

Revelation, Part 26

Rev 19:11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

We now have the high point of all Scripture, the culminating moment in history. John closes his comments on the Wedding Supper of the Lamb with an introduction to what is coming. To be invited to the Wedding Supper is a great blessing because only believers are allowed in. Though many are called, few are chosen. The tremendous revelation in the first 10 verses of chapter 19 is a fitting introduction to what is about to be revealed, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the subject of the entire book, as mentioned in the very first verse of chapter 1.

REV 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John

In the rest of chapter 19, we see the Son of Man return as the conquering Messiah to deliver the surviving remnant of the Tribulation and set up His eternal Kingdom.

Rev 19:11 Then I saw heaven opened and here came a white horse! The one riding it was called "Faithful" and "True," and with justice, he judges and goes to war.

First note how different the action is than what is presented in Rapture passages like 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 where it says, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 4:17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

Or in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 where it says, "We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

Does this sound like, "Then I saw heaven opened, and here came a white horse! The one riding it was called "Faithful" and "True," and with justice, he judges and goes to war?"

No. The Second Advent is nothing like the Rapture. Arguments that the Rapture is post-Trib must be discarded on that basis, as well as others such as the analogy to a Jewish wedding.

Many other passages in the Bible speak of this event. Let's look at a few. In Daniel 2 we have the interpretation of the statue that has feet made of iron and clay:

Dan 2:42 In that the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, the latter stages of this kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile. 2:43 And in that you saw iron mixed with wet clay, so people will be mixed with one another without adhering to one another, just as iron

does not mix with clay. 2:44 In the days of those kings the God of heaven will raise up an everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed and a kingdom that will not be left to another people. It will break in pieces and bring about the demise of all these kingdoms. But it will stand forever. 2:45 You saw that a stone was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands; it smashed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold into pieces. The great God has made known to the king what will occur in the future. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is reliable.”

The “stone...cut...not by human hands” is a picture of the Second Advent and the coming of Christ who destroys the evil Revived Roman Empire to establish His own Kingdom.

Dan 7:13 I was watching in the night visions, “And with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. 14 To him was given ruling authority, honor, and sovereignty. All peoples, nations, and language groups were serving him. His authority is eternal and will not pass away. His kingdom will not be destroyed.

This speaks of Christ setting up His eternal Kingdom and how the people of the world will serve Him.

Hosea 3:4 For the Israelites must live many days without a king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred fertility pillar, without ephod or idols. 3:5 Afterward, the Israelites will turn and seek the Lord their God and their Davidic king. Then they will submit to the Lord in fear and receive his blessings in the future.

When Hosea speaks of Israel being without a king or even their idols, he is referring to the two thousand years they were without even a nation and the Jews scattered all over the world, as discipline for their unfaithfulness and rejecting their Messiah. But they will eventually submit to the Lord and receive His blessings. This is referring to the Kingdom.

Mat 24:27 For just like the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 29 “Immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven

will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This passage in Matthew sounds very much like our study passage in Revelation but goes on to describe the Kingdom after the Second Advent.

Mat 25:31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Rev 1:7 (Look! He is returning with the clouds, and every eye will see him even those who pierced him, and all the tribes on the earth will mourn because of him. This will certainly come to pass! Amen.)

These are just a few passages that speak of the Second Advent, and there are many more. Back to our study passage.

Rev 19:11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

“Heaven opened.” It is hard to imagine how this will look. Does the sky part and reveal this scene? It must be absolutely stunning to see. John sees Christ riding a white horse. Though some have identified this rider with the rider in Revelation 6:2, the context is entirely different. In 6:2 the rider is the world ruler of the Great Tribulation, while here the rider is a ruler who obviously comes from Heaven itself. The white horse is a sign of His coming triumph. It was customary for a triumphant Roman general to parade on the Via Sacra, a main thoroughfare of Rome, followed by evidence of His victory in the form of booty and captives. The white horse is, thus, a symbol of Christ’s triumph over the forces of wickedness in the world, the details of which follow.

He is called faithful and true — always does what He says. “And in righteousness he judges and makes war.” His piercing judgment of sin is indicated in these words. The word translated as "righteousness" is dikaiosune. Some translate it as “in justice,” but I think it is better translated as "with righteousness He judges”.

