

The Other Side of a Comma

God is just

Rev. 20:11 Then I saw a great white **throne** and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky **fled away**, and no place was found for them.

Throne

- Rom 3:21-26 (*God is just*)
judge but no jury, prosecution but no defense,
sentence but no appeal - perfect justice will be done

fled away

- Rev 21:1 (*New Heavens New Earth*)

Death is temporary

Rev. 20:12 And I saw **the dead**, great and small, standing before the throne, and **books were opened**. Then another book was opened, which is **the book of life**. And **the dead** were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Rev. 20:13 And the sea **gave up the dead** who were in it, Death and Hades **gave up the dead** who were in them, and they were judged (**last time in Bible**), each one of them, **according to what they had done**.

the dead

- Rev 20:4-6 (*not believers*)
- 1 Cor 3:10-4:5 (*already judged reward*)

books opened

- Lk 21:33 (*His Word will not pass away*)
- John 12:48 (*His Word will judge*)

book of life

- Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27 (*book of life*)

gave up

- Heb 9:27-28 (*death is temporary*)

according to what they had done

- Matt 12:33-37 (*every careless word*)
- Matt 7:21-23 (*deeds do not determine book*)
- Phil 3:8-9 (*or according to what He has done*)

Hell is forever

Rev. 20:14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the **lake of fire**. This is the **second death**, the **lake of fire**.

Rev. 20:15 And if (**since**) anyone's name was not found written in the **book of life**, he was thrown into the **lake of fire**.

lake of fire

- Matt 25:46; Dan 12:2 (*Hell is forever*)

the second death

- Jn 8:21-24 (*sinners deserve hell not death*)
(*born once die twice*)

book of life

- Jn 8:51-52; 11:26 (*born twice die once*)
this is the closest to Hell we will ever be

The gospel is glorious

- Rev 21:1 (*making New Heaven/earth*)
- 2 Pet 3:10-13 (*where righteousness dwells*)
- 2 Cor 5:16-21 (*He began at the cross*)

The Other Side of a Comma

Intro:

we seem more interested in being saved from the idea of Hell, rather than from Hell itself
the gospel is more than love and lattes, more than repent or...nothing

Problem:

there is a comma in Jn 3:18 (3:16-18) and Revelation 20:11-15 shows us the other side of the comma,
the backdrop of the gospel

Main Idea:

God is just
Death is temporary
Hell is forever

Implication:

born once die twice - this place is the closest to Heaven unbelievers will ever get
born twice die once - the place is the closest to Hell believers will ever get

the gospel is glorious

Application:

- Rev 21:1 (making new Heaven/earth)
- 2 Pet 3:10-13 (where righteousness dwells)
- 2 Cor 5:16-21 began at the cross

notes regarding millennial believers in earthly bodies

The last living believers will be translated and transformed into their eternal bodies, like Enoch (Gen. 5:24), Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), and the raptured church (1 Thess. 4:13–18).

The **dead** pictured here **standing before the throne** of divine judgment are not just from the millennial rebellion, but include all the unbelievers who ever lived. This is the “resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29), the resurrection “to disgrace and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2), the “resurrection of ... the wicked” (Acts 24:15). The Bible teaches that no believer will ever face God’s judgment, because “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Everyone “who believes in Him is not judged” (John 3:18); they have “eternal life, and [do] not come into judgment, but [have] passed out of death into life” (John 5:24). Far from being judged, all the godly participants in the first resurrection (20:6) will have already received their rewards (cf. v. 4; 19:7–9; 1 Cor. 3:12–15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

(John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 12–22*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 250–251.)

Articles for further study

<https://bible.org/article/doctrine-rewards-judgment-seat-bema-christ>

<https://www.9marks.org/article/how-does-hell-glorify-god/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Most-Encouraging-Book-Hell-Ever/dp/1936760827>