

# KING OF THE JUNGLE

## UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

### REVELATION 20:1-15

One of my favorite movies is “[The Swiss Family Robinson.](#)” It was released by Disney Pictures in 1960.

The movie starred John Mills and Dorothy McGuire. And was shot on the Caribbean island of Tobago.

The story is about a family in route to New Guinea.

After a storm at sea and a tangle with some pirates they end up shipwrecked on a South Seas island.

With little hope of rescue the family makes the most of their situation, and creates a tropical paradise. They build an elaborate treehouse using parts of the ship’s main cabin. They invent a system for running water, and add other conveniences to their new home.

In the end they live happily ever after.

As a kid I would watch [The Swiss Family Robinson](#); then spend hours imagining myself marooned on an exotic island... *Swims in the lagoon. Life in a tree hut.*

It all seemed so fun - an easy-going, carefree kind of life - in a pristine, unspoiled, garden Shangri-La.

Even as an adult it doesn't sound too bad... *No more 8 to 5s - no more fighting traffic - no more bills and bosses - no more car repairs and house notes - no more income tax and corrupt politicians - no more deadbolts and burglar alarms - no more war and crime.*

I believe movies like [The Swiss Family Robinson](#) play on a deep-down longing in every human heart...

CS Lewis once observed, [“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is I was made for another world.”](#)

Here's a truth: **God made you and I for the garden.**

Adam and Eve began life in a garden paradise.

Sin got them evicted, but ever since humans have wanted to return. Whether we realize it or not, we long for the garden, and all we do is an attempt to get back.

Today, it's a jungle out there! Our world is out-of-order. It's overgrown, and chaotic, and out-of-hand.

But when the King of the Jungle takes possession, He'll tame the jungle and restore it to a garden.

One day yet future, God will fulfill our human longing, and return us to the garden from which we fell.

This Earth is due for *an extreme makeover*. God will repair the damage caused by sin and its judgment, and restore the fallen planet to the paradise He intended.

And God begins by ridding us of our arch-nemesis...

John writes in chapter 20, “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.”

At the end of chapter 19 John is near Jerusalem. He provides us play-by-play of the mother of all battles.

The nations rally to Armageddon to fight against the Christ. But Jesus returns despite their opposition. *With His breath and His brightness* He kills all His enemies.

But there were leaders who orchestrated this revolt.

The Antichrist and the False Prophet were chief culprits. They ordered the execution of everyone who worshipped Jesus and refused their mark. Chapter 19 recounts their capture and disposal in the lake of fire...

But the real ringleader - the mastermind behind the rebellion - is the devil himself... Now in chapter 20 God sends an angel *with a chain* to incarcerate the devil.

This is interesting, the devil's two stooges - the Beast and the False Prophet - receive eternal torture. They're “*cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*”

It's like being arrested, then sent straight to the federal penitentiary. Usually you're held in the local jail until you're arraigned, or processed. But these guy go straight to hell - “do not pass go, do not collect \$200.”

The Devil though gets held over in *“the bottomless pit.”* This is the temporary place of punishment. *If the lake of fire is the super-max prison, the bottomless pit is the county jail...* It’s still hot as hell, and has hell’s characteristics, but it’s one step short of the lake of fire.

This is where unbelievers are today. They’re jailed in the bottomless pit. And here, Satan gets chained up.

At the end of verse 3, John explains why, *“But after these things he must be released for a little while.”*

Apparently, God isn’t through with Satan. He still has a use for him. Verse 8 will explain his final purpose.

But this brings up an interesting sidebar...

Satan’s existence - even his mischief - has always been at God’s discretion. Not that God approves of the Devil’s specific acts. He doesn’t. The evil he authors and the pain Satan causes - grieves God’s heart.

Nevertheless, God allows Satan some latitude.

God uses trials and temptation to strengthen our faith, and neither has any teeth without a Tempter. At the end of the age, Satan *“must be released for a little while...”* - for the same reason he wreaks havoc today.