Mat 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness goes beyond that of the experts in the law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The righteousness of God is His perfect standard. It is like the huge law library you see in law firms and judges' offices. It is what He uses to judge his creation. The perfect righteousness of God is administered by his perfect justice. In other words, God not only has a perfect standard by which everything gets measured, but the process of measuring is also perfect. The righteousness of God and the justice of God are not only two elements of His divine essence but combined they form His Integrity or Holiness. The justice of God administers what the righteousness of God demands. If the righteousness of God demands chastisement, then discipline is administered by the Justice of God. If the righteousness of God demands blessing, then the justice of God administers blessing. God is returning at the Second Advent to administer justice according to His righteous standard. And it won't be pretty. Look at the next verse:

Rev 19:12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

His eyes are like blazing fire, and His right to rule is evidenced by the many crowns He is wearing. Written on Him is a name that no one but He knows, suggesting that Christ is the ineffable, indescribable One. Some actual titles are given for Him:

- Revelation 19:13 says, His name is the Word of God (cf. John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1),
- Revelation 19:16 states that the name of His robe and on His thigh is “King of kings” and “Lord of lords” (cf. 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14).

The rider is obviously Jesus Christ, returning to the Earth in glory. That He is coming as Judge is further supported by the fact that ...

Rev 19:13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God

We have similar references in Revelation 14 and Isaiah 63.

Rev 14:17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 14:18 Another angel, who was in charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes off the vine of the earth, because its grapes are now ripe." 14:19 So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the grapes from the vineyard of the earth and tossed them into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 14:20 Then the winepress was stomped outside the city, and blood poured out of the winepress up to the height of horses' bridles for a distance of almost two hundred miles.

Isa 63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom, dressed in bright red, coming from Bozrah? Who is this one wearing royal attire, who marches confidently because of his great strength? "It is I, the one who announces vindication, and who is able to deliver!" 2 Why are your clothes red? Why do you look like someone who has stomped on grapes in a vat? 3 "I have stomped grapes in the winepress all by myself; no one from the nations joined me. I stomped on them in my anger; I trampled them down in my rage. Their juice splashed on my garments and stained all my clothes.

The fact that Christ's robe is dipped or splattered in blood may indicate several possible things: It is a foreshadowing of the judgment to come as seen in Revelation 14:17 and as the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" says, "He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are sown...." Meaning his robes are stained with splattered blood from the wrath of His judgment, which is about to happen. Or it could be related to the deliverance of those Jews who fled to the mountains of Edom, Moab, and Ammon in the middle of the Tribulation when the Abomination of Desolation went up in the Temple. I am not prepared to be dogmatic about this and consider either answer or both a possibility. Whatever the interpretation, He has company with Him.

Rev 19:14 The armies that are in heaven, dressed in white, clean, fine linen, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth extends a

sharp sword so that with it he can strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod, and he stomps the winepress of the furious wrath of God, the All-Powerful. 16 He has a name written on his clothing and on his thigh: “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

The drama of the scene is further enhanced by the multitude of the armies of Heaven described as riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Most assume this is the Church and angelic hosts of Heaven riding white horses and wearing white linen both suggest righteousness and victory. The Church is the only group to have been resurrected, evaluated, and rewarded at this point. I don't think any Old Testament or tribulation saints are included.

In Christ's mouth is a sharp sword that He will use to strike down the nations. The word for “sword” (*rhomphaia*) was used of an unusually long sword and sometimes used as a spear, thus indicating a piercing action. We have seen this sword before:

Rev 2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

Coming out of His mouth, it seems to refer to the Word of God, faithful and true, and slays its enemies. In addition to using the sword for striking down His enemies, He will use an iron scepter for ruling (cf. Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27).

Ps 2:9 You will break them with an iron scepter; you will smash them like a potter's jar!”

Rev 2:27 he will rule them with an iron rod and like clay jars he will break them to pieces

The iron scepter is a reference to His rule. It will be righteous and administered in perfect justice. There will be Zero Tolerance for sin under His rule. That is the only way we can have even the resemblance of a return to the conditions of the Garden that is associated with the Millennium when one considers there will be those alive during this period still in their human corruptible bodies and with sinful natures still fully active.

Christ is also described as the One who treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. He is almighty and that is the image of Him presented here. His perfect justice is to be administered to these nations who rejected Him and later to those who enter the Millennium. This scene is a dramatic indication of the awfulness of the impending judgment. Matthew 24:30 indicates that those on earth will be witnesses of this impressive scene.

