

WE LIVE BETWEEN TWO ADVENTS

I. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 Psalm 110:6-7 Revelation 19:11-18 2 Timothy 4:6-8

A. As the season of Advent begins today, we remember Jesus' first Advent by recounting the stories of His humble birth, announced by angels and revealed to lowly shepherds and wealthy wisemen from the East. These stories are told and retold and celebrated in myriads of ways around the earth, among every tribe and tongue. What is less celebrated is Jesus' promised second Advent. And why is that? Because it will be in stark contrast to the first. First time, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger; next time He'll be robed as a sword-bearing warrior. First time, He came to redeem; next time to He'll come to judge.

B. Today we'll let the Scriptures do most of the talking. There's a reason Jesus' second coming is referred to as that *Great and Terrible Day*. For those of you born unto Christ, it will be greater than great. For those who've rejected Him it'll be beyond terrible. Unless of course the Scriptures aren't true. But of course they are very very true...

C. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 (ESV) is Paul's encouragement to a persecuted family of believers in Thessalonica. Living among 100,000 pagan gentiles, these believers were suffering for their faith in Christ...

1) V3: 3 *We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers (and sisters), as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. (Faith & love were flourishing even in the midst of harsh treatment!)*

2) V4: 4 *Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. (There is victory in just enduring, remaining steadfast, clinging to Jesus in hard times!)*

3) V5-6: 5 *This (This what? Enduring faith!) is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, (The God who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" is promising that yet again! God is just and His promises are true!)*

4) V7-9: 7 *and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might, (What are we talking about? Hell! Unending punishment!)*

5) V10-12: 10 *when He comes on that Day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. 11 To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

D. As a child, when Nicole got into trouble with her Mom and I got wind of it, I'd say something like, "*Let Nicole know I'll deal with the issue when I get home.*" Well, the Kid absolutely hated that! These days we laugh about it but it was no laughing matter for her back-in-the-day. ;-) As I have said here many times over the years, if you are in Christ, your judgment has already taken place at the cross where Jesus bore it. If you're not in Christ, you'll bear it in full, come one Day!

E. I read Psalm 110:5-6 (ESV) in my QT earlier in the week. It's a Messianic Psalm pointing to Christ and it says the following in verses 5 & 6: *5 The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings on the Day of His wrath. 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; He will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.* (Think about all the evil rulers of earthly kingdoms down through the ages. None of them have gotten away with anything--past, present, or future! Christ will shatter them!)

F. Next we'll turn to Revelation 19:11-18 and catch a glimpse of what the Apostle John saw when he received his vision while imprisoned on the island of Patmos. Mark Twain is alleged to have said of the Bible: "*It's not what I don't understand in the Bible that bothers me, it's what I do understand.*" I can relate to that with respect to the book of Revelation. But I don't think the hard-to-hear verses we're about to read leave a whole lot to the imagination--it's just that vivid...

G. Revelation 19:11-18 (NLT) comes with imagery as cryptic as it gets...

1) **V11: 11** *Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for He judges fairly and wages a righteous war. (Who're we talking about? Quite a contrast to the King who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey!)*

2) **V12-13: 12** *His eyes were like flames of fire, and on His head were many crowns. A name was written on Him that no one understood except Himself. 13 He wore a robe dipped in blood, and His title was the Word of God. (No mention of swaddling clothes!)*

V14: 14 *The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed Him on white horses. (Gloria in excelsis Deo! I wonder if any of these angels were among the ones that appeared before the shepherds on the night of Jesus' first Advent?! They'll be singing a different song this time! Cue the battle anthem! Sound the trumpet!)*

V15-18: 15 *From His mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. 16 On His robe at His thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: "Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. 18 Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great." (Does this not describe that great & terrible Day?!)*

H. I do not share any of this to scare you into a relationship with Christ. Fear tactics of that sort, if they have any effect at all, merely bring about a fear-filled emotional response that peters out as quickly as it begins. No, I don't seek to scare you but rather to prepare you for what's to come, this second Advent, this *Day* that'll be much different than the first Advent in a Bethlehem stable...

