

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history.
 It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world,
 to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God
 before it is forever too late;
 for just ahead is —

**PART ONE
 OF SIXTEEN**

The Terrible Storm

Here is the Bible/Spirit of Prophecy answer
 to a very important question:
Does God ever kill the incorrigibly wicked?

It will be the worst storm in human history. It is the storm of God's wrath against sin. The largest and the last. **Every special outpouring of God's judgments upon this world has always been preceded by a special pleading call to repentance and a warning to flee from sin.** And our time is no exception—*except that, in our time, the last warning against sin that will ever take place is to be given. That warning is the Three Angels' Message. The Advent people have been assigned the task of giving it.* —Yet, at this crucial time, some among us are saying that the warning is in error; for God has no judgment, no wrath, and no punishment of sin as is described in Scripture.

This present study, *The Terrible Storm*, has been produced to clearly establish, from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, that **our historic beliefs on this topic are indeed correct.** We dare not forsake the Third Angel's Message for another message. — *vf*

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INTRODUCTION

For every generation there is a special truth, a "present truth," that it must accept and proclaim. God has entrusted Seventh-day Adventists with the Three Angels' Messages. Those messages are given in expanded form in the *Great Controversy*. It is the work of our people to tell all men everywhere that they must come to Jesus, turn in His strength from their sins, and obey His Ten Commandment Law. Along with this, the warning is given to flee from the churches fallen in disobedience, lest the faithful be engulfed in the final outpouring of God's wrath on the wicked. God's last warning is a message prompted by deep love for the stubborn and rebellious, before human probation forever closes. **Let us say it again: God's last warning—the warning of the terrible storm to soon fall on the wicked—is given because of His deep love for mankind.** When men preach that no retribution is coming because God is too loving to send it, they are not only teaching error but encouraging the wicked to remain in their sins. None who believe that Christ saves them from their sins should teach this.

A BRIEF SPIRIT OF PROPHECY SUMMARY

Here are some Spirit of Prophecy passages which overview the subject. They are in total harmony with the Bible.

A single angel destroyed all the first born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning.

“This [the plagues] was regarded by Pharaoh, not as a work of God’s power, but as a result of magic.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 264.

“When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The **same** destructive power exercised by **holy angels** when **God commands** will be exercised by evil angels when **He permits**.”—*Great Controversy*, 614.

“‘All the wicked will He destroy’ . . . **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion.**”—*Great Controversy*, 541.

“Although loath to punish, nevertheless **He will punish**, and that speedily.”—5 *Testimonies*, 209.

“The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because He puts **constraint** on His own attributes; but punishment is nonetheless certain . . . and when the time comes, and the iniquity is full, **then God will do His strange work.**”—2 *Selected Messages*, 372-373 (*Isa 28:21; PP 628*).

“**It is God who holds in His hands the destiny** of souls. He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with.”—5 *Testimonies*, 234.

“God has given in His Word **decisive evidence** that He will punish transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary.”—*Great Controversy*, 539-540.

“**He will destroy them** [the wicked] **utterly** and cause them to be as if they had not been; then His justice will be satisfied.”—*Early Writings*, 221.

“**In mercy** to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah’s time. **In mercy** He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom . . . It is **in mercy** to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.”—*Great Controversy*, 543.

“Abraham had seen in his guests only three tired wayfarers, little thinking that among them was One whom he might worship without sin. But the true character of the heavenly messengers was now revealed . . . They were on their way as ministers of wrath . . . **God is strict to mark iniquity and to punish transgression** . . . The work of destruction is a ‘strange work’ to Him who is infinite in love.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 138-139.

“While angels drew near on their mission of destruction, men were dreaming of prosperity and pleasure . . . They rushed upon him [Lot], and would

have torn him in pieces had he not been rescued by **the angels of God**. The heavenly messengers put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house . . . The inhabitants of Sodom had passed the limits of divine forbearance—‘the hidden boundary between God’s patience and His wrath.’ The fires of His vengeance were about to be revealed in the vale of Siddim. The angels revealed to Lot the object of their mission: **‘We will destroy** this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it’ [*Gen 19:13*] . . . Lot went out to warn his children. **He repeated the words of the angels**, ‘Up, get you out of this place; for **the Lord will destroy** this city’ [*Gen 19:14*]. He did not realize the **terrible necessity** for God’s judgments to put a check on sin . . . But for the **angels of God**, they would all have perished in the ruin of Sodom. The heavenly messengers took him . . . out of the city. Here the angels left them, and **turned back** to Sodom to accomplish their work of destruction.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 157, 159-160.

“For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it . . . **Then the Lord rained** upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.”—*Genesis 19:13, 24*.

“ . . . like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, **which the Lord overthrew** in His anger, and in His wrath.”—*Deuteronomy 29:23 (Eze 16:49-50; Jude 7)*.

“**The judgment which God brought** upon the antediluvian world declared it incurable. The destruction of Sodom proclaimed the inhabitants of the most beautiful country in the world incorrigible in sin.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 75.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . And the Lord said, **I will destroy man** whom I have created from the face of the earth.”—*Genesis 6:5, 7*.

“In Noah’s day, men had disregarded the law of God until almost all remembrance of the Creator had passed away from the earth. Their iniquity reached so great a height that **the Lord brought** a flood of waters upon the earth, and swept away its wicked inhabitants.”—*Christ’s Object lessons*, 178.

“A hundred and twenty years before the Flood, the Lord by a holy angel declared to Noah His purpose, and directed him to build an ark. While building the ark he was to preach **that God would** bring a flood of water upon the earth to **destroy the wicked**. [The antitype of the Third Angel’s Warning. Read Revelation 14:9-12]. ‘By faith Noah, warned of God of things not seen as yet [still future], moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which

is by faith' (*Heb 11:7*) . . . **He gave the world an example of believing just what God says** . . . They reasoned, as many reason now, that nature is above the God of nature, and that her laws are so firmly established that God Himself could not change them . . . Animals obeyed the command of God, while men were disobedient . . . All were secretly inquiring, 'Can it be that Noah was in the right [in regard to what he said], and that the world is doomed to destruction?' . . .

"**Satan** himself, who was **compelled** to remain in the midst of the warring elements, **feared for his own existence**. He had delighted to control so powerful a race, and **desired them to live** to practice their abominations **and continue their rebellion** against the Ruler of heaven. He now uttered imprecations against God, charging Him with injustice and cruelty. [Satan's charge is the very error believed by some today: 'It would be wrong for God to kill the incorrigibly wicked.']. . .

"Love, no less than justice, **demand**ed that God's judgments should put a check on sin . . . 'By the word [command] of God . . . the world that then was . . . perished.'

"**Another storm is coming**. The earth will again be swept by the desolating wrath of God, and sin and sinners will be destroyed . . . **Before the Flood God sent Noah to warn the world**, that the people might be led to repentance, and thus escape the threatened destruction. As the time of Christ's second appearing draws near, the Lord sends His servants with **a warning to the world** to prepare for that great event . . . Before the Lawgiver shall come to punish the disobedient, transgressors are **warned** to repent, and return to their allegiance."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 92, 95, 97-100, 101-102.

The "God will not kill anyone" error is a denial of that final message, given in Revelation 14:6-12. The "God will not kill anyone" error is a denial of that final message.

"There will be a series of events revealing that God is **master** of the situation."—*Life Sketches*, 415.

"Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity' . . . **The storm of God's wrath is gathering**; and those only will stand who respond to the invitations of mercy, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh under the teaching of Jonah."—*Prophets and Kings*, 278.

"More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God's judgments are in the world . . . **The time is nearing** when the great crisis in the history of the world will have come . . . The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy

for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth."—*9 Testimonies*, 97.

"The judgments of God are in our land. The Lord is soon to come . . . **In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another** . . . I am instructed to say that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that has been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God."—*Life Sketches*, 412-414.

"God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy . . . In God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other . . . Another deception was now to be brought forward. **Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice**. [That is what some of our people are teaching today!]"—*Desire of Ages*, 762.

"Those who link in sympathy with the world are eating and drinking with the drunken and will surely be destroyed with the workers of iniquity."—*5 Testimonies*, 212.

"And God hath given Him authority to execute the judgment also, because He is the Son of man."—*Desire of Ages*, 210.

"God designed that the Prince of sufferers in humanity should be judge of the whole world . . . He alone is to pronounce the sentence of reward or punishment . . . He . . . is to have the fullest compensation . . . In the day of final punishment and reward, both saints and sinners will recognize in Him who was crucified the Judge of all living."—*Maranatha*, 341 (*Review*, November 22, 1898).

It is when human probation closes, that the severe judgments of God will begin falling upon the wicked.

"The One who has stood as our Intercessor . . . is soon to cease His work in the heavenly Sanctuary. Grace **and mercy will then descend from the throne, and justice will take their place**. He for whom His people have looked will assume His right—the office of Supreme Judge."—*7 Bible Commentary*, 989.

"His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. **His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy** . . . No earthly wisdom can secure wrongdoers against the judgments of heaven."—*7 Bible Commentary*, 946.

"God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people . . . 'The Lord shall rise up . . . that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.' Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the

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PART TWO OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

act of punishment is a strange act . . . **Terrible as these inflictions are, God's justice stands fully vindicated.**—*Great Controversy*, 627-628.

“When the Voice of God turns the captivity of His people, **there is a terrible awakening** of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life.”—*Great Controversy*, 654.

“The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, **to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.**”—*Great Controversy*, 562 (*Signs*, December 8, 1909).

May we not have a part in lulling them in that fatal security.

“The day of wrath **to the enemies of God** is the day of final deliverance to His church.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 727.

“When the heathen Amorites had set themselves to resist His purposes, **God interposed, casting down 'great stones** from heaven' upon the enemies of Israel. We are told of a greater battle to take place in the closing scenes of earth's history. [The seven last plagues are then spoken of.]—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 509.

“Revelation 6 and 7 are full of meaning. **Terrible are the judgments of God revealed.** The seven angels stood before God to receive their commission . . . when the plagues of God shall come upon the earth.”—*Maranatha*, 284 (*Manuscript 59*, 1895).

“The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.”—*Great Controversy*, 656-657.

“The wrath of God in the seven last plagues had been visited upon the inhabitants of the earth.”—*Early Writings*, 289.

“For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decisions; **the wicked have fully united with Satan** in his warfare against God. **The time has come for God to vindicate the authority** of His down-trodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men. ‘The Lord hath a controversy with the nations . . . The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.’”—*Great Controversy*, 656-657.

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire **taking vengeance on them** that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 339-340.

“More terrible manifestations than the world has ever yet beheld, will be witnessed at the Second Advent of Christ . . . ‘Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out Thine arrows, and destroy them . . . The earth will be convulsed; everywhere there will be dreadful earthquakes and eruptions. **Thus God will destroy the wicked from off the earth** [at the Second Advent].”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 109-110.

“God went through the proud land of Egypt as He will go through the earth in the last days. With fire and tempest, earthquake, and death, the great I AM redeemed His people.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 287.

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

God is deepest love, mercy, and compassion. This is part of His character. He is also a God of justice. This is another aspect of His character. Properly understood, His justice is always a mercy; for He mercifully executes judgments upon the wicked, just as earlier He justly extended mercy to them.

Throughout the history of the world, from Cain to just prior to the Second Advent of Christ, all of the problems in this world have been caused because of sin; and nearly all of the disasters have been inflicted by the wicked or directly by Satan. But this does not negate the fact that God also can and will step in, from time to time, and will Himself punish incorrigible sinners.

The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy always attributes the final Second Death to fire sent by God.

It is not wrong for God to kill the incorrigibly wicked. It is never evil of Him to do this. It is just, fair, right, and good. And it is not murder. It is never wrong for God to slay the incorrigibly wicked. But it should be understood that, whenever it occurs, the sinner was responsible for the result, not God. He only executed the judgment. In relation to cause and effect, the sinner slew himself.

A terrible storm of God's wrath against sin and incorrigible sinners is just before us—the worst storm of this kind in human history. **Men have to be warned of this storm;** for it is about to break upon our world in fullest measure. Before the Flood, God called Noah to warn mankind of the approaching storm. Today, He calls upon His remnant people to give the Third Angel's Message. This message is the most solemn warning ever given

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to the world. We dare not muffle that message nor turn from it.

At His first advent, Christ lived a life of mercy. At His second coming and beyond, down to the final destruction of the wicked, He will bring justice. The present mercy was shown in His life and the future judgments in many of His parables (*Matt 25*, for example).

Remember: **It is never wrong for God to be merciful—or to be just.** It is never wrong for God to punish the incorrigibly wicked by slaying them. Their probation is past. A continuation of their life would only bring added misery to themselves and everyone around them. In mercy, they are given death.

It is always dangerous to twist God's Word in order to vindicate a personal theory. Yet, in this case, the dangerous part may not be the theory but the training of the mind in wresting Scripture. One is thereby emotionally prepared and intellectually trained to tackle additional wrestings in order to support later erroneous theories, presented by itinerant preachers or tapesters.

God is wonderful in His love and care. He yearns for His children to return the strong love that He feels toward them. This love surpasses that of any creature that He has made. Throughout eternity we will be studying into the depths of this marvelous compassion and continually be awed by its immensity. Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, His mediation in the heavenly Sanctuary, and His ministry to fallen beings through the Holy Spirit will be subjects of special thought through all time to come. These are topics that angels examine closely. And all the beings on a thousand worlds will do the same through eternal ages.

In this life there are also trials, perplexities, and problems. These are permitted by God in order to keep us close by His side and to help develop in us those attributes that we need. God does not send them, but He permits them.

But in the case of those who are running from God and, amid the enchantments of Satan, refuse to acknowledge the blessings or, in gratitude, return because of them—then God must send judgments.

These judgments are sent to awaken men to their danger before it is too late. To bring the sinner home or to call straying children back—these judgments are necessary. And they come by a more direct intervention of God's providence.

But there is also a third level of judgments. These are the judgments upon those hardened in wickedness that come as a punishment in this life. Such judgments do take place and are necessary. They have occurred in the past, they are taking place today, and they will increase in the future.

The Third Angel's Message is a direct warning to our time, that terrible judgments are to increase and a massive fallout of judgments is soon to deluge earth's inhabitants if they do not repent, return to God, and obey His holy law.

In this present study, we are going to examine the judgments of God. Our attention will not be on the minor trials and perplexities of life. We are considering the judgments.