Mat 24:29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The scene on earth is the final stage of the great world war that will be underway for many months. With armies battling up and down the Holy Land for victory, on the very day of the return of Christ, there will be house-to-house fighting in Jerusalem itself (Zech. 14:2).

Zech 14:2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to wage war; the city will be taken, its houses plundered, and the women raped. Then half of the city will go into exile, but the remainder of the people will not be taken away.

Combatants will have been lured to the battle site by demons sent by Satan to assemble the armies of the world to fight the armies of Heaven.

Rev. 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and dried up its water to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 13 Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of the demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the earth to bring them together for the battle that will take place on the great day of God, the All-Powerful.

We may rejoice that Christ has the final victory but it is impossible to ignore the horror and utter awfulness of the slaughter that is taking place at this point. This is not something that you want to be present for.

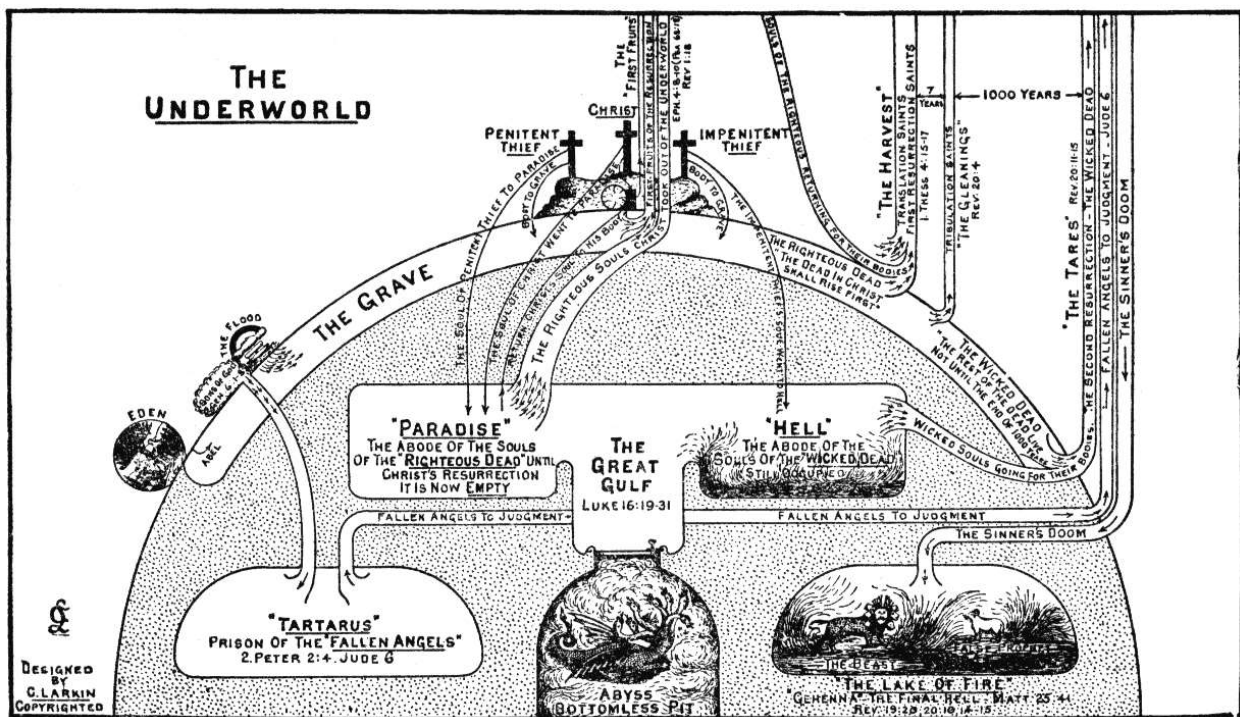
Rev 19:17 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

In these passages, we have the final scene of the Second Advent and the opening elements of the Millennium. In 19:17-18. The armies of Earth are no match for the sharp sword in Christ's mouth (v15), symbolic of His authoritative word of command that destroys earth's armies by divine power. Millions of men and their horses will be destroyed instantly. In keeping with this, John recorded that he saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all flying birds to gather together for the great supper of God to eat the carcasses of kings, generals, horsemen, and all people slain by Christ.

