Who says, I know what you're going to do, not yet, sit down. No, I'm sorry. He's his puppet.

Really? Okay, now. Yeah. So it is Gog and Magog coming, it is the nations of the world, they're inspired by Satan, they're the beast, all of that is all there, but those are the tools of God.

They only come when he says come. He's the ultimate. He is making this happen. read on. So in the latter days, I will bring you against my land.

Why? So that the nations may know me. When through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

That's what I'm going to do. Thus says the Lord God, are you he of whom I spoke in former days? In other words, this isn't the first time God talked about this.

[39 : 52] By my servants, the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them. This is not a new revelation. This has been, they've been telling you all this all along.

Okay? But on that day, on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, that day what, what, what, what?

It's my wrath. My wrath will be aroused in my anger. So, I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations.

Then, they will know that I am the Lord. What's it all about? It's all about him. Why are we here? It's all about him. What's the end all about?

It's all about him. Because we've ignored that because people have, right? I'm going to make everything clear.

[41 : 00] It won't be any doubt. Oh, I wonder what that was about. It's clear. No, no, no. It's all about him. His greatness, his holiness. And then a couple verses more that adds Magog in here in chapter 39, 6, and 7.

He says, I will send fire on Magog. Well, that's the same way that Revelation 20 ends. Fire comes and they are consumed. I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands.

Wait a minute, I thought Magog was from the north. Now we're including the coastlands. And they shall know that I am the Lord. And my holy name will be known in the midst of my people Israel.

And I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore.

And the nations shall know that I am Yahweh. I am, I am, I am. The holy one of Israel.

God. So he's describing the last battle. Gog is this name that leads the great army against Israel.

They are coming, yet God says, reveals, no, actually I'm bringing them, I'm bringing this about.

[42 : 17] Why? To vindicate his holiness, to show his greatness to the nations as well as to his people. To vindicate his holiness so that all will know that I am, the I am.

So we see this final war. So John is, I think, helping us understand what Ezekiel was describing. Because now he's filling out, no, it's not just from the north, they're from the four corners, John says. Right? They're a mighty host, but John says they're like the sand of the sea. They're such a mighty host. Okay? And I think he's telling us who this mysterious Gog and Magog are.

They're not Russia, by the way. They're not China. They're from the four corners of the world.

They're everyone opposed to God.

So that's the final battle. Now we see the final judgment, verse 11 to 15. The final judgment summarized that as all the dead are judged by, well, I say two books, but it's at least two books.

[43 : 30] It might be more. But two kinds of books, let's just say that. All the dead are judged by two kinds of books.

As a result, some go to a second death. Okay? That's the summary of what's going on. We have here, he sees a judge, he describes a judgment, and then at the very end of 15 we have certain ones who escape the judgment, the justified, in spite of their deeds.

So the judge, he describes verse 11, he says he sees a great white throne, great white representing that holy pure representation, right?

Everything in heaven is described in white. The saints are clothed in white. The 24 elders are in white. Everything's white because it's that picture of purity, that picture of holiness.

And this throne in heaven, he just says the one who's seated on it. We saw the throne before. Well, we were told about this throne the first time back in chapter 4.

[44 : 37] Remember, he goes into heaven, he sees first and foremost, he sees the throne. In fact, he describes everything in relation to the throne. He talks about here's the throne, here's what it looked like.

Before the throne, this. Around the throne, this. And then from the throne is this. But everything is in relation to the throne. So in other words, what matters?

The throne. That's central. It's all about him. Everything gets their definition in relation to him. And so here again, he's the focus.

And in chapter 4, what did they say? When the 24 elders, he described, they bow down, they cast their crowns, right? And they bow down and the seraphim around him start crying out repeatedly, right?

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty. And then the 24 elders cast down their thrones and they say, worthy, worthy of worship.

[45 : 42] Why? Because he's the creator. creator. Haven't even talked about salvation yet. He's the creator. Because he's the creator, he is worthy of all worship.

If he's not your Lord and savior, he's still your creator. And by that fact alone, he is worthy of all your worship. That's what he's saying.

And we have this interesting phrase here in verse 11. From his presence, earth and sky fled away. That's kind of odd. No place was found.

Earth and sky fled away. Are they scared? They're personified there. Earth and sky fled away. Well, that's probably referring back to, you know, we had the signs in the seal six, right, where the sky vanishes and the mountains flee away.