I. The late Anglican Preacher & Theologian, John Stott, wrote in his famed book, *Basic Christianity*: "Christ's fourth indirect claim was *to judge the world*. This is perhaps the most fantastic of all His statements. Several of His parables imply that He will come back at the end of the world, and that the final day of reckoning will be postponed until His return. He will Himself arouse the dead, and all the nations will be gathered before Him. He will sit on the throne of His glory, and the judgment will be committed to Him by the Father. He will then separate men from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats. Some will be invited to come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Others will hear the dreadful words, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' Not only will Jesus be the judge, but the criterion of judgment will be men's attitude to Him as shown in their treatment of His 'brethren' or their response to His word. Those who have acknowledged Him before men He will acknowledge before His Father: those who have denied Him, He will deny. Indeed, for a man to be excluded from heaven on the last day, it will be enough for Jesus to say, "I never knew you."

J. Most of us will view this *Day* from a heavenly perspective, from the vantage point of having graduated to the Church Triumphant. Some, however, on that *Day* will be members of the Church Militant here on the earth. Their *Day* that *Day* will fair quite better, even extraordinarily well! But all of us in the here and now can wait lovingly and expectantly for our Lord's return. Our testimony at the end of our time here will hopefully be like that of the Apostle Paul...

K. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 (AMP) has Paul writing to his son in the faith his last will and testament: *6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure [from this world] is at hand and I will soon go free. 7 I have fought the good and worthy and noble fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith [firmly guarding the gospel against error]. 8 In the future there is reserved for me the [victor's] crown of righteousness [for being right with God and doing right], which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that [great] Day--and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved and longed for and welcomed His appearing.*

*** Close with Prayer...**

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 (ESV)

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. **4** Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. **5** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- **6** since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will

suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might, **10** when He comes on that Day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. **11** To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, **12** so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 110:5-6 (ESV)

5 The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings on the Day of His wrath. **6** He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; He will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

Revelation 19:11-18 (NLT)

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for He judges fairly and wages a righteous war. **12** His eyes were like flames of fire, and on His head were many crowns. A name was written on Him that no one understood except Himself. **13** He wore a robe dipped in blood, and His title was the Word of God. **14** The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed Him on white horses. **15** From His mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. **16** On His robe at His thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords. **17** Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: "Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. **18** Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great."

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (AMP)

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure [from this world] is at hand and I will soon go free. **7** I have fought the good and worthy and noble fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith [firmly guarding the gospel against error]. **8** In the future there is reserved for me the [victor's] crown of righteousness [for being right with God and doing right], which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that [great] Day--and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved and longed for and welcomed His appearing.

Quote by John Stott

"Christ's fourth indirect claim was to judge the world. This is perhaps the most fantastic of all His statements. Several of His parables imply that He will come back at the end of the world, and that the final day of reckoning will be postponed until His return. He will Himself arouse the dead, and all the nations will be gathered before Him. He will sit on the throne of His glory, and the judgment will be committed to Him by the Father. He will then separate men from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats. Some will be invited to come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Others will hear the dreadful words, 'Depart from Me, you

cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' Not only will Jesus be the judge, but the criterion of judgment will be men's attitude to Him as shown in their treatment of His 'brethren' or their response to His word. Those who have acknowledged Him before men He will acknowledge before His Father: those who have denied Him, He will deny. Indeed, for a man to be excluded from heaven on the last day, it will be enough for Jesus to say, "I never knew you."

- John Stott, *Basic Christianity*.

Bonus Goodies

Living Between Two Advents - Ken Boa (CBN)

<https://www1.cbn.com/spiritual-life/living-between-two-advents>

The Advent of Christ - A Devotional from Ligonier Ministries

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/advent-christ>

Already, Not Yet - David Briones (Westminster Seminary / Desiring God)

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/already-not-yet>

More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras

Daniel 12:1-4 (NLT)

1 "At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued. **2** Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace. **3** Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever. **4** But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end, when many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase."

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (VOICE)

1 And now I bring you this charge before God and Jesus the Anointed, the One destined to judge the living and the dead, at His glorious appearance and His kingdom: **2** go out and preach the word! Go whether it's an opportune time or not! Reprove, warn, and encourage; but do so with all the patience and instruction needed to fulfill your calling **3** because a time will come when some will no longer tolerate sound teaching. Instead, they will live by their own desires; they'll scratch their itching ears by surrounding themselves with teachers who approve of their lifestyles and tell them what they want to hear. **4** They will turn away from the real truth you have to offer because they prefer the sound of fables and myths. **5** But you must stay focused and be alert at all times. Tolerate suffering. Accomplish the good work of an evangelist, and complete the ministry to which you have been called.

