



Revelation 20

Revelation 20
Tape 8259
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles now to the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation. John said,

I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (20:1)

We've mentioned that this bottomless pit in the Greek is *abusso*, which literally means shaft. And it would seem from the Scriptures that this is the place where angelic-kind of beings are incarcerated. We read that the beast, the Antichrist, will come out of the abusso, chapter 17 of the Book of Revelation. When Jesus was at Gadera and met by the demon possessed man, the demons begged Jesus that he would not send them to the abusso before their time. It is interesting that Satan will be bound and placed into the abusso, the angels coming down from heaven having the key to the abusso, or the bottomless pit, a great chain in his hand. Back in the 9th chapter of the Book of Revelation, there was another angel, a star it was called, fall from heaven having this key to the abusso. When he opened it, the earth was invaded by demonic hoards that created great havoc upon the earth. Demons were turned loose out of the abusso back in chapter nine.

And so he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he cast him into the abusso, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. (20:2,3)

So now this place of demonic spirits houses Satan. It's interesting that God has allowed Satan the freedom. Someone has asked if God is going to ultimately bind him and put him in the abusso, why didn't He do it a long time ago and save us all of the misery and suffering that he has brought upon the earth? And if he is once chained and shut up in the abusso, when why will God allow him to be released again? Interesting is the fact that Satan does serve a divine purpose. God allows him the freedom in order that he might serve God's divine purpose. It's so easy for us so say I love You, Lord, with all my heart. Lord, You are first. Lord, I love You more than anyone or anything else. Those words are easy to say. But often times they are said but not with real sincerity. When we avow our love for God, often times God allows us to be put to the test. To the extent of how much we really do love him. Satan is God's instrument often in testing the love that we have for God.

We see a classic example of that in the story of Job where when the sons of God were presenting themselves to God and Satan came along with them, and God questioned him, where he had been, and he said going to and fro throughout the earth, up and down. God said have you considered my servant Job? He's a good man. He loves God, hates evil. Satan said yes but You've put a hedge around him. You won't let me get to him. And You have blessed him and prospered him. Anyone would serve You if You prospered them like you have Job. He has no needs, no wants. You have so mightily blessed him. Take away the hedge, let me at him. I can make him curse You. And so God allowed Satan to strip Job of his possessions. God put the restriction on him, leave his life alone. Satan's philosophy concerning Job that he had developed was that Job was a mercenary; he was only serving God for the profits, for the perks that God gave him. Take away the perks, he won't serve You. It is true that God gives to His children many wonderful perks. Am I serving Him just for the perks, just for the blessings, just for the benefits, or am I serving Him because I really love Him with all my heart? And God allows it to be put to the test. Job was put to the test. And having been stripped of everything, his family, his wealth, his fortune, Job lay on the ground. He said, I came into the world naked, naked I will go out. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. And in all of these things, Job did not curse God nor charge God foolishly. But Satan was used as an instrument of God to put Job to the test and often is used as an

instrument of God to put us to the test.

Let us say that, I say to my son, "Son, [that was when they were growing up. I can't say anything to them now. I say sir now], son, I'm going down to purchase a desk. I'll need help to get it up stairs to get it into my office. I want you to stay here in the yard until I get back because I have a lot to do today, and as soon as I get back I want you to help me put desk up in my office. So don't leave the yard." And if I would take then a great chain and go out in the backyard and chain him to the tree and then head for the office supply and get the desk; when I got home, there he is chained in the backyard. I go back and I unchain him and I say, "My I have such a wonderful son. He is so obedient. He stayed in the backyard the whole while I was gone. I'm so proud of that boy." My neighbor might be saying, you should have heard him screaming and the things he called you while you were gone.