It's probably, again, just a short, quick reference to, you know, that first creation, at this point, it's over. This is now the judgment. All the first stuff, it's gone. All that's gone.

[46 : 46] No more preview, this is it. Sky's gone. Don't need the sky anymore. Earth, gone. There'll be a new one, but that first one's gone. All the things about the first one are gone.

Probably what it's referring to. So what happens at the judgment? Verse 12. So they're judged. All the dead are gathered, great and small, so talking about all of them, they're standing before the throne.

So the dead, do they have bodies? They're standing. Remember earlier, it talked about the first resurrection was the saints, right, who reigned with Christ.

That's the first resurrection. And it said, it's not until after the thousand years that the rest of the dead will be raised, will be the second resurrection. So by implication from the text, yes, they're raised.

Apparently they have some kind of body. Not like the saints will have, but something. Their souls are in something, some kind of container, they're standing.

[47 : 56] Everyone's before Christ. before the throne. Two books now are described. Actually, technically more than that, because he says books were opened, so more than one.

And then he says, and then there's another book, so that's at least three. And the books, we don't know how many of the books, because the first set of books are most likely where the deeds are recorded.

Lots and lots of deeds. Lots and lots of deeds. All the deeds, good and bad. And then there's another book, that's the book of life, that's, it has names in it.

Right? So the two kinds of books are, they were told, verse 13, and then kind of going back and saying, where'd all the dead come from? Well, the sea gave up the dead who were in it, death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged.

Who? The dead were judged, each one of them according to what they had done. Why does it say the sea gave up the dead and death?

[49 : 06] How does death give up the dead? Death is just an experience. Death is not a place. Hades is a place where the dead bodies go, right? The grave.

Generally, Hades means grave. Sometimes it has some symbolic meaning to it like, remember Jesus told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and Lazarus goes to, you know, he goes to Abraham's bosom, and across the chasm is Hades, where the rich man now is experiencing agony, right?

Wanting to just have Lazarus just give me a drop of water to ease my pain, and he calls that Hades, so place where the dead, kind of the holding place of the dead, unrighteous dead.

Not a lot of theology we can build on that, we just have that reference. So death, how does death, you know, it's people and beings that are thrown in the lake of fire.

How does death, which is just a description of our experience, how does that get thrown in? And then Hades, which was the previous holding place, that gets thrown in.

[50 : 16] Are they experiencing, no, it's just first heaven, first earth, they're passing away. So the first experience of death, that's now gone. That's going to be replaced by a second death experience.

First holding place of the dead is now gone. Now there will be another place called the lake of fire. Okay, I think he's just saying there's a change.

There's a change. And by mentioning the sea, why the sea? Well, you've got to understand, first century, people were particular about burial.

It was very, very important, especially to the Jews, to bury soon. And it must be dust to dust. So if you die in the ocean, if you die in the sea, what happens?

what about them? They're not properly buried. They're not dust. And I think perhaps what's being described here is, yeah, if you die in the sea, you don't escape this judgment.

[51 : 36] Everyone, it comes, whether you're in the sea, whether you're in the ground, wherever you are, you are gathered for this judgment. Nobody escapes this judgment. Everyone who has died comes to stand before the throne.

And they're judged by what is written in the books. And in some of those books, it is according to what you have done. Now, anyone, how's anyone going to do by that book?

According to what you have done. You're going to stand before the Lord, okay? And it's going to be all there. here. Oh, here's Bill. Oh, right?

Oh, oh, oh, he was abiding in the Lord there. Look at that. Oh, look at that. I hope that survives the fire. But here and here.

I mean, what, how are we going to do? Well, if we're judged by that alone, we're toast. we are toast. We cannot.

[52 : 47] The scriptures are clear. No one is righteous. None. Not our very best examples. Abraham. A lot of faith, but a lot of mistakes.

Moses. Oh, he's a killer. Noah. No, he's drunk. Who else we got? Joseph. He holds grudges a long time.

Daniel. Yeah, you make a pretty good case for Daniel, right? But, according to his words, he's as bad as everybody else.

Who you got? David. David. I mean, he's the, he's the, yeah, no, we, man, that was our, that was probably our best shot.

God. No, we haven't got a chance. It's not a scale. It's not a curve.

[53 : 53] You know, we get there and say, oh, I thought you're going to grave on a curve, Lord. No, no, this is justice. We don't play with the law.