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 (NLT)

8 And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it, **9** for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. **10** And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven--Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. **14** For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. **15** According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 (ESV)

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. **4** Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. **5** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— **6** since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might, **10** when He comes on that day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. **11** To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, **12** so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Quote by Stephen Charnock

"Not all the vials of judgment that have or shall be poured out upon the wicked world, nor the flaming furnace of a sinner's conscience, nor the irreversible sentence pronounced against the rebellious demons, nor the groans of the damned creatures – give such a demonstration of God's hatred of sin – as the wrath of God let loose upon His Son! Never did divine holiness appear more beautiful and lovely than at the time

our Savior's countenance was most marred in the midst of His dying groans – when God had turned His smiling face from Him, and thrust His sharp knife into His heart, which forced that terrible cry from Him, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me!"

- Stephen Charnock, (1628 - 1680) English Puritan, Presbyterian Pastor, Christian Author.

Quote by Harold Senkbeil

"Most people think that the human dilemma is that our lives are out of adjustment; we don't meet God's expectations. Salvation then becomes a matter of rearranging our priorities and adjusting our life-style to correspond with God's will. In its crassest form, this error leads people to think they earn their own salvation. More often in today's evangelical world, that error has a more subtle disguise: armed with forgiveness through Jesus, people are urged to practice the techniques and principles Christ gave to bring their life-style back into line. It is certainly true that sinful lives are out of adjustment. We are all in need of the Spirit's sanctifying power. But that comes only after our real problem is solved. Sins are just the symptom; our real dilemma is death. God warned Adam and Eve that the knowledge of came with a high price tag: "...when you eat of (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) you will surely die" (Ge. 2:17). Our first parents wanted to be like God and were willing to pay the price. And we are still paying the price: "the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23) "...in Adam we all die" (1 Cor. 15:22); "...you were dead in your transgressions and sins" (Eph. 2:1). The real problem we all face is death. Physical death, to be sure. But ultimately and most horribly, spiritual death--being cut off from God forever. And everyone must die. You can either die alone or in Jesus. In His death Jesus Christ swallowed up our death, and rose again triumphantly to take all of the teeth out of the grave. In the promise of the resurrection, death loses its power. When we die with Jesus, we really live!"

- Harold Senkbeil, *Dying To Live: The Power of Forgiveness*, p 13.

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"God, by the very perfection of His moral nature, cannot but be angry at sin – not only because of its destructiveness to humans, but, more important, because of its assault on His divine majesty. This is not the mere petulance of an offended deity because His commands are not obeyed. It is rather the necessary response of God to uphold His moral authority in His universe. And though God's wrath does not contain the sinful emotions associated with human wrath, it does contain a fierce intensity arising from His settled opposition to sin and His determination to punish it to the utmost."

Quote by D.A. Carson

"God's wrath is not an implacable, blind rage. However emotional it may be, it is an entirely reasonable and willed response to offenses against His holiness. But His love... wells up amidst His perfections and is not generated by the loveliness of the loved. Thus there is nothing intrinsically impossible about wrath and love being directed toward the same individual or people at the same time. God in His perfections must be wrathful against His rebel image-breakers, for they have offended Him; God in His perfections must be loving toward His rebel image-bearers, for He is that kind of God.

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

“The hearing of the gospel involves the hearer in responsibility. It is a great privilege to hear the gospel. You may smile and think there is nothing very great in it. The damned in hell know. Oh, what would they give if they could hear the gospel now? If they could come back and entertain but the shadow of a hope that they might escape from the wrath to come? The saved in heaven estimate this privilege at a high rate, for, having obtained salvation through the preaching of this gospel, they can never cease to bless their God for calling them by His word of truth. O that you knew it! On your dying beds the listening to a gospel sermon will seem another thing than it seems now.

Settling Accounts

The story is told of a farmer in a Midwestern state who had a strong disdain for “religious” things. As he plowed his field on Sunday morning, he would shake his fist at the church people who passed by on their way to worship. October came and the farmer had his finest crop ever—the best in the entire county. When the harvest was complete, he placed an advertisement in the local paper which belittled the Christians for their faith in God. Near the end of his diatribe he wrote, “*Faith in God must not mean much if someone like me can prosper.*” The response from the Christians in the community was quiet and polite. In the next edition of the town paper, a small ad appeared. It read simply, “*God doesn’t settle His accounts in October.*”

- William E. Brown in *Making Sense of Your Faith*.