In verses 19-21. The beast and his armies will gather to fight against Christ and His army. The outcome of this battle referred to in 16:14 as "the battle on the great day of God Almighty," is summarized in 19:19-21. The world rulers—the beast and the false prophet—will both be captured. Their former miraculous demonic power will no longer be sufficient to save them. Both will be thrown alive into "the lake of fire that burns with sulfur". The wicked who have died throughout the history of the world up to this point are in Hades (Luke 16:23) which is in the "Underworld". Let's take a moment to clarify some of this.

Luke 16:19 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his

finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’
 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ 27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ 29 But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”



Clarence Larkin (chart above) and Luke give us a picture of Hades, which is divided into several compartments. The word translated as "hell" in verse 23 is the Greek *hades*. Luke 16:22 tells us that at death believers, in this case, Lazarus, go to a place in Hades called "Abraham's Bosom," sometimes translated as "Abraham's Side". The rich man, an unbeliever identified by his uncaring nature, ends up in Hades also but in another compartment called "Torments". Luke 16:26 tells us these two

compartments are separated by “a great chasm”. Chasm is a transliteration of the Greek *chasma* which refers to a void or gape and is translated in some Bibles as a “gulf”. I am not quite sure how to describe this. Is it a body of water? Or a void and deep crevice no one can cross? Larkin sees it as the abyss. Regardless, the two compartments are separated by a divide that prevents the crossing from one side to the other. There is a third compartment.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment, 2:5 and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah

The word translated as “hell” here is different from the one in the Luke passage. This Greek word gets transliterated into “Tartarus”. Note also the difference in the descriptions between the hell in Luke and the hell in 2 Peter. In Luke, the rich man can see across the gulf and it is hot where he is “I am in anguish in this fire.” In 2 Peter: the angels were “locked...up in chains in utter darkness”. We have two different Greek words and two different descriptions, thus, I think we have two different places: Torments and Tartarus. The compartment Torments contains unbelieving humans. Tartarus contains the fallen angels who copulated with human women during the time of Noah (Gen 6:1-4).

Now, consider this scene at the cross.

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

If we connect this comment by Jesus with the story of the Lazarus and rich man, we must conclude that “Paradise,” the place where Abraham, a believer went, Paradise must not be connected with any form of punishment. Rather it is a holding place for believers until the Cross. Now, let's go to First Peter ...

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Hades sometimes translated as hell consists of four parts:

1. Abraham's Bosom or Paradise, the abode of OT saints until the Cross.
2. Torments, the abode of unsaved humans, and it is hot.
3. These two are divided by the great chasm or gulf or abyss.
4. Tartarus is the abode of the fallen angels from the time of Noah (Gen 6) and it is dark.

Upon his death, the soul of Jesus went to Paradise with the repentant thief that was on the cross next to him. On the day of His resurrection, His soul, Spirit, and body are reunited, and Jesus goes to preach the truth of the victory over Satan to the fallen angels in Tartarus who, because of their incarceration, did not know their boss has failed.

I believe Paradise is empty now and has been since the ascension of Christ. Those believers are in Heaven, and all believers since then also go to Heaven. Torments and Tartarus are still occupied, and we will come back to them later in this study.

But we also have the Lake of Fire, a different place prepared for the devil and his angels

Mat 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!

This is a picture of later judgments at the end of the Millennium. Meanwhile, Rev 19:20 tells us it will be the abode of the antichrist and the false prophet. Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Both of them were “thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur”.

The Lake of Fire will not be occupied by human beings until later after the White Throne judgment at the end of the Millennium

Rev. 20:14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death – the lake of fire. **15** If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, that person was thrown into the lake of fire.

At this time the Devil is also thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Rev 20:10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented there day and night forever and ever.

Back to Revelation 19.

In Revelation 19:15 The armies themselves will be killed by Christ’s sword. The number of dead will be so great that the vultures will have more than they can eat. The defeat of the earth’s wicked will then be complete and will be finalized as later judgments search out the unsaved in other parts of the earth and eliminate them (Matt. 25:31-45). We will look at that judgment later.

The same inspired Word of God, which so wonderfully describes the grace of God and the salvation which is available to all who believe, is equally plain about the judgment of all who reject the grace of God. The tendency of liberal interpreters of the Bible to emphasize passages dealing with the love of God and to ignore passages dealing with His righteous judgment is completely unjustified. The passages on judgment are as inspired and accurate as those which develop the doctrines of grace and salvation. The Bible is clear that judgment awaits the wicked, and the Second Advent of Christ is the occasion for a worldwide judgment unparalleled in Scripture since the time of Noah’s flood.

The point of contact between man and God is always His Justice.