We don't twist the law. It's just the law. So, we don't have a chance. Our God is holy and righteous and just.

He is also merciful and compassionate and loving and kind and forgiving. How do you get those to come together?

Because how can he do both? Well, then it talks about verse 15, right? Here's the final big issue. If anyone's name, this is the real issue, if anyone's name is not found written in the book of life, he's thrown into the lake of fire.

So, there's one exception. There's one book that's decisive. The one book that spares some.

[55 : 04] It's called the book of life. And it's the one that has names written in it. Why does that book spare us?

Book of life. Well, if you remember back in chapter 13, this book of life is also called the book of the lamb who was slain. Oh, that kind of book.

A book that's connected to the lamb who was slain. it's connected to my Lord Jesus. It's connected to him who shed his blood for me, who paid for my, all the book, all those list of deeds that are going to be burned in the fire.

He already paid for that. He canceled out on the, he canceled out my record of debt. how do I get in that book?

How do I get in that book? Is your name written in that book? How do you know? Here?

[56 : 16] Is it because something you did? Well, you did do stuff though. Yeah. I mean, we do. We have to respond. We have to repent, right?

We have to believe. We have to confess. We have to do, you know, all that stuff that goes with that faith thing. And when we first are saved, we think, we did that. I figured it out.

Bless my soul. And with Christians, we'll figure out, oh, wait a minute. It says all this stuff about what he was already doing. He's drawing me. Okay, okay, it's all him.

This is the crucial issue is your name in the book. That's the only escape clause, shall we say?

It's the only loophole, but it's not a loophole. It's not about injustice because it is justice because it was paid. It was paid.

[57 : 19] Therefore, it is just for God to forgive us. That's why 1 John 1 9 says, if we confess our sins, if we agree with him, yes, I'm a sinner.

He is faithful and what? Just. It is right for him to forgive us. Not because we deserve it, but because it was paid.

Let me check the document here. Yeah, you're good. Is that what it's going to be like? Is it going to be the books are open, right? And, you know, Peter's going to be reading from them.

Okay, here's Bill. Oh, man. Boy, this guy. Hey, remember yours, Peter. Yeah, okay. Yeah, going through. I don't know who's reading the book.

But when it comes to the end, it's like, okay, so according to his deeds, he's toast. I guess check Jesus. Jesus, what do you got in your book? See, William Stoney.

[58 : 26] Story, is that with an E or what? Oh, he's good. It's like that.

He's forgiven. He's forgiven. He belongs. He's one of mine. Now, I'm playing because he's not going to have to, gee, let me see you.

Do I remember that one? He's going to go, I got him. Daddy, he's good. Of course, daddy already knew. Daddy knew too.

The Holy Spirit's going, yeah, dude, I'm the one that made it happen there. I don't know how they talk. Forgive me if that was disrespectful.

I'm just trying to make it alive. I think weird like that. Jesus sitting next to Peter, what's he doing? Hey, watch what I do with Lance here. Watch this one.

[59 : 25] He's going to be tested, but he's going to love me afterwards. I don't know if that's what they talk like. That's what I think about. So what difference does all this make?

Does this make any difference? this is the ultimate, right? This is the ultimate issue. This is really in the sense of all things that matter, the only thing that matters.

Lots of things matter. Lots of things are important. This is the issue. So let's look at it this way.

Let me kind of put it into Jeremiah's language, I think, which is very, very concise and helpful.

There's two kinds of people. There's two kinds of trust. So Jeremiah says, Jeremiah 17, 5, he says, Thus says the Lord, Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.

He, let me give you a word picture for him. He's like a shrub in the desert. He shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness in an uninhabited salt land.

[60 : 51] All right, that doesn't sound real promising. On the other hand, blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.

Is there a difference? Trusting in the Lord, that's how I'm walking. Whose trust is the Lord, that's more of a, he's my treasure.

He's my security. He's my everything. That's my, he's my trust. I'm trusting, that's day to day.

See the difference? He, what's he like? He's like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream and does not fear when the heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and it's not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.

Why? Because it's connected to the source of the water. right? If you abide in me as the branch abides in the vine, right?

[62 : 05] That's it. It's not me producing fruit, it's if I'm connected to him, I'll be okay. He'll take, he'll flow that fruit through.

Right? Then Jeremiah says this, okay, here's the thought part. Okay, which one am I? Am I trusting the Lord, trusting the Lord? Okay, how do I know for sure? Here's what Jeremiah says next.

