

## When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder Revelation 20:11-15

### Slide 1

After a long and boring sermon, the congregation filed out of the church saying nothing to the pastor.

Towards the end of the line was a thoughtful person who always commented on the sermons. *"Pastor, today your sermon reminded me of the peace and love of God!"*

The pastor was thrilled. *"No one has ever said anything like that about my messages before. Tell me why."*

*"Well, it reminded me of the Peace of God because it passed all understanding and the Love of God because it endured forever!"*

Today is the third part of our four-part series on old hymns. This week, we're looking at *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder*.

In the hymns, *Amazing Grace* and *How Great Thou Art*, we learned that everyone will spend either eternity in Heaven or eternity in Hell.

Today our hymn, *When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder*, tells us that one day when the roll is called your name will either be on it or it won't.

Either you're a Christian and you live like it and talk like it, or you're not. There's no grey area.

None of this... *"Well I went to church every Sunday. I mean I know that I didn't live or talk like a Christian, but I was in church every Sunday."* That won't work in Heaven.

There's more to being a Christian than just saying a prayer some preacher is telling you to pray.

There's more to being a Christian than coming to church each week and sitting in the same pew. Neither of these makes you a Christian. Paul tells us what's required.

Romans 10:9, *"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

That's what it takes to be a Christian. Not saying some prayer you don't mean or understand, or sitting in a pew every week.

You must fully believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He died for your sins, and then confessing and saying that which you believe.

Only then, when you do this, will you find your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The chorus say, *"When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."* So, the question begs, "When that roll is called, will you be there?"

Now, Revelation 20 gives us several facts that we need to understand. Listen to verse 12.

## **Slide 2**

Revelation 20:12, *"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books."*

Like I said earlier, there's coming a time when the roll will be called and when it is, either your name is on it, or it isn't. There's no grey area.

2 Corinthians 5:10, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*

Every single person who has ever walked the face of the Earth will one day stand before God and give an account for what they've done whether it be good or bad.

There's no getting out of this. It doesn't matter if you're young or old. Dead or alive. Christian or Non-Christian. Your race doesn't matter. Your gender doesn't matter.

Scripture says: *"For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ..."* "All" includes everyone. It doesn't matter if you've never even heard of Jesus, because even those who have never heard will also be judged.

It's a sad reality to know that the first time some people will ever hear of or see God will be on Judgement Day.

Revelation 20:15, *"Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."*

If your name isn't in the Book of Life, when the roll's called, you'll spend an eternity in hell. If someone has never even heard of Christ, how can they accept Christ? They can't.

Everyone who has never heard of Christ will be thrown into hell on Judgement Day. This is the reason we need to be going out and spreading the Gospel.

There are millions of people around the world who've never heard the Gospel. They have no idea who Jesus is or what He did for us.

They have no idea that they'll spend eternity in hell if they don't accept Christ. They don't know any of that. How can they if we don't tell them?

Romans 10:14, *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”*

They can't believe in someone who they've never heard of before. It's our job, as the church, to tell them. Just because we live in the Bible Belt doesn't mean everyone has heard of Jesus.

Some children haven't. Some young adults haven't. Some senior adults haven't. It's imperative that we go and we tell them. Their eternity literally depends on it.

The Bible makes it clear that one day that roll will be called. Verse 3 says,

*Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun;  
Let us talk of all his wondrous love and care.  
Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.*

When that roll is called, will your name be in it? Will your name be written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

If so, let's labor for the Lord until He returns. Let's do everything we can to tell as many people as we can about Jesus Christ.

### **Slide 3**

Revelation 20:12-13, *“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.”*

Not only will a role be called, but we'll all be held accountable for everything that we've ever done here on Earth. There's no statute of limitation on sin.

2 Corinthians 5:10 emphasizes this, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*

Not only will we all stand before God, but we're going to be judged on what we did while we're here, *"whether good or bad."*

1 Corinthians 4:5, *"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God."*

Paul tells us here that Jesus will bring everything to light. You'll be judged for the things you did when nobody was looking. The things you didn't want others to know about.

We need to be living our life for Christ. 2 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 4, and Revelation 20 all show why it's important that we live our lives for Christ every day and every moment.

You can't live for Christ and act like a Christian only on Sundays. You must do it every day throughout the week. There's a song called *Monday Morning Faith*; listen to these lyrics:

*And Hell's not scared of a Sunday faith  
If it only leads to empty praise*

*What really makes darkness run  
Is when the saints arise and praise in quiet  
On Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday*

*To know you, to love you, to choose you first  
Thursday and Friday and Saturday  
To see you, behold you in worship, singing*

It's not just a Sunday thing; it's an everyday thing. In every moment, in every situation, and in every opportunity, we must live for Christ and reflect Him in it all.