Notice too, the duration of Satan’s incarceration - *“a thousand years.”* In Latin, it’s the term, *“Millenium.”*

This is why you’ll hear terms like *“The Millennial Reign of Christ,”* or *“Millennial Kingdom,”* or just *“Millenium.”*

The first word in verse 1 implies that the last days events recorded in Chapters 19-20 are chronological.

In Revelation 19 Jesus returns to destroy the armies who oppose Him. Chapter 20:1 follows, *“Then” - here’s what comes next...* Satan is chained and Jesus reigns.

Both are sustained for a thousand years. After Jesus’ second coming, He’ll set up His Kingdom on Earth.

And Jesus won’t just rule by Himself... John writes in verse 4, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.”* The army that rode with Jesus from Heaven now helps Him rule on Earth.

That includes you and me - the Church - but not just the Church... *“Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.”* Believers martyred in the Tribulation will also now serve in Jesus’ administration.

They were mocked and martyred for Jesus’ sake. Now they’ll sit on thrones and help Him rule the world.

Verse 4, *“And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”* The first message Jesus preached was *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Jesus came to establish God’s Kingdom on Earth.

Yet in His day, and even today, you’d be hard-pressed to point to God’s Kingdom on a map. It has no borders, or buildings, or budgets. It’s invisible, spiritual. His Kingdom is known only in the hearts of believers.

In Luke 17:20 Jesus said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation (or with fanfare or outward demonstration); nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Yet still the OT is packed with prophecies of a coming King... Who’ll sit on an earthly throne - Who’ll rule visibly and tangibly - over a geographic kingdom.

2 Samuel 7 predicts that a descendant of David will sit on the throne of Israel and rule the world forever.

This is the prophecy the angel quoted to Mary when she discovered that she was with Child. “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

The OT predicts that God will establish a physical, political Kingdom on planet Earth. His throne will be in Jerusalem. All the world will come and bow before Him.

He’ll rule with a rod of iron. Jesus will be the police.

And the fulfillment of these promises occurs here in Revelation 19-20. In His model prayer Jesus told us to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.” Now in Revelation 20 at Jesus’ second coming this prayer is finally and fully answered.

Just a few weeks ago our President was inaugurated for a second term on the steps of our nation’s capitol.

Imagine a similar scene on Jerusalem's Temple Mount. Our Lord Jesus addressing throngs of people from all over the planet, articulating the goals of His new administration. His first term He reigned spiritually.

In His second term He'll rule legally and corporally.

On the cross Jesus redeemed or purchased planet Earth. When He returns He'll take possession. One day soon our world will be **under new management**.

Revelation 20 gives us only the duration of Jesus' Kingdom - *"a thousand years."* But there are a host of OT prophecies that provide us many other details...

*We're told of the quality of life, changes in the earth's ecosystem - even the lifestyle of folks in the Kingdom!*

Remember one of the plagues in the Tribulation is the poisoning of the waters. Ezekiel 47:8-9 describe how the Earth's waters will be healed and rejuvenated.

Isaiah 30:23-26 tells us there'll be longer periods of sunshine to revitalize the planet's vegetation. Under Jesus' administration the Earth will be restored to the garden paradise it once was. We'll live in **"Eden again."**

Isaiah 11 tells us how God's Kingdom will even impact the animal kingdom. He'll resolve the hostility between animals - even between man and animals.

Verse 6 tells us, **"The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb..."** Natural born predators will no longer exist.

God will alter the food chain. Animals will no longer be carnivores... Imagine, *bulldogs won't swat yellow jackets, and yellow jackets won't try to sting bulldogs!*

Isaiah 11 tells us that God will remove the fear that protects humans from animals, and vice versa. Verse 8, **"The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the**

weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den." Mom, your baby's favorite pet will be a copperhead.

Isaiah 35:5-6 tells us there'll be no birth defects... No down syndrome, or cleft palates, or spina bifida...

Isaiah 65:20 comments on longer life-spans - a man 100 years old will be considered a child. The Bible tells us that before Noah's flood men lived to old ages: 600, 700, 900 years old. The phenomena of aging is a mystery. We really don't know what triggers the aging process. Whatever it is, Jesus will lift it in the Kingdom.

