

12. JUDGMENT DAY

The judge in Rev 20:11-15 is not named, but 'he who is seated on the throne' is universally thought of as God. However, we wouldn't be wrong if we interpreted the judge as God the Son, Jesus the Messiah. Jesus made it clear that the Father judges no one but has entrusted all judgment to the Son (Jn 5:22).

The context is the very end of this world. John said that the Earth and sky will flee from God's presence and no place will be found for them (Rev 20:11). That sounds like the end of the physical creation, the world, and may be the entire universe (cf. Heb 12:26-27). When the judgment is over, death and Hades, and anyone whose name is not found in the Book of Life, will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is a metaphor for hell.

The Last Judgment is for the damned. The righteous are judged immediately after the resurrection and reign with the Messiah for a 1000 years. Millennial converts, including Israel, will be resurrected, assessed, and rewarded according to service for the Lord. There is no condemnation for those who are in union with the Messiah Jesus (Rom 8:1).

The judgment seat of Christ (1 Co 3:13, 2 Co 5:10) is separate from the Last Judgment and is for all believers and is compared to passing through a fire. The true value of all their attitudes and deeds will be made manifest, and individuals will be rewarded accordingly. There is no punishment for sin; the blood of Christ covers that. Rewards may be withheld; some suffer loss because it's a divine assessment of their worth. This judgment occurs at the start of the millennium so that the saints can enjoy their rewards during that time.

The judgment of the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:36-51), where the righteous and wicked are all judged at the same time, is a parable, as are the other passages in that chapter. The details should not be taken too literally, but the judgment is premillennial because the righteous are invited to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. The focus of judgment is on people's attitude

toward the Messiah's brethren. What they did during their lifetimes to help their fellow Christians, especially during the Great Tribulation, will test the genuineness of their faith.