It is a striking fact that, at the very time in human history when men most need to be warned in regard to these judgments from God, **Satan has arranged matters so that our Western culture is rapidly moving toward the erroneous concept that wrong should not be punished** and the wicked should not be hurt or killed. It is very clear from Scripture that this idea is un-Biblical. **It is at this very time that many of the people of God are turning from this important aspect of the final message and are teaching the opposite, that no judgments or punishments from God need be expected;** for none will take place. There have never been any in the past and there will be none in the future. While the world begs for leniency for hardened thieves, rapists, and murderers, a growing number of Christians are urging toleration and compromise for the sake of peace; and many among the remnant are viewing with favor the idea that God has no commanding qualities, no push, and no punishment—only a passive love able to be stepped on, and little more.

This error teaches that, if the wicked are ever punished, someone else will have to decide to do it. God surely won't; for, though He has mercy, He has no justice.

Some new kind of fire will have to be invented to destroy the wicked after the millennium because, contrary to Scripture, none is going to come from God out of heaven for that purpose. Such a view of haphazard management of affairs is considered quite loving; with the thought that, instead of a mercifully brief punishment and death of the wicked by a just God, it is far better to let Satan start the fire and be placed in charge of hellfire. He will give them excruciating suffering for a time far longer than God would; but, according to the theory, this will better show the love of God. It is said that the final fire will eventually burn out by itself when Satan in the ages to come tires of his task; then God will step forward and make a new heaven and a new earth.

The center of the Adventist message should be the Third Angel's Message. And here is how this message from God to the world in our time is described:

"The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the Third Angel's Mes-

sage. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. **Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter;** the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' The warning of the Third Angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

"In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (*Rev 13:16*), to receive 'the mark of the beast,' yet the people of God will not receive it."—*Great Controversy*, 449-450.

The truth is that the judgments of God upon sinners is an act of mercy on His part toward the wicked, the righteous, and the unfallen worlds.

The truth about the judgments and the wrath of God is a clear vindication of His character of love and mercy. By a better understanding of His justice, the great depths of the mercy that accompanies it is more clearly grasped. God is, indeed, love. And His justice combined with His mercy is the fullest representation of it. **His love is too mature to permit Satan to be in charge of hellfire.** There is no natural event of nature nor act of man or devil that can mercifully limit to the very least the amount of suffering that hellfire shall bring to each one who shall experience it—unless God steps in and actively is in charge of the entire affair.

The burning question is this: Who executes the judgment? Does God do it? Or does Satan, man, or natural events? The Inspired Word consistently tells us that Christ alone will be in charge of hellfire. He who died in painful agony to redeem men from Satan, who followed men with pleading for most of their lifetime, is the One qualified to blot from existence those men and angels who have chosen to live only to hate and mutilate the existence of man and beast.

We all know that any parent who manifests mercy without justice will ruin his child and cannot really love its best good. Just as sentimental yielding love, without correction and punishment, by a parent is not genuine love, so such

love on God's part would not be genuine either.

It is time that the full character of God—in both of its aspects—were vindicated in the sight of all men. The Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14:6-12 was designed for this purpose. We are not now to turn from this message to unite with the worldlings in their erroneous concepts.

The last message of mercy to a dying world is a message of God's love. We must call people to Calvary and to obedience to His law. We must urge upon them the truths and standards given by Inspiration. **We must warn them that terrible judgments are soon to fall on the unrepentant!**

It is the *height of God's mercy* that He asks the remnant to give this warning message about His justice. It is the fullness of His love that urges His children to call men back to obedience before it is too late.

Here, now, is the truth about the mercy, the justice, and the wrath of God:

— SECTION ONE —

THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD IN THE LAST DAYS

GOD WILL INTERPOSE - HE WILL PUNISH

"The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God's visitation has about come. **Although loath to punish, nevertheless He will punish,** and that speedily."—*5 Testimonies*, 209.

"Instead of being softened by the patience and long forbearance that the Lord has exercised toward them, those who fear not God and love not the truth strengthen their hearts in their evil course. But **there are limits even to the forbearance of God,** and many are exceeding these boundaries. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must interfere and vindicate His own honor."—*5 Testimonies*, 208.

"The world has become bold in transgression of God's law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. . . **But there is a line beyond which they cannot pass.** The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God, the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.

"In Noah's day, men had disregarded the law of God until almost all remembrance of the Creator had passed away from the earth. Their iniquity reached so great a height that **the Lord brought a flood of waters upon the earth, and swept away its wicked inhabitants.**

"From age to age the Lord has made known the

manner of His working. **When a crisis has come, He has revealed Himself**, and has interposed to hinder the working out of Satan's plans. With nations, with families, and with individuals, He has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has made manifest that there is a God in Israel who will maintain His law and vindicate His people." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, 177-178.

GOD GIVES MEN TIME - BUT ONLY SO MUCH TIME

"The wrath of God is declared against unrepentant sinners not merely because of the sins they have committed, but because, **when called to repent, they choose to continue in resistance**, repeating the sins of the past in defiance of the light given them."—*Acts of the Apostles*, 62.

"Now is the time for wrongs to be righted and sins to be confessed, or they will all appear before the sinner **in the day of God's wrath**."—*1 Testimonies*, 156.

"Men are prone to abuse the long-suffering of God and to presume on His forbearance. But there is a point in human iniquity when it is time for God to interfere; and terrible are the issues. 'The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.' Nahum 1:3. The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because He puts constraint on His own attributes; but **punishment is nonetheless certain**. Every century of profligacy has treasured up wrath against the day of wrath; and when the time comes, and the iniquity is full, **then God will do His strange work**. It will be found a terrible thing to have worn out the divine patience; for the wrath of God will fall so signally and strongly that it is represented as being un-mixed with mercy; and the very earth will be desolated."—*2 Selected Messages*, 372-373.

"Although this nation [the Amorites] was conspicuous because of its idolatry and corruption, it had not yet filled up the cup of its iniquity, and God would not give command for its utter destruction. The people were to see the divine power manifested in a marked manner, that they might be without excuse. The compassionate Creator was willing to bear with their iniquity until the fourth generation. Then, if no change was seen for the better, His judgments were to fall upon them.

"With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but **when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences**. The account is

closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf."—*5 Testimonies*, 208.

"For four hundred years the execution of this sentence [of death to the wicked Amalekites] had been deferred; but the Amalekites had not turned from their sins. The Lord knew that this wicked people would, if it were possible, blot out His people and His worship from the earth. Now the time had come for the sentence, so long delayed, to be executed.

"The forbearance that God has exercised toward the wicked, emboldens men in transgression; but **their punishment will be none the less certain and terrible for being long delayed**. 'The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.' Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' Yet He will 'by no means clear the guilty.' Exodus 34:6-7. **While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law**. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. 'The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.' Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His down-trodden law. And the very fact of His reluctance to execute justice testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 628.

WE FLEE FROM GOD'S WRATH BY FLEEING FROM SIN

Carefully consider the following paragraphs. They explain that **the Laodicean Message of Revelation 3 is closely connected with the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14**. And should not this be so? The three angels warn of the coming wrath of God and the only way of avoiding it—by submission and obedience to Him. The Laodicean Message comes at the same time in history and is a plea to God's people to return to Him before it is too late. It is so urgently important that they return—**for they are commissioned to work with**

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART THREE OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

those angels in giving that final warning of the approaching wrath of God against the disobedient. It is no time for them to relax and say that the Third Angel's Message is really of little consequence—because there is no wrath of God!

“The prophet Ezekiel thus enumerates the causes that led to Sodom's sin and destruction: ‘Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.’ All who would escape the doom of Sodom must shun the course that brought God's judgments upon that wicked city . . .