In Romans 8 we're told that today all creation groans as it awaits its redemption. Julie Andrews sang, "The hills are alive with the sound of music." What she didn't say is that they're playing in a minor key. All of God's creation groans over its fall in the aftermath of our sin.

When mankind rebelled he threw a wrench into the gears of life. A capriciousness appeared in nature.

The gentle rains that waters your lawn can also flood a city. The breeze that lifts a kite can splinter a house.

After the fall, twisters and hurricanes went on a crime spree. Nature now commits random acts of violence.

Today, Mother Nature has a terrible case of PMS. In a fallen world, nature is *a mix of beauty and brutality*.

Every time I hear a tree creak, or a dog howl, I wonder if they're not expressing their angst over the conditions they're forced to endure in a fallen world.

Yet one day the curse of sin will be lifted. When Jesus reigns over planet Earth the natural order will be restored to it's former, and perfect, and peaceful state.

Yet the greatest benefit of living in the Kingdom Age will be the unlimited access we'll have to Jesus.

Isaiah 2:2-4 describes how people will flow to the King in Jerusalem, and Jesus will teach us His ways.

Verse 4 tells us, “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” Under the influence of King Jesus this war-torn world will finally know peace.

And the peace won't just be nationally, but locally.

In the Millenium there'll be no dead bolts or security systems. Crime will be reduced to a minimum.

For one, there'll be no Satan. He's chained for a thousand years... Another reason is that Jesus won't tolerate it - He'll enforce what's right and punish evil.

And realize during the Millenial Kingdom of Christ a strange mix of people will occupy planet Earth.

*Mortal men will live alongside resurrected believers.*

Understand, there will be humans who survive the Tribulation. These people will continue to marry and repopulate the planet. With improved conditions and longer life-spans a population explosion will occur.

The offspring of these survivors will retain a sin nature, and even without the devil's influence, from time to time they'll need to be corrected. They'll be saved the way we're saved - *by faith in God's grace.*

Along with this population of mortals, the Church, you and I - with OT and Tribulation saints - will also live on planet Earth. After we descend with Jesus at His second coming - we'll hang out and help Him rule.

2 Timothy 2:12 tells us **"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him."** Remember in 1 Corinthians 6:2 Paul asks the believers, **"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?"** The implication is that we will!

Think of the lessons we'll have to teach the mortals in the Kingdom. Through trials, and heartache, and pain, and tears we've learned the effects of sin and the need for faith. We've put together quite a resume.

When people living in God's Kingdom need to be reminded why its wise to obey the Lord, we'll have firsthand knowledge that we can share as examples.

Remember what Jesus said to the trusted servant in Luke 19, **"Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities."**

Authority and government in His kingdom is one of the rewards we'll receive for our current faithfulness.

I'm serving the Lord the best I can now, hoping I'll get assigned a few tropical islands to rule over then.

In the Millennial Kingdom we'll live among the mortals on Earth, but according to 1 Corinthians 15 by this point we'll have put on an immortal, incorruptible body.

At the rapture we'll receive resurrected bodies.

Our bodies will have the same capacities Jesus had after His resurrection... Recall how He'd pop in and out on His disciples. His body wasn't confined materially or spatially. He could dematerialize and reappear elsewhere. The disciples thought He was a ghost until they touched Him, and felt the scars of His crucifixion.

And you and I will have the same type of resurrected body. I like to say, we'll travel *at the speed of desire...* Want to go to Hawaii for the day... *presto you're there!*

As we talk about this future Kingdom you should know, not all Bible teachers agree with its literalness...

Some folks teach what's called **"Amillennialism"** or **"no millenium."** *Amillennialism* teaches that the thousand year reign of Christ is merely symbolic of the Church.

One day Jesus will return and that'll be the end.

Other folks advocate **"Post-millennialism."** Jesus will return after man brings about a golden age on Earth.

The job of the Church is it to create a utopian society that will usher in the second coming of Jesus.

One current form of *"Post-millennialism"* is **"Kingdom Now"** theology. Rather than expect Jesus to return, Christians need to take over earthly institutions *now*.