But if on the other hand, I say, "Son, I'm going down to get a desk. I want you to stay in the yard while I'm gone. Don't leave. I want you here when I get back." And as I take off, my neighbor is out watering his lawn and I say, "Mr. Jones, would you mind just sort of keeping an eye on my son? I'm sort of curious as what happens when dad's not around. I told him to stay in the yard, and I'm just curious when I'm not around just what happens." And so I go down and get the desk, and as I get home I stop by Mr. Jones and say, "Well, how did it go?" He says, "Oh Mr. Smith, you've got a fine son! You don't have to worry about him. He stayed in the yard the whole while you were gone but not only that, that little kid up the street, little Jimmy, he came over and he said come on let's go over to the school and shoot some baskets. And your son said no I can't go. I've got to stay in the yard. Dad wants me to stay here. He wants me here when he gets back. Oh come on let's go. You can get back here before your dad does. He'll never know you're gone. Come on, let's go. Your son said no. Dad told me to stay here and I'm going to stay here until he gets back. Ah, come on, you're just chicken. And your son popped him in the nose. The kid went home with a bloody nose. Mr. Smith, you've got a fine son." And I could then be justly proud that my son obeyed me though the opportunity and the freedom to do otherwise was there.

And so with God. He leaves us free, and he even has little Jimmy, the devil, that comes along and tries to tempt us towards disobedience. And when I remain true to God in spite of the temptations, then, as Paul said, God has created us for the praise of the glory of His grace. That is, He receives pleasure, glory, in my obedience to Him especially in light of the fact that the opportunity to do other wise was there, not only the opportunity, but Satan was there trying to exploit the opportunities. But I've remained true, and God says, oh, I've got a fine son! And so God said concerning Job. So that is why God has allowed Satan the freedom in order that we might be tested to prove our love and our commitment to the Lord, the genuineness of that love and that commitment. In a moment, we will look at why God allows him freedom again after his being bound for a thousand years in the abusso.

Now in verse four, it is important to note that John is observing not one but two companies. Those who hold to a post tribulation view often use this verse as one of the great proof texts of the post tribulation position because John said,

I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (20:4,5)

So because John saw this company, they don't make the correct distinction here. They lump it all as one where John is actually talking about two companies that he sees in heaven. Notice, "I saw thrones and they that sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." Who are they? These people on their thrones are the church. Back in chapter three, verse 21, "To him that over cometh I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Paul writing to the Corinthians said, "No ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more the thing that is pertain to this life?" The psalmist wrote, "Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds, let the high

praises of God be in their mouth and the two edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people. To bind their kings with chains, their nobles with fetters of iron, and to execute upon them the judgment written. This honor have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord.” Daniel speaking of the Antichrist said, “I beheld in the same horn the Antichrist made war with the saints, prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given to the saints of the most high and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

Jesus said to His disciples, “Verily I say unto you that ye which have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

So the first group that John observes is the church, the over comers, seated on their thrones judgment is given unto them. But notice, he sees a second group. Notice, he says, “And I saw the soles of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.” He saw the second group, which were the martyred saints, who had come up out of the great tribulation, had not worshiped the beast or taken his mark.

Back in chapter six, verse nine, “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Chapter seven, verse thirteen, “And one of the elders [When John saw this great multitude in heaven no man can number, singing of salvation through Jesus], the elders said unto Me, Who are these that are arrayed in these white robes? And where do they come from? [And John said], Sir, you know. And he said unto me, These are they, which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, they serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”

So there is the second group, those that are martyred during the tribulation period by their refusal to take the mark of the beast or to worship him or his image. So John is actually seeing not one, but two companies, separate companies. The church sits with Jesus on His throne. These martyred saints from the tribulation stand before the throne of God. They are in His holy temple, we are told in chapter seven, worshiping him day and night continually. So John tells that they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Now, that’s both companies. Jesus Christ is going to return to the earth. We will be returning with Him. Paul said, “And when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.” He’s returning to the earth to claim the earth as God’s. He redeemed the world through His death upon the cross. He paid the price to redeem the world. He’s coming back to claim that which He purchased on the cross. We will come back with Him and He will reign over the earth for a thousand years, during which time, in the first part of the chapter, Satan will be bound. He will be in the abyss, and we will not have to be dealing with him during this thousand-year reign of Christ.