“Many of you are reposing in false security, absorbed in selfish interests, and attracted by earthly treasures. You fear no evil. Danger seems a great way off. You will be deceived, deluded to your eternal ruin unless you arouse and with penitence and deep humiliation return unto the Lord.

“Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ. The eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

“The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. **The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth.** ‘Escape for thy life’ is the warning from the angels of God. **Other voices are heard saying, ‘Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.’ Those who are at ease in Zion cry ‘Peace and safety’** while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, **and all sleep on at ease.** Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. **Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames.** That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.

“It is God who holds in His hands the destiny of souls. **He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with.** Already His judgments are

in the land . . . Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm.”—5 Testimonies, 232-234.

GOD WILL PUNISH THE TRANSGRESSORS OF HIS LAW

“God has given in His Word decisive evidence that He will punish transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that ‘the wages of sin is death,’ that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution. Christ the Sinless became sin for man . . . In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. **And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression.**”—Great Controversy, 539-540.

“**‘All the wicked will He destroy’ . . . The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion;** yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, longsuffering, benevolent being . . . The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, ‘Love your enemies.’ God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character . . . What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? . . . **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice . . . Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict—that the wicked are incurable . . . It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.**”—Great Controversy, 541-543.

Part of the “righteousness” of God's judgments is the fact that they come from Him. **He alone is qualified to execute judgment and do it justly. And for Him not to do so would be a denial of His mercy.** His attribute of mercy (mercy to the righteous, mercy to the wicked, mercy to the unfallen worlds) requires that He finally blot out the wicked, and that He do it Himself.

“A large class to whom the doctrine of eternal torment is revolting are driven to **the opposite error.** They see that the Scriptures represent God as a being of love and compassion, and **they can-**

not believe that He will consign His creatures to the fires of . . . hell . . . Such a doctrine [the error that God will not kill the wicked], presuming upon God's mercy, but ignoring His justice, pleases the carnal heart and emboldens the wicked in their iniquity."—*Great Controversy*, 537.

"Though God is strict to mark iniquity and to punish transgression, **He takes no delight in vengeance.** The work of destruction is a 'strange work' to Him who is infinite in love."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 139.

"The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 190.

As long as God sees that men have not passed their probation, He ministers in every way possible to save them and draw them to Himself. But when men continue to adamantly refuse that proffered love, they eventually become hardened in sin; their probation runs out and they have no more reason for life, for continued existence. The time comes when God must work His strange work, a work that God would rather not do; yet it is a work that He eventually must do, the work of executing the judgment.

GOD EXECUTES THE JUDGMENT, BUT MEN MAKE THE DECISIONS AS TO WHO SHALL BE IN IT

"God sets before man life and death. He can have his choice. Many desire life, but still continue to walk in the broad road. They choose to rebel against God's government, notwithstanding His great mercy and compassion in giving His Son to die for them. Those who do not choose to accept of the salvation so dearly purchased, must be punished. But I saw that God would not shut them up in hell to endure endless misery, **neither will He take them to heaven; for to bring them into the company of the pure and holy would make them exceedingly miserable. But He will destroy them utterly and cause them to be as if they had not been; then His justice will be satisfied.** He formed man out of the dust of the earth, and **the disobedient and unholy will be consumed by fire and return to dust again. I saw that the benevolence and compassion of God in this matter should lead all to admire His character and to adore His holy name.** After the wicked are destroyed from off the earth, all the heavenly host will say, Amen!"—*Early Writings*, 221.

In this life, we little realize how terribly wicked is wickedness. But when God has finally destroyed the wicked utterly in the fires of hell and they are totally consumed and gone forever, **all the heavenly host will know that He did what was**

right and what needed to be done. Those pure beings will be thankful that it has been done. The benevolence and compassion of God in mercifully blotting the wicked from their miserable existence should lead all to admire and adore Him. Everything God does is right. If God omitted just one of His acts, great suffering would come to His creation as a result. Everything God does is right and everything God does is necessary.

BY THEIR ACTIONS NOW, MEN ARE DECIDING FOR ETERNAL LIFE OR ETERNAL DEATH

"God destroys no man. **Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself.** Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, **Pharaoh** of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born . . . until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war . . . Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 84-85.

Some try to use the above paragraph as proof that God does not kill.

But, first, **the above paragraph** (from *Christ's Object Lessons*) **must agree with all of the other inspired quotations.** It cannot be made to reject a truth that literally thousands of other Bible-Spirit of Prophecy statements uphold.

Second, **the COL paragraph does not agree with the confused teaching of the "God never kills" error:** The writings of those who teach this error claim: (1) God does not kill. (2) Man kills himself. (3) But, no, man does not kill himself; Satan will kill all men in the fires of hell. This strange error is not only inconsistent with the above paragraph, it is inconsistent with itself.

Third, **if taken literally, the COL paragraph does not say that Satan will kill them.** But, if the whole paragraph is read, **it does say that God will ultimately kill them.**

Fourth, **the COL paragraph specifically teaches that the sinner alone is responsible for his death,** simply because he is the one who chose sin and clung to it. **God is not responsible for the decision of the sinner** to cherish and cling to sin. However, **God will execute the sentence** upon the sinner who has chosen sin. All those concepts are in the above paragraph!

Fifth, the COL paragraph—the complete paragraph—does not agree with the "God does not kill" error as it is being taught. Let us view the actual

wording of the above paragraph: **The first two sentences are explained, in context, by those that follow. Man works his own destruction by his actions**, by sowing sinful seeds. These, if not repented and turned from, bring an inevitable harvest. The harvest is death. This paragraph teaches that man is in charge of the seedsowing and responsible for the harvest. **The paragraph also teaches that, at the end, it is God who is in charge of the judgments.**

An illustration is given in the COL paragraph, to illustrate the meaning of the first two sentences in the paragraph. It is the experience of Pharaoh. **He was fully responsible** for the obstinacy and unbelief, and therefore for all that resulted from it. **Yet it was God who, by a direct act, caused the devastation and death:** the devastated land; the cold, dead form of his first-born; and the death of his warriors in the Red Sea. Read the Bible—Exodus 3 to 13.

The magicians in Egypt calmed the fears of Pharaoh and helped him harden his heart. They did it by declaring that judgments do not come from Israel's God; He is not to be feared. The error they taught was "Israel's God does not exist, so no judgments will ever come from Him." The error being taught today is "Israel's God does exist, but no judgments will ever come from Him."

"Peace and safety" is the message of the world today, and some in our midst. But it is the very opposite of the Third Angel's Message!

Protestants declare that, since there no longer is a Divine Law we are bound to obey, the judgment is past; it all fell on Christ. The "God will not kill anyone" theory teaches that God has no judgments at all.

Before concluding this section, it should be noted that the magicians of Satan claimed that the judgments came by their own enchantments (thus, as a direct act of Satan), but we know that the judgments upon Egypt (the ten plagues) came as a direct act of God. Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 263-280, if you question this truth.