Their goal is to Christianize society and government. Create for God a political, social kingdom right now!

This was the mistake first century Jews made when they tried to fashion Jesus into a political Messiah. He refused to cooperate. His earthly kingdom is *not now*.

It's a kingdom yet to come, *but it will come!*

Here's the problem with *Post and Amillennialism* - if the Church is the Kingdom, and we're in the thousand year reign of Christ now, **then why isn't Satan bound?**

One look at the filth on the internet, or the recent spree of school shootings... If we're currently in the Kingdom, then Satan must be on a pretty long chain!

For me *Amillennialism* and *Post-millennialism* fall flat on two counts... **First**, they put too much emphasis on the work and wisdom of man. If humans can solve the multiple dilemmas facing our planet we should try. But the ultimate answer is with God, not with men.

And **second**, both schools of interpretation take the unfulfilled promises God made to Israel and applies them to the Church. This is dangerous. *It denies the literalness of Scripture.* The OT promises that God made to His people, Israel, are both factual and actual.

This is why I am a **“Pre-millennialist.”**

I believe with all my heart that Jesus will literally and physically return to planet Earth... usher in His kingdom all by Himself... reign a thousand years... restore all that sin has damaged... and in the process, fulfill every single promise God made to the people of Israel...

Back to our text. John writes in verse 5, **“But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”**

In John 5 Jesus spoke of two resurrections. “For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Believers are raised to life. Unbelievers are judged. And both resurrections are found in Revelation 20...

What the Lord didn't mention in John 5 is that a thousand years separates these two resurrections...

The first resurrection begins with Jesus. The NT calls Him “*the first fruits of the resurrection.*” Jesus is *the first of the first* to overcome death never to die again.

Then the Church joins the resurrection at the rapture.

Followed by the OT believers and those martyred by the Beast - they get resurrected at the end of the Tribulation. The first resurrection comes in 3 waves...

The second resurrection, or here “*the rest of the dead*” aren't resurrected until the thousand years ends.

As Jesus said in John 5, God resurrects unbelievers to condemnation. We'll see it in verse 11. At the Great White Throne of Judgment, the bottomless pit empties out, and “*the rest of the dead*” appear before their maker to receive their permanent, final, fatal sentence.

Here's the moral of the story... be part of the first resurrection - not a member of the second. For we're told in verse 6, “*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*”

In verse 7 the plot thickens, “**Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison...**” *And as if you couldn't guess what he does...*

Remember Satan has been chained ten centuries. He's had time to take a personal inventory. He's thought it all through - considered his mistakes. If ever he wanted to turn over a new leaf this is it... *but NO!*

As soon as he's released he's back to his lies and rebellion. Like a criminal who refuses rehabilitation, as soon as he hits the street again, he's out for revenge.

Satan goes “**to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog** (combatants in an earlier war, Ezekiel 39), he'll **gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.**”

Did you hear about the devoted Christian lady who was dirt poor. She lived hand-to-mouth. Yet she trusted God for all her needs, and the Lord always supplied.

Of course her atheist neighbor couldn't figure her out. If her God existed, why was she always in need?

One day, he overheard her desperate prayer. “**Lord, please, I'm hungry.**” The atheist decided to teach the woman a lesson. He went down to the supermarket and loaded up several bags of groceries. He set them on her doorstep, rang the bell, and hid in the bushes.

As soon as she opened the door and saw the food, she shouted, “**Praise the Lord, God heard my prayer.**”

That's when the atheist jumped out, and scoffed at the lady, “**God didn't bring you those groceries, I did.**”

The woman answered, "Praise the Lord! He heard my prayer, and sent the Devil to make the delivery."

Martin Luther once described Satan as "God's ape."

Like the organ grinder's monkey, he exists for the Master's purposes. Even Satan's rebellion plays into God's hands. He's God's puppet. He's on a string.

Think of the cross. I'm sure Satan relished the pain inflicted on Jesus - *the beating, the nails, the rejection.*

Yet its by His stripes we're healed. He was bruised for our iniquities - wounded for our transgressions. He was rejected so we can be accepted. At the cross Satan played into God's hands. *And here's another example of how he unwittingly serves God's purposes.*

For several decades now the big debate in psychology has been between *nature or nurture?*

Which is the greater determiner of human behavior?