The earth will be restored to the Edenic glory as it was before the flood, as it was in the Garden of Eden. The earth, the whole earth, will be a paradise. There will probably be an equalizing of the climates. There will be no more hurricanes. There will probably not be any polar icecaps. We do know that under the polar icecaps there were at one time forests under the icecaps. The coal deposits tell us that. We do know that in the frozen Arctic Circle in Siberia, in that icy tundra, they have found the remains of mammoths that were frozen in place. When they were cut open, the digestive tracts had parts of tropical vegetation. So we know that at one time, the climate of the earth was vastly different than it is today. That there didn’t exist the polar icecaps, but there were tropical animals roaming around the area of the North Pole. Without the polar icecaps, of course, the land surface would be covered more with water. There would be a difference between the present percentage of sea and land. But without the polar icecaps, you would not be getting these tremendous radical changes of climate. There would be much more sun. The earth, of course, presently is tilted at twenty-three and a third degrees, which gives us our seasons.

But perhaps God will readjust because the Bible says the earth is going to wobble like a drunken man and will be moved out of its place. Perhaps the Lord will correct, and we will not be in a twenty three and a

third degree angle on our axis in relationship to the sun, but directly perpendicular which would bring not the seasons but an equal kind of daylight and nighttime. And the whole earth could be like Hawaii. So you that have Hawaii scoped out, forget it. It's mine. But you won't need to be jealous because the whole earth will be like that. There will be a renewed longevity of life. There will be, of course, greater moisture in the atmosphere because of the evaporation of the oceans with more water and not the storms and so forth. There will be a greater evaporation. More moisture will be carried in the atmosphere, which will give us more filters from the ultra violet rays and all. And the earth will be a beautiful place. The whole earth will be filled with His glory! Righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. We will be living with Christ and reigning with Christ over the earth.

Now, we've been reading about the great judgment that is going to come upon the earth. We have been looking at the events. We have seen how the earth's population has been decimated. And there are scriptures that do indicate that only one out of ten people will survive the great tribulation period. Not very many, one out of ten. But if the earth's population is presently somewhere around the five billion mark, that would still leave you five hundred million people upon the earth, and that's a pretty healthy number. When Jesus returns to establish His kingdom, the first order of business will be to gather the nations together for judgment to determine which of those who survive to do great tribulation will be allowed the privilege to continue living into the kingdom age. Now, if a person has taken the mark of the beast, he immediately will be eliminated. He will not be allowed to enter into the kingdom age. If they have been a part of his program, they'll not be allowed to enter the kingdom age. It is at that time that the Lord will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and to those on His right hand, He'll say, Come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared from the foundations of the world. But to those on His left, He'll say depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity into ever lasting darkness that was prepared for Satan and his angels. Jesus will then begin the thousand-year reign, and we will be reigning with Him as kings and priests, or a kingdom of priests over the earth. We are told that annually we will be going to Jerusalem to meet with Jesus—a great convocation, annually, as the church goes to Jerusalem to meet with the Lord.

Now, let us suppose that there are say two hundred million people that passed the test when Jesus returns and are allowed to live into the kingdom age. There is a passage in Daniel, chapter twelve, where the angel is talking about the end of the Gentile reign and the coming again of the Lord to establish His reign. And Daniel asked the question, how long, oh Lord, to the end of these things? And the Lord said to Daniel, from the time that the abomination which causes desolation is set up, the man of sin comes to Jerusalem causes the daily oblations and sacrifices to cease. It will a thousand two hundred and ninety days to the return of Jesus Christ in glory with His saints to rule over the earth.

Now, let us say that you are one of those that you're sort of a skeptic. You don't believe these things that the Bible says are going to come to pass, except that you have sort of a, well, you know what the Bible says, but you just are not sure. Well, once the church is taken out, you'll realize it's true. The sudden disappearance of the church. So you know enough to know what's going to be coming, the great tribulation. So you get together supplies because you know there's going to be a famine. You head off to the most remote area that you can find. You try to set yourself up to survive the seven years. You take advantage of the first three and a half years when everybody is hailing this new leader that has arisen to guide the earth. And somehow you're able to survive that three and a half years of great judgment, all the meteorite showers, all of the fires and everything that's going to happen, you were able to survive it and you are marking your calendar as you sit there in your cave. And when you hear that the temple in Jerusalem has been desecrated by this man of sin, the sacrifices that were reinstituted had been stopped. You make the mark on the calendar and start counting off the days, one thousand two hundred and ninety days, and you will have made it. You survived.

