

**Revelation**  
**The Lamb of God: On His Throne and Among His People**  
*Judgment*  
**Revelation 20:11-15**  
**Study Notes**

**Home Group Questions**

- Read Revelation 20:11-15
- Is there one judgment at the end of time, or two?
  - What do you know about the judgment seat of Christ and the great white throne judgments?
  - Discuss this truth – for believers, judgment was carried out at Calvary, but for unbelievers, judgment will be based on works.
- Read the verses below about crowns that believers can attain to offer to Jesus. Apply these verses to everyday life, and do not only consider our actions, but attitudes, thoughts, motives, words, responses/reactions, etc.

**Quotes and Thoughts from the Sermon**

There is an excerpt from the sermon at the bottom of this study that states my position on the millennium.

The gospel is hiding in plain sight in the NT. Only those whose eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit will see and believe.

There are two judgments at the end – one for believers (the judgment seat of Christ) and one for unbelievers (the great white throne judgment). Do these occur at the same time at Jesus' Second Coming or are they staggered according to a timeline that includes a seven-year tribulation and a literal 1,000-year millennial rule of Jesus? Good question! Without weighing in on the timeline (here), here are the two judgments:

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

- Scripture – 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12
- For believers only

- Not a judgment for sin – that was accomplished at Calvary
- This judgment is for encouragement and rewards – in the NT, five crowns are promised to believers who persevere in the faith, who suffer persecution, who anticipate Jesus’ return, etc. (see the section below)
- Any crowns that are attained in this life will be cast at the Lord’s feet, following the pattern of Revelation 4:10
- Even though there is no judgment for sin, we will give an account of how we lived our lives. Our actions, our motives, our character, our love for Jesus and for others, etc. will be considered. This accountability should motivate us to live for Jesus.
- It is possible, according to 1 John 2:28, that we could find ourselves ashamed before Jesus, but this might be more of a “I wish I had done more” attitude than hiding our faces in shame. Or it could be that “confidence” and “shame” will be the responses of believers and unbelievers at the Second Coming. Even so, much is said in Scripture about the believer’s accountability to Jesus for how we have lived.
- Do all believers hear, “Well done good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Master?” I think so, but I am not sure.
- There is no indication that there will be classes of saints in heaven – Jesus will be our focus, and we will rejoice over him for all eternity!

### **Heavenly Crowns for Those Who Live for Jesus**

1. **The crown of life** – for those who endure suffering and those who are martyred
  - **James 1:12** Blessed is the man who remains **steadfast under trial**, for when he has stood the test he will receive **the crown of life**, which God has promised to **those who love him**.
  - **Revelation 2:20** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.**
  
2. **The crown of righteousness**
  - **2 Timothy 4:6** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge,

will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also **to all who have loved his appearing.**

### 3. The crown of glory

- **1 Peter 5:1** So I exhort the **elders** among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: **2** shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; **3** not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the chief Shepherd appears, **you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

### 4. The crown of rejoicing (or boasting)

- **1 Thessalonians 2:19** For what is **our hope or joy or crown of boasting** before our Lord Jesus at his coming? **Is it not you? 20 For you are our glory and joy.**

### 5. The victor's imperishable crown

- **1 Corinthians 9:24** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? **So run that you may obtain it. 25** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. **They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.**

Question: are non-martyrs and non-elders excluded from some of these crowns? Probably not. For starters, it is likely that all who endure faithfully or serve faithfully will receive a crown as if they are a martyr or an elder. It is also highly likely that the crowns that are mentioned in the NT do not comprise an exclusive list. Like the spiritual gifts, it could be that not all crowns are listed.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

**Romans 14:10** Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; **11** for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,

and every tongue shall confess to God.”

12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15** – note, this seems to be far more directed to churches than to individuals. The issue addressed was the preaching of the gospel by the churches more than individuals building a case (with gold, silver, precious stones) to endure Jesus’ fiery eyes at the judgment seat of Christ. Still, the other interpretation could be correct.

**1 Corinthians 3:10** According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**Hebrews 10:17** then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

**1 John 2:28** And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

<https://shepherds.edu/the-judgment-seat-of-christ/>

### **The Great White Throne Judgment**

- Only for unbelievers
- God sits on the throne, but John 5:22-23 indicates that the Father gives Jesus the right to execute the judgment.
- Since the throne of God and the throne of Jesus are one (Revelation 22:3), either way you look at it, our God is doing the judging.

- The throne is massive, and it is white, representing purity and absolute authority. It recalls Daniel 7:9-10.
- Since unbelievers refused to accept Jesus' sacrifice for their sins, they will be judged by their works.
- The books will be opened before a holy and righteous God, and it will be all bad news for those who are judged at the great white throne.
- All, at this judgment, will be condemned and thrown into the lake of fire for eternal punishment.

**John 5:22** For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

**Revelation 22:3** No longer will there be anything accursed, but **the throne of God and of the Lamb** will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

**Daniel 7:9** “As I looked,

thrones were placed,  
 and the Ancient of Days took his seat;  
 his clothing was white as snow,  
 and the hair of his head like pure wool;  
 his throne was fiery flames;  
 its wheels were burning fire.  
 10 A stream of fire issued  
 and came out from before him;  
 a thousand thousands served him,  
 and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;  
 the court sat in judgment,  
 and the books were opened.

<https://www.samstorms.org/enjoying-god-blog/post/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-great-white-throne-judgment>

### **Scripture Associated with the Message**

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**John 11:25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Hebrews 9:27** . . . it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

**John 5:25** “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for **an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.**

**From the sermon:** Throughout this study, I have been asked many times where I lean in my understanding of how Revelation should be interpreted, and time and again I have said that I don’t know. Now at the end of the chapter that is the most debated text in Revelation, I will tell you what seems to be the best interpretation to me. I hope you know that this understanding comes, not only from our time in Revelation, but also from our time in Daniel and in the eschatological excurses we have covered, as well, especially in the first part of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24. In just a few minutes we will read all of Matthew 25 with little comment because none will be needed once the context is set.

But first, where do I stand? I have been a dispensational premillennialist almost all my Christian life, but now I am more – confused than ever! Not really – I knew a lot already, but I have learned so much in these last two years. I don’t think this will surprise you, but I would have to say that I now lean toward an amillennial position. There are difficult questions for every position, and perhaps some of the key questions about an amillennial view are more difficult than the key questions of a dispensational view, but on balance, it seems to me that Scripture fits better if Revelation is more symbolic. I cannot tell you how happy I am if you want to talk with me about the tribulation or about something that is happening in the world today as part of your/our understanding of eschatology.

Maybe the best way to think about all the views is with an analogy that Barbara and Garry Stephens shared last week. For lunch, Garry and Barbara enjoyed roasted pastor – I mean, they discussed the sermon for a long time, talking about the different views of the millennium. Barbara said, “We thought that maybe when we get to heaven, it will be like a giant puzzle with a billion pieces, and a piece will be brought in and then we will say, “Ohhhh! I see how that Scripture fits, now!” This could be the perfect analogy! We will talk about this a lot more in September, but it seems to me that while there is not a lot of teaching in Scripture about how life will be in the new heavens and new earth, even so, we are invited to speculate, so long as we distinguish between Scripture and speculation. Here’s what we know, now – Jesus is coming again; we hope it’s soon; we better be ready. Amen!