Are our dysfunctions the result of *a genetic defect* or can they be traced to *a deficient environment?* If my problem is me I have nobody to blame but myself. If it's my environment I can blame everyone and everybody.

This is why most people choose *nurture*. I'm a sinner because *I had poor parents, or grew up on the wrong side of the tracks, or didn't have an education, or had evil friends, or couldn't find a job - excuses, excuses.*

But at the end of the thousand years, God steps into this debate. He ensures that no one walks off into an eternity in hell thinking they have a legitimate excuse.

For a thousand years now mankind has existed in the perfect environment. Jesus has sat on the throne, and made the world new. Peace and prosperity - holiness and happiness - reign in all corners of the globe. People have been treated fairly and flawlessly.

Yet the folks who populate the planet are still sinners at heart. Like men today, they're born with a sin nature.

With Jesus on the throne they've lived by His rules. *They're the better for it*, but they've only conformed to an external standard. They haven't been transformed by the Holy Spirit. These people need to be born again!

And no one realizes it until Satan is let loose for a season. All of sudden, these people are given a choice.

The Devil tempts them. *"You know better than God. Who needs God anyway? You can be your own god?"*

We've heard this all before. But the people at the end of this Kingdom Age will hear it for the first time.

And it'll strike a chord in their hearts. It'll enflame the rebellious nature that's been simmering inside. Even after a thousand years in a perfect world the human race will still rebels because it's in their nature to do so.

Here God proves for all time, that humans have sin in their heart. The old adage is true, *"Sinning doesn't make you a sinner. You sin because you are a sinner."*

Selfishness and rebellion are imbedded in man's nature. What happens at the end of the Millenium proves – *that at the heart of man's problem is the problem in mam's heart!* Mankind is a rebel by nature!

Verse 9, “They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.” This flimsy coup d’etat dares to lay siege to Jesus’ capitol city. This is **the final insurrection**. *How dare anyone attack Jesus after He’s been so good?*

The revolt gets put down in short order. “Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.”

*And now the instigator finally gets his due!* Verse 10, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever...” Jesus said “*the lake of fire*” wasn’t made for man. It was created for Satan and his angels.

Here Satan is sent to his ultimate destination.

Verse 11, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it...” What an ominous sight this is... “*White*” is the color of holiness and purity. A “*throne*” speaks of authority. And “*great*” has the sound of permanence.

I believe it’s Jesus Christ who sits on this throne.

We’ll learn in verse 12 this is a throne of Judgment.

And a long list of people judged Jesus... *Caiaphas the Priest, King Herod, the Jewish Sanhedrin, Pontus Pilate, the Jewish mob who screamed crucify Him...*

Now imagine each of them appearing at this throne to be judged by Jesus. The roles are now reversed.

Trust me, there’ll be a lot of squirming going on.

In fact, everyone who comes before the Great White Throne will be squirming... The reason people appear at this judgment is because they've rejected Jesus.

They judged Jesus as unfit to follow. Now it's His turn to see how they stack up to God's righteousness.

Verse 11, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them." After a thousand years of renovations - after renewing all that sin has worn out - God decides to ditch the Earth and the Heavens and start brand new.

*And why would God do that?* I don't pretend to know all His reasons. But perhaps He wants us to know that this world, and all that's in it, has simply been a stage.

The stuff we value are but props and decorations. What truly matters are the things that last forever.

2 Peter 3:10 tells us of this day in Revelation, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."

Physics teaches that "like charges" repel. Yet at the center of every atom is a cluster of bonded protons.

Scientists explain the mystery with terms like "atomic glue." They talk of "a God particle." Their explanations are vague at best. The Bible on the other hand is quite clear. Colossians 1:17 tells us that in Christ "all things consist." It's Jesus Who's holds together the universe.

And one day He's going to *let go*. He'll loosen the glue - "and the elements will melt with fervent heat."

Every nucleus of every atom will explode in a fission meltdown. The material universe will be no more.