Judged by A Different Set of Standards

In *Words We Live By*, Brian Burrell tells of an armed robber named Dennis Lee Curtis who was arrested in 1992 in Rapid City, South Dakota. Curtis apparently had scruples about his thievery. In his wallet the police found a sheet of paper on which was written the following code:

I will not kill anyone unless I have to.

I will take cash and food stamps—no checks.

I will rob only at night.

I will not wear a mask.

I will not rob mini-marts or 7-Eleven stores.

If I get chased by cops on foot, I will get away. If chased by vehicle, I will not put the lives of innocent civilians on the line.

I will rob only seven months out of the year.

I will enjoy robbing from the rich to give to the poor.

This thief had a sense of morality, but it was flawed. When he stood before the court, he was not judged by the standards he had set for himself but by the higher law of the state. Likewise when we stand before God, we will not be judged by the code of morality we have written for ourselves but by God’s perfect law.

- Taken from [Craig Brian Larson, Choice Contemporary Stories and Illustrations \(Baker, 1998\), p.181.](#)

Standing Where Fire's Been

By H.A. Ironside

One of the first gospel illustrations that ever made a real impression upon my young heart was a simple story which I heard a preacher tell when I was less than nine years old.

It was of pioneers who were making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They traveled in covered wagons drawn by oxen, and progress was necessarily slow. One day they were horrified to note a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely and coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames would be upon them. One man only seemed to have understanding as to what could be done. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon it. As the flames roared on toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?" The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has been!"

What a picture of the believer, who is safe in Christ!

"On Him Almighty vengeance fell,
Which would have sunk a world to hell.
He bore it for a chosen race,
And thus becomes our Hiding Place."

The fires of God's judgment burned themselves out on Him, and all who are in Christ are safe forever, for they are now standing where the fire has been.

- H.A. Ironside, *Illustrations of Bible Truth*, Moody Press, 1945, p.p. 34-35.

Gospel and Judgment by Charles Spurgeon

<https://www.monergism.com/gospel-and-judgment-c-h-spurgeon>

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained." - Acts 17:30-31

Now, according to the revelation of the gospel, this Judgment will be conducted by the Man Christ Jesus. God will judge the world; but it will be through His Son, Whom He has ordained and appointed actually to carry out the business of that last tremendous day. He Who shall sit upon the throne is "the Son of man." He will be thus enthroned, I suppose, partly because it is involved in His mediatorial office, in which the Lord hath put all things in "subjection under His feet" (Heb 2:8). He is at the right hand of God, "*angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him*" (1Peter 3:22). God has been pleased to put the world, not under the direct government of personal deity, but under the government of the Mediator, that He might deal with us in mercy. That

Mediator is Prophet, Priest, and King; and His Kingship would be shorn of its glory if the King had not the power of life and death, and the power of holding court and judging His subjects.

Jesus Christ, therefore, being mediatorial King and Sovereign, all power being given unto Him in heaven and in earth, He will take unto Himself His great power at the last and will judge the nations. This high position is also awarded to our Lord as an honor from the Father, by which shall be wiped away every trace of the shame and dishonor through which He passed among the sons of men. The kings of the earth stood up to judge Him, but they shall stand before Him to be judged. The rulers took counsel together to condemn Him, but the rulers shall stand at His bar to be themselves condemned. Pontius Pilate and the chief priests shall all be there, and Caesar, and all Caesars, Czars, emperors, kings, and princes shall do homage before Him in lowliest manner, by standing before His judgment seat as prisoners to be tried by Him. There will be no recollection of the scepter of reed, for He shall break His enemies with a rod of iron (Mat 12:20; Rev 19:15). There shall be no marks of the thorn-crown, for on His head shall be many a diadem. Men shall not then be able to think of Him as the "man of tears" with visage sadly marred by grief and shame, for His eyes shall be as a flame of fire and His countenance as the sun shining in its strength. O Cross, whatever of shame there was about thee shall be wiped out forever among the sons of men, for this Man shall sit upon the throne of judgment!