But then you've got to survive the next forty-five days when Jesus gathers the people together for judgment. You may survive the great tribulation, but you may not survive the judgment. But let's say you

do. You were able to survive without getting into the system of the Antichrist, the beast and all, and you did survive and now you stand before the Lord and He says go ahead. You can enter in. Daniel said, blessed is he who comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty fifth day. Which means there will be a forty-five day judgment period, and you've made it. You'll still be in your body.

However, with Jesus here and the radical changes that will take place in nature and in the kingdom of our Lord, sickness will be abolished. Handicaps will be abolished. Isaiah speaks of those glorious days when the lame will be leaping for joy, the blind will be beholding the glory of the Lord. The mute will be shouting for joy. No more sorrow, no more pain, no more suffering. The kingdom of God has come. There will be, as I say, a great number that will survive and will live on into this period.

Isaiah describes it for us a little bit in Isaiah, chapter sixty-five, beginning with verse seventeen. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. And you will be glad and rejoice forever in that which I've created: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man who has not filled his days: for a child will die being a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old will be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. And they shall build, and another will not inhabit it; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." So he talks about this day when, of course, "The wolf and the lamb will feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and the dust shall be the serpent's meat. And they shall not hurt nor destroy in My holy mountain, saith the Lord."

During this thousand years that Jesus is reigning and we are reigning with Him as a kingdom of priests and as David described, probably enforcers of righteousness. We will be the church in our glorified bodies. Those that live through will still be in these natural bodies. And during this period of ideal weather conditions, ideal living conditions, no more sicknesses, no more diseases, no more floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes. You can imagine in a thousand years under those ideal conditions how rapidly the population will develop. There will be no more abortions either. And you can imagine how rapidly under these ideal conditions the population will grow. And so we read that we will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years, but the rest of the dead, that is the unsaved, will not rise until the thousand years be fulfilled. "But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." There will be two general resurrections. If first resurrection began with Jesus Christ. It will end when the last of the martyred saints is brought on into glory. The first resurrection has covered a long period of time. But the rest of the dead, they will not live again until the thousand years are finished.

So blessed and holy is he that has a part in the first resurrection: because upon him the second death will have no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign for a thousand years. But when the thousand years are expired, then Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, (20:6,7)

Back in chapter two, Jesus said in verse eleven, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit say to the churches, for he that over comes will not be hurt of the second death." Revelation 1:6, "He has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Chapter five, "In heaven we are singing for Thou has made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." So this thousand-year reign when we live and reign with Him upon the earth. But at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed out of the abisso.

And he shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (20:8,9)

Here to me is an amazing thing, which reveals the heart of man! The Bible tells us that the heart of

man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Now our sociologists today try to say there are no bad boys. It's the environment. And if you can just change the environment, if the person just has the right opportunities, there is that innate spark of good within all of us and all we have to do is fan that spark and everybody will be good.

That's exactly the opposite of what the Bible says. The heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked and who can know it? The depravity of man, the social scientists like to deny that, but the Bible teaches that. When these people have lived on the earth for a thousand years under the ideal environment, the reign of Jesus Christ. During this reign they will be forced to live righteously. They will not have an opportunity to give vent to their evil desires. We'll be there to see to that. We'll be there with extraordinary powers in our glorified bodies. So it will be ruling, it says, with a rod of iron. The reign of Jesus will be an ironclad reign. Righteousness will be something that will be enforced upon all men. And for the thousand years we will see how wonderful it is when people live in righteousness. There will be no prisons. There will be no judicial systems. There will be no police departments, no need for them. As Jesus reigns with an ironclad reign. People living righteously will see the benefits, the blessings, of living in harmony with God.