The heart. Oh, he's got a good heart, right? Oh, my heart's good. I love the Lord with all my, wait a minute.

What's he say about the heart? The heart is deceitful. The heart's a liar. Deceitful, that's kind of like the devil.

Hmm. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Come on, Jeremiah, be a little more kind. Haven't you seen people with a good heart? I know what you mean, right?

[63 : 13] We know what we mean by that. Here's Jeremiah, no, the heart's deceitful above all things, desperately sick. Who can understand it? In other words, can I lean on my heart?

Can I trust my heart? What do I do? Well, the Lord says, I, the Lord, search the heart. Okay.

And I test the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds. I, the Lord, I'm not fooled by the heart.

I'm not fooled by the mind. So, what does that mean? How do I know if I'm the one trusting in myself or trusting in God?

How do I know if I'm the one whose heart has left the Lord or the one whose heart is abandoned to the Lord? How do I know? Right?

[64 : 15] Right? If my heart is turned from, if I'm the one who trusts in myself, I'm, I'm the one who's turned my heart away from God.

Look at that life. I'm like a shrub in the desert. My life's dry. My life is parched. My life is no life. I'm without life.

If I'm trusting in the Lord, then I'm like the tree planted by water. I will experience drought. I will experience hard time, but I can get, I'm not afraid of it because I'm still connected.

Right? I'm not dry in the desert. Even if I'm in the desert, I'm not dried out. I'm not a shrub. I'm still a tree that's bearing fruit. How? Because I, because, because I've got the water source.

I don't know. How do I know if I'm trusting in the Lord and not myself? Well, where's your fruit come from? What's your fruit look like?

[65 : 17] Is it by my strength? Or is it because I've surrendered and said, okay, I can't Lord, or I'll mess it up Lord.

Right? So, so, so I'm leaning on you. I'm looking to you. You give me the strength. You should, how do I love this person? How do I bear with this time?

I know what I want to do. Okay, that's my heart. My soul. So, Lord, okay, Lord. You know what I want to do. Strengthen me.

I'm waiting for you. I'm leaning on you. That's the difference. And the difference is what?

Relationship. Not duty. What do I got to do? I'm leaning on my strength.

What do I got to do? If it's about that, realize, okay, I'm talking to my Jesus. The heart is deceitful.

[66 : 22] I cannot trust my heart. My heart will tell me I'm okay. Hey, I believe in God. I've prayed the prayer. I'm good. Not as bad as other people. I'm good. That's what my heart will say.

Because my heart wants to pat me on the back. Right? My heart wants to make it look good for me. So, I can't trust my heart until the Lord looks at my heart.

Okay? So, what would you say about your heart? More importantly, what would God say about your heart?

Would he point out where your treasure is? Where your security is? Where your hopes are? Where your dreams are? Would he say, you're good.

I know I'm your, I know I'm your trust. I know I'm your, I know you have some, you know, hard times, but I know at the end of the day, I'm really what you're banking on.

[67 : 22] I'm your hope. So, there is a certain promise from God. There is a day set where all will give an account. Every person must face God.

And that is a scary, scary day if you do not know him. You know the next chapter talks about how he will wipe every tear from our eyes? It might be that kind of day too, because when we see the book open, we're going, oh, don't, don't show, don't show.

Right? Nothing's hidden. But there'll be some joyous moments in that too, I believe.

Don't you? I mean, there's the day you, you came to him. There's the other day that you fell down and you repented to him again and again. And he heard you.

There's those other days where the Spirit has grabbed you and pulled you and you followed that, right? There's, those are going to be good days. Those are going to be in the, I don't know if there's two books, bad, you know, let's just, I don't know what it looks like, but it's all there.

[68 : 41] And the books really, I don't think the books are, literal books, it's probably just a picture that God never forgets anything. He will remember everything.

Most importantly, if my name's there. That's what counts. Do you know your name is written in the book? If it's yes, great.

Are you sure? Are you sure? Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this book, this, this passage that we need to hear.

You've put it down there for us to hear. It's not something we really want to read before we go to bed. But it's, it's important and it's ultimate and it is something you have put down for us to hear.

And so, Father, help us to hear it rightly. Help us to hear it in the spirit of, okay, I know my heart's deceitful. And I know I don't deserve, Lord, I don't deserve.

[69 : 57] And so, give us assurance of our name in the book or, Father, call us to account so that we can make sure.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.