

The End of the World ~ Part 2

Revelation 20:11-15

The End Times

In my last post, we began to explore **Revelation 20:11-15 ~ The End of the World ~ Part 1**. In this post, we conclude our exploration of Chapter 20.

"¹¹ Next I saw a great white throne and the One sitting on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened; and another book was opened, the Book of Life; and the dead were judged from what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead in it; and Death and Sh'ol gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to what he had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Sh'ol were hurled into the lake of fire. This is the second death — the lake of fire. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was hurled into the lake of fire. ~ Revelation 20:11-15 (CJB)

As I said previously, this passage contains one of the Bible's most personal messages. We ought to read it often. It will help us to be ready to answer the roll call. There is so much packed into these five verses that to adequately do them justice; I decided to split this post into two parts. We will concentrate on verses 13 to 15 in this post.

The sea gave up the dead in it; and Death and Sh'ol gave up the dead in them; and they were judged, each according to what he had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Sh'ol were hurled into the lake of fire. This is the second death — the lake of fire. All the dead who have not participated in the first resurrection are now resurrected and judged. There is no longer any need for **Sh'ol**, where the bodies are held for judgment since this *is* the judgment. Nor is there a need for **death**, which is the punishment for sin, since sin is now being banished from the universe, as foretold by **Sha'ul** at 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. Likewise **the sea**, a biblical metaphor for death, destruction and turmoil (see Isaiah 57:20, Ezekiel 28:8, Psalm 107:25-28), harboring fearsome, Satanic creatures such as Leviathan (Isaiah 27:1, Psalm 104:27, Job 40:25-41:26(41:1-34)) and the beast of 12:18-13:8 above, releases its dead for judgment, so that, having served its purpose, it too disappears (Revelation 21:1).

Anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life was hurled into the lake of fire. This is the event foretold by the parable of the sheep and the goats in Mt 25:31-46:

"Then he will also speak to those on his left, saying, 'Get away from me, you who are cursed! Go off into the fire prepared for the Adversary and his angels!... They will go off to eternal punishment, but those who have done what God wants will go to eternal life.'" (Mt 25:41, 46)

The **eternal life** spoken of is in Revelation 22:1-22:5.

The lake of fire may mean the wicked will experience the torment of burning and stench physically forever, or it may be a metaphor for the eternal pain of knowing that one is separated from the God for eternity.

This is **the** climactic moment for the wicked. It is not God who has determined their fate, but themselves, by their deeds that fall short of God's holiness, and by their lack of trusting Him for salvation through **Yeshua HaMessiah**. ***"The Lord... is patient with you; for it is not his purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins"*** (2 Kefa 3:9). Compare Romans 2:1-8, especially vv. 5b-6: ***"... by your unrepentant heart you are storing up anger for yourself on the Day of Anger when God's righteous judgment will be revealed; for he will pay back each one according to his deeds,"*** as taught in Psalm 62:13(12) and Proverbs 24:12. God desires that the wicked should turn from his evil ways.

David Stern writes: ¹

"The Judaism of today tends to finesse or minimize the punishment to be meted out to the wicked. Orthodox Judaism speaks of a probationary period (like the Roman Catholic purgatory) of not more than

¹ Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.

eleven months for members of the House of Israel. In this sense, Judaism does not take sin seriously, in terms of its consequences to the individual sinner."

To those who cannot relate to verses 11-15 because they find the doctrine of eternal punishment for the wicked too fearsome, or because they cannot accept that God would be *"so mean—it's against his loving nature,"* the **Tanakh** replies, **"The fear of Adonai is the beginning of wisdom"** (Psalm 111:10). Justice and mercy, holiness and love are qualities which God balances in His way, which may not be the way we would choose.

***"My thoughts are not your thoughts, says Adonai,
and my ways are not your ways.
As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)***

***"There is a way which seems right to a man,
but at its end are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12).***

Special Comparative Notes on Chapter 20:13-15 ²

Premillennialists believe that those who have been previously buried or fed to the fishes at sea will not be able to escape this **final judgment** (cf. Isaiah 26:21). **Death and Sh'ol** were revealed in the fourth seal. Here they are personified as demonic powers that had previously held the dead captive but now must surrender their prey.

Amillennialists believe with the inauguration of the new heavens and the new earth in Chapter 21 and 22; there is no more need for **Death and Sh'ol**. All those who persisted in the path of death will attain the thing they all were inadvertently pursuing: **the second death**.

Postmillennialists believe both the wicked and the redeemed will be included in the final judgment. HaSatan and his confederates, **Death and Sh'ol** will be forever consigned to the lake of fire, along with **anyone whose name was not found written in the Book of Life**. All of Yeshua's and our enemies will be destroyed never to rise again.

In my next post, we'll examine a **Summary of Chapter 20** and an introduction to the last two chapters of the **Revelation of Yeshua ~ a New Heaven and a New Earth**.

² Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.