But when Satan is released again for a short time, it will be a demonstration throughout all of eternity of the desperate wickedness in the hearts of men. The amazing thing is that Satan is able to gather an army so large that it is like the sands of the sea—innumerable. That seems so difficult to comprehend how people who have been living under this ideal reign of Christ will be deceived by Satan to rebel against the reign of Christ. But throughout all of eternity, God's righteous judgment will be demonstrated. No one can say, well, it was my environment that caused me to be evil, I was deprived. That whole argument will be put down forever because the desperate wickedness of man's heart will be revealed as they try again to overthrow Jesus. Once the demonstration is made, they gather together, then God destroys them with fire from heaven. It's all over in a moment. There's no battle. It will be over in a moment. But it shows the desperate wickedness of man's heart and the absolute righteousness of God's judgment when He judges wicked men for their rebellion against Him. For the rebellion will still be in their hearts, they'll not be able to express it during the reign of Christ. But yet, they'll live under the blessings and the benefits.

That's the thing that hurts me about the United States. You go back to the founding of this nation, you go back to the founding fathers, you go back to the founding principles; and it was intended to be a nation that would honor God and respect God! A nation that would seek after and follow after God. And because of that, God blessed America. And America became strong. America became prosperous. But just like the nation of Israel, when they became prosperous, they forgot God, they forsook God. And so our nation has forsaken God. And just as the nation of Israel when they forsook God, God turned them over to their enemies. So the time of judgment will come when God will turn the United States over to their enemies. You can't escape it. Isn't it interesting, the very thing that made us strong, the very thing that made us great, men are rebelling against? And look how they're trying to attribute the success and the greatness of America to democracy or to the free enterprise system. And so what are we wanting to send to the world to change the world? Send to them the free enterprise system. Surely that will make everybody good. Send to them the ideals of freedom and democracy. But what freedom? They're taking away our freedom. More and more they're taking away your freedom.

I have the most obnoxious Eucalyptus tree in my front yard possible. Every day I have to sweep up a bag of Eucalyptus leaves out of the yard. Every day of the year; that thing sheds all year long. It is a nuisance. I applied to the city of Newport Beach for a permit to remove the Eucalyptus tree because I'm just tired of raking up and sweeping up a bag of leaves every day. The yard always looks trashy. I've even taken pictures one hour after I've swept to show all the leaves. Two hours, more leaves. But will they allow me to remove that Eucalyptus tree? No. My request was denied. Freedom. Free America. Oh praise God for freedom. What freedom? They're encroaching every day more and more upon our freedoms. And yet we are wanting to export freedom to the world. It's crazy, it's mixed up.

Satan is going to draw the people together in one final rebellion against God and forever God will be justified in the judgment that He has meted out against the ungodly. So we read in verse ten,

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, [Now, last week we saw the beast and the false prophet cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. That was a thousand years earlier than this Scripture. Notice.] The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, [where the beast and the false prophet are, not where they were destroyed, not where they were annihilated, but where they are after a thousand years! That's where they are.] and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. (20:10)

You say oh, Chuck, you really don't believe that, do you? Can't you sort of explain that away somehow, the idea of forever and ever, is a little difficult to swallow, isn't it? Let me tell you why I'm not going to mess with it. Over in chapter 22, verse 18, we read, "For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God will add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of this book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things, which are written in this book." You think I'm going to mess with it? You've got to be kidding. I'm going to tell it to you straight as it is told to us. I'm not going to try to modify it. I'm going to leave it just as it is.

And I saw the great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (20:11)

There's going to be a new universe. Peter talks about how this whole thing is going to be dissolved, melt with a fervent meet, the elements dissolving. The earth and the heaven flee away from the presence of the face of Him on the throne.

I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (20:12)

Now, God keeps accurate, precise, and complete records. Everything you've ever done or thought has been recorded. It's an interesting thing, and I don't know, they theorize that sound goes on. It just continues. Now, we know that sound travels at about 727 miles an hour. But they say that it just continues. That everything that has been said is out there somewhere. And if you could only tune in on it, you could play back your parents, ooing and ahing over you as they first saw you there in the crib. As light is traveling and seems to go on, they say that sound does the same and there have even been attempts by scientists to try to somehow tune in the sounds. It would be exciting if we could actually tune in and actually here the voice of Jesus talking to the people by the Sea of Galilee. That ought to really sell if you could get a cassette of that. You can be sure God has recorded it all. The book will be open, they will be judged out of the things that is are written in the book.