MEN BRING THE PUNISHMENT UPON THEMSELVES

"The precious time of probation is passing, and few realize that it is given them for the purpose of preparing for eternity . . . Every transgression will bring its punishment."*—4 Testimonies, 147.*

"God had pleaded with Judah not to provoke Him to anger, but they had hearkened not. **Finally sentence was pronounced** against them . . . The sufferings of the men of Judah were to be in proportion to the light they had had and to the warnings they had despised and rejected."*—Prophets and Kings, 425.*

"Their punishment was to be in proportion to their intelligence [knowledge] and to the warnings they had despised."*—4 Testimonies, 165.*

"We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. **The sinner brings the punishment upon himself** . . . Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death."*—1 Selected Messages, 235.*

It is for this reason that some of the wicked will receive more punishment than others (*EW 294, GC 554, 673*) and Satan will receive the most (*EW 294-295, GC 673*). In this probationary life, sin is often punished with sin (*PP 728*); but the final punishment and destruction of the wicked is a definite act on the part of God Himself. It is God's strange act (*GC 627, PP 628, etc.*).

Men bring the punishment upon themselves by their consistent desire to remain in sin.

THE EXAMPLE OF SODOM, ABOVE EVERY OTHER, IS THE GREAT TYPE OF THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED BY THEIR CREATOR

The destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain, by fire from heaven, is described in Genesis 18-19.

"And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to bring on the way. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation? . . . For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord—to do justice and judgment . . .

"And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and **because their sin is very grievous;** I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom. But Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near, and said, **Wilt thou also destroy the righteous** with the wicked? . . . And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes . . . If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it . . . I will not destroy it for twenty's sake . . . I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

"And there came two angels to Sodom at even . . . And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness . . . Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-laws, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring

them out of this place. **For we will destroy this place**, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it . . . And Lot . . . said, **Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city**. But he seemed as one that mocked [“God does not kill,” they said] . . .

“The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities . . . And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.”—*Genesis 18:16-19:29*.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.) **The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.**”—*2 Peter 2:4-9*.

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, **He hath reserved . . . unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah**, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”—*Jude 6-7*.

“Abraham had seen in his guests only three tired wayfarers, little thinking that **among them was One whom he might worship** without sin. But the true character of the **heavenly messengers** was now revealed. Though they were on their way as ministers of wrath, yet to Abraham, the man of faith, they spoke first of blessings. Though God is strict to mark iniquity and to punish transgression, He takes no delight in vengeance. The work of destruction is a ‘strange work’ to Him who is infinite in love . . .

“God knew well the measure of Sodom’s guilt; but He expressed Himself after the manner of men, that the justice of His dealings might be under-

stood. Before bringing judgment upon the transgressors He would go Himself, to institute an examination of their course; **if they had not passed the limits of divine mercy, He would still grant them space for repentance.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 138-139*.

“Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham’s prayer . . . The spirit of Abraham was the spirit of Christ. The Son of man is Himself the great Intercessor in the sinner’s behalf. He who has paid the price for its redemption knows the worth of the human soul. With an antagonism to evil such as can exist only in a nature spotlessly pure, Christ manifested toward the sinner a love which infinite goodness alone could conceive.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 140*.

“The long-suffering of God is wonderful, because **He puts constraint on His own attributes; but punishment is nonetheless certain**” (read *2 SM 372-373 for the entire passage*). What is this attribute? **“With an antagonism to evil such as can exist only in a nature spotlessly pure”** (*Patriarchs and Prophets, 140*). It is only by restraining Himself that God does not instantly destroy sin and those that cling to it. But He does so in order to work out the issues of the great controversy. **The marvel is not that God will someday destroy the wicked; the marvel is His self-constraint in waiting so long to do it.**

“In Sodom there was mirth and revelry, feasting and drunkenness. The vilest and most brutal passions were unrestrained. **The people openly defied God and His law and delighted in deeds of violence.** Though they had before them the example of the antediluvian world, and knew how the wrath of God had been manifested in their destruction, yet they followed the same course of wickedness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 157*.

“And now the last night of Sodom was approaching. Already the clouds of vengeance cast their shadows over the devoted city. But men perceived it not. **While angels drew near on their mission of destruction**, men were dreaming of prosperity and pleasure . . . None could discern in those humble wayfarers the mighty heralds of divine judgment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 157-158*.

“That last night was marked by no greater sins than many others before it; but mercy, so long slighted, had at last ceased its pleading. **The inhabitants of Sodom had passed the limits of divine forbearance—‘the hidden boundary between God’s patience and His wrath.’ The fires of His vengeance were about to be kindled in the vale of Siddim.**

“The angels revealed to Lot the object of their

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The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

mission: **'We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it'** . . . Lot went out to warn his children. **He repeated the words of the angels, 'Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.'** But he seemed to them as one that mocked . . . They were well enough off where they were. They could see no evidence of danger . . .

"But Lot delayed. Though daily distressed at beholding deeds of violence, he had no true conception of the debasing and abominable iniquity practiced in that vile city. **He did not realize the terrible necessity for God's judgments to put a check on sin** . . . The heavenly messengers took him and his wife and daughters by the hand and led them out of the city.

"Here the angels left them, and turned back to Sodom to accomplish their work of destruction. Another—He with whom Abraham had pleaded—drew near to Lot . . . The command was given with startling vehemence: 'Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain . . . The storm of divine judgment was only waiting that these poor fugitives might make their escape . . . Again the solemn command was given to hasten, for **the fiery storm would be delayed but little longer**. But one of the fugitives ventured to cast a look backward to the doomed city, and she became a monument to God's judgment . . . While her body was upon the plain, her heart clung to Sodom, and she perished with it. **She rebelled against God because His judgments** involved her possessions and her children in the ruin."

It was God (Christ) who gave the announcements of coming destruction to Abraham and to Lot; **it was He who had planned the action and who carried it out.**

"Suddenly and unexpectedly as would be a thunder peal from an unclouded sky, the tempest broke. **The Lord rained brimstone and fire out of heaven** upon the cities and the fruitful plain; its palaces and temples, costly dwellings, gardens and vineyards, and the gay, pleasure-seeking throngs that only the night before had insulted the messengers of heaven—all were consumed. The smoke of the conflagration went up like the smoke of a great furnace. And the fair vale of Siddim became a desolation, a place never to be built up or inhabited—a **witness to all generations of the certainty of God's judgments upon transgression.**"

In the above quotation, **there is no doubt as**

where the fire came from. "The Lord rained brimstone and fire out of heaven upon the cities."— And **there is equally no doubt as to where the fire comes from that destroys the wicked at the close of the millennium.** It also comes from God out of heaven. **The fire that destroys the wicked does not come from men nor from Satan.** Such talk is idle speculation!

"The flames that consumed the cities of the plain shed their warning light down even to our time. We are taught the fearful and solemn lesson that while God's mercy bears long with the transgressor, there is a limit beyond which men may not go on in sin. **When that limit is reached,** then the offers of mercy are withdrawn, and the ministration of judgment begins."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 159-165.

The Flood and the destruction of the cities of the plain occurred fairly early in human history as a warning to all time to come, that those who persist in sin must face a similar holocaust before the end comes. **No man should make a mockery of those solemn events by speculating that they were not judgments from God**—when the Bible says they were.

"There is a record kept of the impieties of nations, of families, of individuals. God may bear long while the account goes on, and calls to repentance and offers of pardon may be given; **yet a time will come when the account will be full;** when the soul's decision has been made; when by his own choice man's destiny has been fixed. **Then the signal will be given for judgment to be executed** . . .

"**Christ declared, 'As it was in the days of Lot** . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.' Luke 17:28-30. The daily record of passing events testifies to the fulfillment of His words. **The world is fast becoming ripe for destruction. Soon the judgments of God are to be poured out,** and sin and sinners are to be consumed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 165-166.