*1 John 2:15-17, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."*

This passage tells us that those who live like the world will one day fade away. One day they'll spend an eternity in hell while those who live like God will be with Him forever in Heaven.

You can't live like the world and expect to spend an eternity with Christ. Living like the world means that you're of the world instead of God.

If you want to enter the gates of Heaven, you must live for Christ every day of the week.

#### **Slide 4**

*Revelation 20:14-15, "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."*

This says that if your name isn't in the book, you'll be thrown into hell. That also means that if your name is in the book, you'll enter Heaven and spend an eternity with Jesus.

Christians will be saved from an eternal punishment in hell. We've looked at that in the past two messages. True Christians will be saved.

So, if you want to be saved, your name must be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Romans 10:9, *"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

That's what it takes to be a Christian. Not just saying some prayer that you don't mean or understand.

Not sitting in a pew every week, but fully believing that Jesus is the Son of God; that He died for your sins and then confessing and saying that of which you believe.

Only those who do both of those will find their name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Verse 4:

*On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,  
And the glory of His resurrection share;  
When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.*

When the roll is called, we'll all rise. Whether you are dead or alive, we'll meet and see Christ. That verse says that **His** chosen ones will go to their eternal homes. That means Christians will enter eternity in Heaven.

I believe there're going to be some people in Heaven that'll surprise us. People that we didn't think would be there. Listen to this post from Facebook that a lady wrote a while back:

*Christians...*

*Did you know there will be rapists in Heaven? Did you know there will be serial killers in Heaven? Did you know there will be pedophiles in Heaven? Did you know there will be child molesters in Heaven?*

It's possible that you'll be next to someone in Heaven who killed a member of your own family. It's possible that you may be in Heaven with the person who killed you.

It's possible the person who sucked every ounce of life from you will be seated right next to you and Jesus in Heaven. It's crazy to think that this is possible, but it is.

Because of Jesus, He forgives when we ask for forgiveness. He redeems when we ask for redemption. Don't live life thinking you get into hell for being "bad" and Heaven for being "good."

There're tons of people in prison who're serving life sentences or are on death row that'll be seated beside me in Heaven. I'm no better than them in the eyes of Jesus.

Don't let social media or worldly views confuse you into thinking you can't get into Heaven after making mistakes.

Even those that have gone the farthest from Jesus can make it into Heaven with the right steps down the right path. Yes, there'll be people in Heaven that'll surprise us.

But that's because the same God that reached down and saved us in the middle of our brokenness and sin is the same God that can reach down and save them in the middle of theirs.

I say all this to make this point... it doesn't matter what you've done or what you've said, God can still save you. God can still restore you. Nobody is ever too far gone.



If you want to be saved when that role is called, then you must turn your life over to Christ. That's the only way.

## **Slide 5**

When the roll is called on that day, it'll be too late. At that point, you're either headed to hell or you're headed to Heaven.

There's no amount of begging or pleading that you can do to change where you're going at that time.

You'll be in that place for eternity. It doesn't matter how long you've been coming to church if you don't truly know Jesus.

There are many people that have spent their entire lives in a church somewhere, but if they dropped dead right now, they'd never see the Gates of Heaven.

*Matthew 7:21-23, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

These are some of the saddest words in the whole Bible. Can you imagine going before the King of Kings, fully expecting to walk the streets of gold, and God looks at you and says, *"I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers."*

Billy Graham once said this: *"The greatest mission field in the world is not the foreign field or the home field; it is the mission field of the membership rolls of American Churches."*

The greatest mission field in the entire world is right here in our own backyard... our churches. That's not because we're full of unbelievers, but because we're full of lost people, and we don't even know it.

When that roll is called one day, it'll be too late. When the trumpet sounds and Jesus returns, it'll be too late.

When you die, it'll be too late. The only opportunity you have for salvation is in this short time period that we're here on Earth.

*Luke 16:22-26, "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'"*

Once you're in hell, there's no way out. You're there for eternity. An eternity full of anguish.

The rich man longed and begged for just one drop of water to cool down his mouth. There'll be no help if you're there.

## **Slide 6**

### Conclusion

None of us knows how much time we have here on Earth. Some may live to be over 100, while some never make it out of their mother's womb.

Time is never guaranteed, but I guarantee you this... if you leave this place we call Earth, either by death, the rapture, or when that roll's called on Judgement Day, your eternal destination is locked in.

That's true for every person whose ever walked the Earth. Verse 1:

*When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more,  
And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and fair;  
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.*

If you have never accepted Christ, then right now your eternal destination is hell. I know that's harsh, but that's the truth.

You must have a true and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If you have that, then your eternal destination is Heaven.

If you died today, would you spend an eternity with Jesus? If not, Jesus is calling. What will you do?

That roll is going to be called one day, I can assure you of that and when the roll is called, will your name be on it? If not, why not change that today?