Now there is this mention of the Book of Life. And throughout the Bible there are several mentions of the Book of Life. It is interesting to me that in the many times that the Book of Life is mentioned, half of the times there is the reference to people being blotted out of the Book of Life. When Moses asked the Lord to forgive the people and if not then to blot his name out of the book, the Lord said to Moses, whosoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.

David, in Psalm 69, speaking for the Messiah, the prayer of the Messiah. The prayer was, Let them be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous. Jesus, in His message to the church of Sardis in the third chapter, promised that those that overcame would be clothed with white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I'll confess his name before My Father and before His angels. And then, as we just read in chapter 22, if any man shall take away from the words of the book and of this prophecy, God will take away his part out of the Book of Life. You say, well you mean you actually believe that God takes people's names out of the Book of Life? Are you trying to get me in trouble? I'm not going to mess with that. I'm not going to take away. I don't want to add to it. It's there. The warning is there. Why would the warning be there if there wasn't a danger, if there wasn't a possibility? And so they're judged according to things written in the books, according to their works.

The sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. (20:13,14a)

First of all, the beast and the false prophets became the first to inhabit this place. Later, they were joined by Satan, and now, after the great white throne judgment of God, they will be joined by those whose names are not found written in the Book of Life. Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, and it says,

This is the second death. (20:14b)

If you have a part in the first resurrection, you will never face the second death. Death from a scriptural definition is the separation of a man from God, the separation of a man's consciousness from God. If you live out a consciousness of God, if there is no place for God in your life, there's no communion, no fellowship with God, no thought of God; then according to the scriptures, you are dead already. You one day will die physically, but you're already spiritually dead. When you stand before God at this white throne judgment, your name is not found written in the Book of Life, you'll be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Now, we read just a little bit ago, "Blessed are they who have a part in the first resurrection over them the second death has no power." If you are born twice, you'll die once. Jesus said, "You've got to be born again. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the spirit is spirit. Don't marvel that I say you've got to be born again." You've got to have a second birth, a spiritual birth. Born twice, you'll die once. Born once, you'll die twice. You'll die physically and then you'll be cast into the lake burning with fire, the second death, that eternal separation from God.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (20:15)

That to me puts at the top of priorities to make sure that my name is in the Book of Life. How does that happen? By my confessing Jesus Christ as my Lord and my Savior and living my life for Him, surrendered to His Lordship. Now, it isn't just saying, well, Jesus is Lord. Jesus said, "In that day, many will come saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. Didn't we prophecy in Your name? cast out devils in Your name? did marvelous works?" And He'll say, "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you." Jesus said, "Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things that I command you?" You see, Lord is not His name, it's His title. He is my Lord, which means I am His servant. I live my life to do His will. And the importance of knowing Jesus as Lord, surrendering your life to Him as Lord, confessing Him as Lord; for if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you'll be saved. But it has to be a true confession. Your name will be written in the Book of Life.

Now, someone has suggested that because God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, that in the beginning from the foundations of the world, He wrote everybody's name in the Book of Life. But it's a question of being blotted out of the Book of Life, which I said the Bible refers to four times over. I don't know. That's an interesting concept to consider. Perhaps so. I don't know. All I know is that I'm thankful my name is written. I know it is. The blessed assurance that Jesus is mine. Oh, what a fore taste of glory divine. Heir of salvation, purchase of God. Born of His spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story. This is my song.

Father, we thank You for redeeming us from our sin, washing and cleansing us, Lord, from the defilement and the pollutions of this world, claiming us as Your children. And Lord, we gladly confess You before men as Lord. And we thank You, Lord, that You've promised that one day, You'll confess us before Your Father as Your sons, Your bride. Lord, we look forward to that day when You present us faultless before the presence of Your glory with exceeding joy. We pray, Father, that tonight Your Holy Spirit will assure our hearts of the truths of these things. And may we not try to diminish or take away nor may we not try to add to these things, but just accept what You have said as truth and believe it. In Jesus' name, Amen.