"'Escape for thy life,' is the warning from the angels of God; **but other voices are heard saying, 'Be not excited; there is no cause for alarm.'** The multitudes cry, **'Peace and safety,'** while Heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. On the night prior to their destruction, the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure and derided the fears and warnings of the messenger of God; but those scoffers perished in the flames; that very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom. **God will not always be mocked; He will not long be trifled with.** 'Behold the day of

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the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and **He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.**’ Isaiah 13:9.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 167.

God warns all the world today through the powerful message of three angels that His wrath is going to fall on all those who refuse to worship and obey Him. Who is that man who dares to tell the people that God is not going to manifest such wrath “because He is too kindly to punish the wicked”?

**THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD
ARE ALREADY UPON THE EARTH
AND WILL INCREASE BECAUSE OF
THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN**

“The world is filled with transgression . . . A spirit of lawlessness pervades every land, and is especially manifest in the great cities of the earth. The sin and crime to be seen in our cities is appalling. God cannot forbear much longer. **Already His judgments are beginning to fall on some places**, and soon His signal displeasure will be felt in other places. There will be a series of events revealing that God is master of the situation.”—*Life Sketches*, 415.

“God’s message for the inhabitants of today is, ‘Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.’ Matthew 24:44. The conditions prevailing in society, and especially in the great cities of the nations, proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God’s judgment is come and that the end of all things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. **In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another**—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.

“Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’ Isaiah 26:21. **The storm of God’s wrath is gathering**; and those only will stand who respond to **the invitations of mercy**, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah, and become sanctified through obedience to the laws of the divine Ruler. The righteous alone shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation be overpast.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 278.

“When men, being in power, oppress and spoil their fellow men, and no earthly tribunal can be found to do justice, God will interpose in behalf of those who cannot defend themselves. **He will punish for every act of oppression. No earthly wisdom can secure wrongdoers against the judgments of heaven.**”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 946.

“I am bidden to declare the message that cities full of transgression, and sinful in the extreme,

will be destroyed by earthquakes, by fire, by flood. **All the world will be warned that there is a God who will display His authority as God.**”—*Country Living*, 7.

“The world, who act as though there were no God, absorbed in selfish pursuits, **will soon experience sudden destruction**, and shall not escape . . . Dancing and carousing, drinking and smoking, indulging their animal passions, they go as an ox to the slaughter. **Satan is working with all his art and enchantments to keep men marching blindly onward** until the Lord arises out of His place to punish the inhabitants of earth for their iniquities.”—*Evangelism*, 26. [*Are any of us, by the errors we are teaching them, encouraging men to march blindly onward?*]

“God would show man that **He can kindle upon his idols a fire that water cannot quench**. The great general conflagration is but just ahead, when all this wasted labor of life will be swept away in a night and day. The treasure laid up in heaven will be safe. No thief can approach nor moth corrupt it.”—*4 Testimonies*, 49.

“God permits the wicked to prosper and to reveal their enmity against Him, that when they shall have filled up the measure of their iniquity all may see His justice and mercy in their utter destruction. **The day of His vengeance hastens** when all who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people will meet the just recompense of their deeds; when **every act of cruelty or injustice toward God’s faithful ones will be punished** as though done to Christ Himself.”—*Great Controversy* 48.

“More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that **God’s judgments are in the world** . . . The time is nearing when the great crisis in the history of the world will have come . . . Oh, that the people might know the time of their visitation! There are many who have not yet heard the testing truth for this time. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. **The time of God’s destructive judgments** is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door of mercy is closed to those who would not enter.”—*9 Testimonies*, 97.

It is quite obvious that the great need of our time is to live right, to tell others the special truths for this time, and to warn them of the great crisis ahead and the judgments which are to fall on those who remain in their sins. —And this is the message of the three angels (*Rev 14:6-12*). We are to be living it and sharing it every day. We are not to deny any part of it by our lives or by our teachings.

Inspiration tells us that **God’s judgments are now falling. But after probation closes they will increase on an immense scale and then culmi-**

nate, in a massive degree, at Christ's return and again at the final destruction of the wicked after the millennium.

GOD WILL SEND FIRES AND EARTHQUAKES AS JUDGMENTS UPON THE WICKED CITIES

“What terrible scenes will take place when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth! Then the words of Revelation 18:1-3 will be fulfilled. The whole of the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is a warning of what is coming on the earth. But I have no light in particular in regard to what is coming on New York, only I know that one day the great buildings there will be thrown down **by the turning and overturning of God's power.** From the light given me, I know that destruction is in the world. One word from the Lord, one touch of His mighty power, and these massive structures will fall. Scenes will take place the fearfulness of which we cannot imagine . . .

“Not long hence these cities will suffer under the judgments of God. San Francisco and Oakland are becoming as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord will visit them in wrath. [Written on September 1, 1902; the San Francisco Earthquake took place in April of 1906.]”—*Life Sketches*, 412.

THE STORY OF A FRIEND

My family once had a close friend that we prayed with and were trying to help. His name was Fred Nogle. He lived a couple miles from our home in southern Illinois in the early 1980s. Fred loved God's Word and he daily read in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. *Desire of Ages* had especially been a deep encouragement to him. He was also reading her other books. Generously, he would purchase boxfuls of *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, and *Great Controversy*, and give them to colporteurs to distribute. Many times, he gave expensive, new Bibles to children, to help them in their walk with the Lord.

Although Fred had made much progress in other lines, he had so far not been able to overcome the tobacco habit. For this reason, he had not yet been baptized. But, month by month, he was strengthening in his resolve. God was wonderfully blessing in his life and he was thankful for it; he had hoped that soon this last difficulty would be put away in the strength of Christ.

Then, one day, someone shared with him a newsprint religious newspaper mailed out monthly by an independent Adventist publisher in Oregon. It told him that God does not punish sin, and he inferred from this that it did not really matter whether one sinned or not. Now a different kind of peace came into Fred's heart. No more need for an upward walk. No more need to overcome the to-

bacco habit. As he commented later, “If God doesn't punish sin, then He intends to take me to heaven anyway. Anybody can see that.”

The newspaper tabloid advertised cassettes, as well as a book, by Fred Wright. So he ordered the cassettes and several copies of the book. When they arrived, he listened to the cassettes and read the book—and decided two things. And the very next day he stopped by and told me of his discovery and his two decisions. I will never forget his words:

“Last week, I accepted the ‘sacred name’ theory, and this week I've accepted the ‘God does not kill’ theory. I know that neither one is in the Spirit of Prophecy, so I'm done with those books!”

He was honest enough to openly admit that those theories were not in the Spirit of Prophecy. Fred handed me a copy of a book by Fred Wright. Opening it and noting the chapter titles, I turned to the chapter on the destruction of Sodom, and then to the chapter on the final destruction of the wicked.

In the first of those two chapters (the one on Sodom), I found, not Scripture but, page after page of descriptions of various volcanoes that had occurred in different parts of the world, such as Vesuvius, Krakatoa, and Mt. Pelee. The chapter concluded with the thought that maybe, who knows, an accidental volcano is what destroyed Sodom, not an act of God. (Which would be very fortunate, since God through the angels had said that He would destroy the city; and since, according to the theory, He doesn't do such things, an accidental volcanic eruption just then would be a fine solution to a difficult problem.) In the three years that has elapsed since I was given that book, I have tried to locate data on volcanic activity in the Dead Sea area (where Sodom and the cities of the Plain were once located)—but what I have discovered is that there have never been volcanoes in that area. An extinct volcano is relatively easy for geologists and volcanologists to identify.

