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Revelation Now

The Final Judgment

Revelation 20

Our previous study covered chapters 17-19 of the book of Revelation, focussing on the theme of God's judgment against Evil. Chapter 20 brings this topic to a climax. At the end of chapter 19 the two beasts described in Revelation 13 (representing the Evil Empire and its False Prophet) were thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. At the end of Revelation 20, Satan himself ends up in the same place.

Read Revelation 20

The aim of this study is to review the what the Bible *actually* says about The Final Judgment, and then consider our response to this sobering topic.

1. See if your group can draw a timeline and place the following events from chapter 20 in some kind of order:
 - The beginning of a period of 1,000 years
 - The end of a period of 1,000 years
 - The Dragon, Satan, is bound such that he cannot deceive the nations (v2-3)
 - Satan is set free for a short period of time to deceive the nations (v3, v7ff)
 - The souls of the martyrs come to life and reign with Christ for a period of 1,000 years (v4-5)
 - The first resurrection (v5)
 - The second resurrection, i.e. the general resurrection (v13)

- The deceived are gathered together with Satan as vast army to make war on God's people (v7-9)
- The great war is ended almost before it even begins (v9)
- Satan is thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur (v10)
- All people, from all times, come before God for Judgment (v11-15).
- The second death (v6, 14)

Note that this passage has no reference at all to a 'rapture' of Christians suddenly taken away from the earth, leaving cars to crash and the world to rot!

2. According to verses 11-15, there appear to be two books that form the basis for judgment at the resurrection of all the dead: (i) the Book of Life, and (ii) the book recording whatever a person has done. There are varying views as to how these two books work with God's judgment. One thing that is clear is that those whose names are not written in the Book of Life are thrown into the lake of fire with Satan and his two beasts (v15, see Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8. See also Ps 69:28 and Phil 4:3).

Where this issue gets tricky is the 'book of works'-- specifically, *whose* works are recorded?

Is it everyone's or just those whose names are written in the Book of Life? At very least we as Christians need to be aware that our faith must produce actions (see James 2:14-26, 1 Cor 3:10-15).

How do you ensure that your faith produces actions-- fruit that will last?

3. As this passage leads us to ponder the future certainty of salvation, what are some of the things that you are prompted to do? How important are these things?