The Father designed to put this honor upon Him, and He hath right well deserved it. Jesus Christ as God hath a glory that He had with the Father before the world was; but as God-man, He hath a glory that His Father hath given Him to be the reward of that labor of life and death by which He hath redeemed His people. *"Give unto the Lord glory and strength"* (Psalm 96:7) is the ascription of all His saints, and God the everlasting Father hath done this unto His Son, concerning Whom He hath sworn that *"every knee should bow"* before Him and *"that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:10-11). *"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him"* (Judges 1:14-15)...

It is as Son of Man as well as Son of God that our Lord will judge the world at the last great day.

Be ye sure, then, of His impartiality. He is God, yet man, having an intense sympathy both with the King and with the subjects, having manifested His grace even to the rebellious and being yet filled with intense love to the Father and His Law. If we could have the election of a judge, what being could we suppose more impartial or so impartial as the Lord, Who *"thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men"* (Philippians 2:6-7)? O blessed Judge, be Thou at once enthroned by the choice of the whole creation!...

[The Son of Man's] verdict will be final and irreversible.

When Jesus has once pronounced it, there will be no appeal, no suing out of a writ of error, no reversal of the decree. He Himself hath said it: *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal"* (Matthew 25:46). There will be no delay in execution or escape from the doom. There will be no steeling of the heart to endure it and no outliving the doom. It will last on in all its terror, the final verdict of the Judge of all the earth, pronounced by the Christ of love. I know not how to speak upon such a theme as this, but must leave it as it stands before you. May the Holy Ghost impress it upon your minds.

- From a sermon delivered on Lord's Day morning, May 25, 1879, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington...

The Final Judgment

The Reformation Study Bible - R.C. Sproul - General Editor

The certainty of final judgment is the background against which the New Testament message of saving grace is set. Paul no less than Jesus stresses this certainty. According to Paul, Jesus Christ saves us from "the wrath to come" (1Thess. 1:10) on "the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom. 2:5; cf. John 3:36; Rom. 5:9; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; Rev. 6:17; 19:15). Throughout Scripture, God's indignation, "anger," and "fury" are judicial; these words point to the holy Creator as the active Judge of sin. The message of coming judgment for all mankind, with Jesus Christ completing the work of His mediatorial kingdom by acting as Judge on His Father's behalf, runs throughout the New Testament (Matt. 13:40-43; 25:41-46; John 5:22-30; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 10:25-31; 12:23; 2 Pet. 3:7; Jude 6, 7; Rev. 20:11-15). When Christ comes again and history is completed, all people of all times will be raised for the judgment and take their place before Christ's throne. The event surpasses imagination, but the human imagination is not the measure of what God will do.

At the judgment every person will give an individual account to God, and God through Christ "will render to each one according to his works" (Rom. 2:6; cf. Ps. 62:12; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12). The regenerate, who as servants of Christ have learned to love righteousness and desire the glory of heaven, will be acknowledged, and on the basis of Christ's merit on their behalf they will be awarded the righteousness they seek. The rest will go to a destiny commensurate with the godless way of life they have chosen, a place assigned to them on the basis of their own demerit (Rom. 2:6-11). How much they knew of the will of God will determine the severity of their condemnation (Matt. 11:20-24; Luke 11:42-48; Rom. 2:12).

The judgment will demonstrate the perfect justice of God. In a world of sinners, where God has "allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16), evil is rampant, and doubts arise about how God, if He is sovereign, can be just, or, if He is just, can be sovereign. But God will be glorified in rendering just judgment, and the Last Judgment

will answer every suspicion that He has ceased to care about righteousness (Ps. 50:16-21; Rev. 6:10; 16:5-7; 19:1-5).

For those who profess to belong to Christ, a review of their words and works (Matt. 12:36, 37) will show whether their profession is the fruit of an honest and good heart (Matt. 12:33-35), or a deceptive hypocrisy (Matt. 7:21-23). Everything will be exposed on Judgment Day (1 Cor. 4:5), and each person will receive from God what fairly belongs to them. Those whose professed faith did not express itself in a new life, marked by hatred of sin and love of righteousness, will be lost (Matt. 18:23-35; 25:34-46; James 2:14-26). Yet God has announced the day of judgment before the time commanding everyone to repent and love life rather than death (Deut. 30:19; Luke 13:24).

- Reformation Study Bible, R.C. Sproul - General Editor, Theological Note on Matthew 24-25, p. 1404.