The other chapter in that book, the one that dealt with the topic of the final destruction of the wicked, turned out to be primarily a speculative exercise as to the possibility of the sun blowing up, conveniently, all by itself at just the right time—the time that the great controversy is concluded; the wicked would die because of an accidental explosion of our sun, because God lacked the capacity to solve the problem Himself.

Fred Nogle walked away—and left God's Word. He became a changed man. No longer did he buy Bibles or Spirit of Prophecy books. Instead, Fred sold his own in an auction sale and moved north to central Illinois. He became so vicious in his personal habits that, within a short time after talking with me, his wife and children left him.

About six months later I was told that he went out in the garage one day, turned on the ignition in the car, and sat there till the carbon monoxide killed him. When Fred Nogle left God's Word, he destroyed himself.

"June 20, 1903: 'The judgments of God are in our land. The Lord is soon to come. In fire and flood and earthquake, He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His soon approach. O that the people may know the time of their visitation! We have no time to lose. **We must make more determined efforts to lead the people of the world to see that the day of judgment is at hand.**'

"November 12, 1902: **The time is nearing when the great crisis in the history of the world will have come**, when every movement in the government of God will be watched with intense interest and inexpressible apprehension. **In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another**—fire and flood and earthquakes, with war and bloodshed.'

"February 15, 1904: '[speaking about the erection of the large buildings in New York and how they are funded by greed and fraud] The time is coming when in their fraud and insolence men will reach a point that the Lord will not permit them to pass, and they will learn that there is a limit to the forbearance of Jehovah. The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at lofty and supposedly fireproof buildings, and said, 'They are perfectly safe' But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines. I am bidden to say that **when the Lord's time comes**, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that **the hand that has been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God.** No material can be used in the erection of buildings that will preserve them from destruction **when God's appointed time comes to send retribution on men for their insolence and their disregard of His law.**'"—*Life Sketches*, 412-414.

**CALVARY WAS PROVIDED
TO SAVE US FROM
THE CLOUD OF VENGEANCE**

"When we study the divine character in the light of the cross we see **mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice.** We see in the midst of the throne One bearing in hands and feet and side the marks of the suffering endured to reconcile man to God. We see a Father, infinite, dwelling in light unapproachable, yet re-

ceiving us to Himself through the merits of His Son. The cloud of vengeance that threatened only misery and despair, in the light reflected from the cross reveals the writing of God: Live, sinner, live! ye penitent, believing souls, live! I have paid a ransom."—*Acts of the Apostles*, 333.

"Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption . . . Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character . . . God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy . . . It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' Psalm 85:10. By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy . . . Another deception was now to be brought forward. Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice."—*Desire of Ages*, 762.

Through the mercy of God we may have forgiveness and a changed life. And thus His mercy may kiss His justice; for the changed life comes into harmony with His law. But there is another aspect to this. Through Calvary, mercy continues to be extended to the stubborn and rebellious. **But God's mercy does not blot out His justice.** Those who persist in refusing to accept the proffered mercy will experience His justice. They have refused harmony with His law; so they will have to contend with that which condemnation of their lives will someday bring.

**CHRIST SUFFERED
THE SIN OF THE WORLD
ON OUR BEHALF,
AT THE HANDS OF A JUST GOD**

"God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. **He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge,** divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 246.

"The sin of the world, with all its terribleness, was felt to the utmost by the Son of God. The dis-

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART FIVE OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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pleasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty, which is death, were all that He could realize through this amazing darkness. He was tempted to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of His Father that He could not be reconciled to His Son. The fierce temptation that His own Father had forever left Him caused that piercing cry from the cross: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

"Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair, like the pall of death, will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin . . . If they refuse the heavenly benefit and choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death."—*2 Testimonies, 210.*

What took place at Calvary? Jesus experienced the wrath of God, which is His anger against sin. And it involves separation of God from the one identified with the sin. Jesus experienced all of this to the full. **It is in God's nature to be angry with sin.** And those who stubbornly refuse to separate from it will have to experience that anger or wrath someday. It is not wrong for God to be angry with sin. **It is not wrong for Him to punish those who have lived their days cherishing it and refusing to leave it.** It is not wrong for God to someday kill in hellfire those who live to injure, hurt, and destroy. It is not wrong for Him to blot out of existence those who shall continue in these thoughts and actions as long as they have being.

Christ experienced the wrath of God and His judgment against sin. Those who refuse to accept Christ will also experience God's wrath and His judgments. Refusing repentance, acceptance and obedience, they have refused the Atonement.

Only He who received the full wrath of God, in order to save us, will someday inflict it upon those who refuse the salvation which He now offers them.

Question: Is it just and right to let Jesus execute the final judgment upon the wicked? Yes, it is fully just and right.

Question: **Would it be just and right for God to let Satan inflict the final judgment upon the wicked? No, it would not be just and right.** Satan has not been appointed to do it (anywhere in Scripture). He is not qualified to do it. He would not, and could not, do it properly. **Every sinner finally lost will suffer in the fire only a certain**

amount, exactly equivalent to his sinful life, and then will cease to exist. That is fair and right. But Satan would not do this. He would try to continue their suffering **on and on**—just as he did through the papists to the martyrs in the Dark Ages. The character of God would not be vindicated if He were to turn the final destruction of sinners over to Satan. To do so would be a blot on His justice and on His mercy. And if the "God does not kill" theory were correct, there would be no way that God could stop Satan from continuing on their misery for unending ages—**because God would not step in and put a stop to it by destroying Satan!**

**BECAUSE OF CALVARY,
CHRIST HAS BEEN APPOINTED
TO BE OUR JUDGE.
HE WHO DIED TO SAVE US WILL BE
THE ONE TO EXECUTE THE JUDGMENT.**

"He has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given, each is to be judged. And He who has given the light, He who has followed the soul with tenderest entreaty, seeking to win it from sin to holiness, is in one its advocate and judge. From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. It is He who has encountered the deceiver, and who through all the ages has been seeking to wrest the captives from his grasp, who will pass judgment upon every soul.

"And God 'hath given Him authority to execute the judgment also, because He is the Son of man.' Because He has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save—**because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgment.**"—*Desire of Ages, 210.*

"God designed that the Prince of sufferers in humanity should be judge of the whole world. He who came from the heavenly courts to save man from eternal death . . . He who submitted to be arraigned before an earthly tribunal, and who suffered the ignominious death of the cross—He alone is to pronounce the sentence of reward or of punishment. He who submitted to the suffering and humiliation of the cross here, in the counsel of God is to have the fullest compensation, and ascend the throne acknowledged by all the heavenly universe as the King of saints. He has undertaken the work of salvation, and shown before the unfallen

worlds and the heavenly family that the work He has begun He is able to complete . . .

“In the day of final punishment and reward, both saints and sinners will recognize in Him who was . . . crucified the Judge of all living . . . Solemn will be the day of final decision . . . Probationary time is granted us, opportunities and privileges are given us, to make our calling and election sure. How we should prize this precious time, and improve every talent God has given, that we may be faithful stewards over ourselves.”—Review, November 22, 1898.

“His [Christ’s] object was to reconcile the prerogatives of Justice and Mercy, and let each stand separate in its dignity, yet united. **His mercy was not weakness, but a terrible power to punish sin because it is sin,** yet a power to draw to it the love of humanity. Through Christ, Justice is enabled to forgive without sacrificing one jot of its exalted holiness.”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 935-936.