In that day all that's left will be man and his Maker...

Then suddenly, everyone in the bottomless pit - all unbelievers - every rebel who rejected God's salvation will stand before Jesus and answer for their decision.

Verse 12 tells us, "And I saw the dead, small and great..." Famous people like kings, and generals, and athletes, and entertainers - not so famous folks like clerks, and cooks, and cabbies, and janitors - will all be judged on the same criteria... *How did they measure up to the righteousness of a holy, sinless, perfect God.*

They're all "standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." These books contain every deed ever done.

At this Great White Throne everything is exposed and laid bare. Nothing remains hidden. Every person who rejected the work of Christ on the cross is judged by the deeds they did and the merit they mustered.

Realize there are four judgments in the Scripture...

First, is **the cross**. On Mount Calvary, in the person of Jesus, God judged the sin of the world. The punishment due *my sin* - in fact, *all sin* - was taken out on Jesus. He bore our judgment, so God could forgive us. When you trust in Jesus your sin is judged forever.

Second, is **the judgment seat of Christ**. It's mentioned in 1 Corinthians 3. At issue here is not our sin, but service. Here a believer's works are judged to see what reward he'll receive. Our motivation is tested.

Good deeds done out of love for God will be valued as gold and silver, but service done out of selfishness or pride will be burned up like wood, hay, and stubble.

Third, is **the judgment of the nations**. This occurs at Jesus' second coming in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Joel 3 and Matthew 25 tell us Jesus will separate *the sheep* from *the goats*. The criteria by which the nations are judged is how they treated God's people, Israel.

Folks alive at the end of the age, who survived the Great Tribulation, will be separated out - ***the sheep or the righteous - and the goats or the unrighteous.***

And then, the fourth judgment is here – **the Great White Throne of Judgment**. This is *not* for believers.

In Revelation 4 we saw believers gathered around a multi-colored throne. It represents the manifold grace of God. It's surrounded by a rainbow - a symbol of His faithfulness. Four living creatures are present - each one representing a different aspect of Jesus' ministry!

Yet what a contrast we have here. This throne is large and looming. It's stark white! It represents God's unapproachable holiness. *Unforgiven sinners beware!*

Remember, if you're in Christ your sin was judged at the cross. But according to verse 12, the people under scrutiny here are **“judged according to their works.”**

The last thing I want to ever have happen is to stand before God on the merit of my own works. Who, but Jesus, lived a life good enough for a holy, sinless God?

Isaiah 64:6 tells us that in the sight of God all our righteousness is as filthy rags. If judged according to my efforts I'm in big trouble! I'm resting - not in my works, but in the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross!

God doesn't grade on *the curve*, but on *the cross*.

Verse 13, "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works." "*Hades*" opens its hatches and unbelievers are tried before God. *And nobody stands a chance...*

Even the best of the bunch will fail the test.

Romans 3:23 gives a preview of the outcome. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God..."

Remember "*Hades*" is like the county jail. It's a temporary holding. It's where the spirits of unbelievers are today. In Luke 16 the rich man suffers in the flames of "*Hades*" - but it's not his permanent punishment.

"*Gehenna*" or "*the lake of fire*" is the super-max prison. It's the final assignment. Once you're judged lacking at the Great White Throne you're sent to THE LAKE. *And nobody should want to go to THE LAKE...*

Despite popular lore, there're no keg parties, or wild orgies, or beer buddies at THE LAKE... only fire and brimstone... only scorching regret. Thus, verse 14, "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire."

“This is the second death.” Physical death is the first death. But the lake - eternal damnation - is the second.

There’s an old saying, “Born once die twice. Born twice die once.” Come to Jesus, be born again, and you’ll face only physical death... The first death is not the one to fear. “*The second death*” is “*the lake of fire.*”

Chapter 20 closes, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Here’s the most important question you’ll ever be asked, “Is your name written in the Book of Life?”

Are you trusting in Jesus? Are you leaning on the cross of Christ, or trying to stand on your own? The stakes are high... *It’s the river of life or the lake of fire...*

**Where will you spend eternity?**