This is one of the reasons that the great controversy has continued for so long a time—to reveal to all intelligences that God is just in doing so when He finally destroys the wicked.

THE WORKING OUT OF THE GREAT CONTROVERSY WILL REVEAL THAT GOD IS JUST IN DESTROYING THE WICKED

“Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, **could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence,** they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question.”—*Great Controversy*, 498-499.

“In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists. When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, ‘Why hast thou rebelled against Me, and robbed Me of the subjects of My kingdom?’ the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped, and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless . . .

“In the Saviour’s expiring cry, ‘It is finished,’ the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that ‘through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer’s desire for self-exaltation had led him to say: ‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of God’ . . . God declares: ‘I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth and never shalt thou be any more.’ Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:18-19 . . .

“The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And **its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor** before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. **Says the Word of God: ‘Affliction shall not rise up the second time.’** Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.”—*Great Controversy*, 503-504.

One of the objectives of the book, *Great Controversy*, is to clearly reveal why—and how—sin will finally be eliminated from the universe:

“To unfold the scenes of the great controversy between truth and error; to reveal the wiles of Satan and the means by which he may be successfully resisted; to present a satisfactory solution of the great problem of evil, shedding such a light on **the origin and final disposition of sin as to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God** in all His dealing with His creatures; and to show the holy, unchanging nature of the law is the object of this book.”—*Great Controversy*, xii.

The book, *Great Controversy*, reveals that **God has repeatedly shown mercy to sinners; but those who resolutely reject His forgiving and enabling grace shall burn in hellfire.** And Jesus, who suffered and died for them on Calvary, is just and merciful to do this act and put them out of their otherwise endless misery of existence. Read *Great Controversy*, chapters 29, 33, and 42 for further details.

WHEN HUMAN PROBATION FINALLY CLOSES

“When individuals commit sins which are too grievous for the Lord to pardon, their names are erased from the book, and **they are devoted to destruction.**”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 987.

As long as you are convicted that you should

repent and return to God, your probationary opportunity has not closed. Those who have sinned away the day of grace are hardened and calloused in sin and have no conscience in what they say and do.

“The day of God’s vengeance is just upon us. The Seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. Those who link in sympathy with the world are eating and drinking with the drunken and **will surely be destroyed with the workers of iniquity.**”—5 *Testimonies*, 212.

“The One who has stood as our Intercessor; who hears all penitential prayers and confessions; who is represented with a rainbow, the symbol of grace and love, encircling His head, is soon to cease His work in the heavenly Sanctuary. **Grace and mercy will then descend from the throne, and justice will take their place.** He for whom His people have looked will assume **His right**—the office of Supreme Judge.”—7 *Bible Commentary*, 989.

“God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish; but His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy . . . He will punish for every act of oppression. **No earthly wisdom can secure wrongdoers against the judgments of heaven.**”—7 *Bible Commentary*, 946.

“The cup of iniquity is nearly filled, and **the retributive justice of God is about to descend** upon the guilty.”—4 *Testimonies*, 489.

After the close of probation, the judgments of God will fall in greater intensity than earlier.

“God’s judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgressions, but **their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed.** ‘The Lord shall rise up . . . that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.’ Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.’ Ezekiel 33:11 . . . The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord’s reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God’s account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy. When Christ ceases His intercession in the Sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark [*Rev 14:10*; promised in the Third Angel’s Message] will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God’s

people . . . [Some of the plagues are described] . . . **Terrible as these inflictions are, God’s justice stands fully vindicated.** The angel of God declares: ‘Thou art righteous, O Lord . . . because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and Thou hast given them blood to drink.’—*Great Controversy*, 627-628.

A careful reading of these post-probation passages in *Great Controversy* reveals the following carefully arranged pattern: (1) **Probation ceases as Jesus concludes His ministry in the Most Holy Place** (*GC 611-614*). (2) **Satan then brings misery and trouble upon the wicked.** He is permitted by God to do this because their probation is now past (*GC 614-615*). Note this significant paragraph, showing that destructive acts can come in two different ways—directly from God or directly from Satan, when God permits:

“A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. **The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits.** There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.”—*Great Controversy*, 614.

(3) The focal point of the controversy will continue to be the Sabbath, and therefore a death decree will be enacted against those who faithfully observe it (*GC 615-616*).

(4) Jacob’s Trouble will then take place as God’s people agonize with Him for help; we should now prepare ourselves for what is ahead, for it will include the personation by Satan himself as Christ (*GC 616-626*).

(5) But, not forgetting His own, **God will, by His own angels, pour out the seven last plagues upon the wicked.** These plagues represent the beginning of the outpouring of the wrath of God. This outpouring was predicted by the Third Angel. These plagues represent the first part of that wrath (*GC 626-629*).

(6) God will, throughout this entire experience, protect His beloved children (*GC 629-634*). —And that is the outline for chapter 39 of the book, *Great Controversy*. Read the chapter yourself if you think that this outline is incorrect.

Very carefully, **Ellen White separates her discussion and description of two activities. One is various desolations brought on by Satan** (*GC 614*). **The other is the seven last plagues as the initiation of the outpouring of the wrath of God upon the wicked** (*GC 627-629*). **These two are not the same. Havoc will come to the wicked from two different sources.**

A careful reading will show that they both begin

when probation closes. **The troubles brought on by Satan are not the plagues and wrath of God. The two are carefully separated in this chapter** (*The Time of Trouble, chapter 39*). The one (*GC 614*) comes directly from Satan; the other directly from God (*GC 627-629*). The timing of this chapter is between the close of probation and the deliverance of God's people by the Voice of God, at the time when the death decree is about to be enforced.

"Christ has spoken: 'Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. **For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity:** Isaiah 26:20-21. Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life.'"—*Great Controversy, 634*.

The above quotation concludes chapter 39. Opening **chapter 40, we find still further descriptions of the outpouring of the plagues.** Continually the falling of the plagues is linked with the outpouring of the wrath of God. A careful study of the Spirit of Prophecy reveals this wrath of God against sin, and those determinedly clinging to it, is not concluded until the fire falls from Heaven at the close of the millennium.

Note, in the next quotation, that **the devils themselves are terribly frightened as these plagues intensify. The demons are not causing them; they wish they would stop!** (A parallel passage is *Patriarchs and Prophets, 99*, where Satan fears for his own life in the midst of the violence of the flood that God has brought upon the world.)

"Great hailstones, every one 'about the weight of a talent,' are doing their work of destruction [*Rev 16:9, 21*; quoting from the Revelation passage that speaks about the seven last plagues]. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The Lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes . . . Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked . . . Their wails [cries of the wicked] are heard above the sound of the elements. **Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power,** while men are supplicating for mercy and groveling in abject terror. Said the prophets of old, as they beheld in holy vision the day of God: 'Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the

Almighty.' Isaiah 13:6. 'Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord.'"—*Great Controversy, 637-638*.

Read the rest of the paragraph.

One receives the impression from reading all this that Satan's joyful fun at causing scattered desolation and carnage here and there, when probation first closed, was later swallowed up by the overwhelming immensity of the seven last plagues as they seemingly intensify in fury with the passing of time—until the devils are so concerned for their own existence in the plagues that they have little time to consider what new deviltry they can inflict. **In these judgments from Heaven, demons are trembling at Christ's power, not rejoicing at their own.** Also note that these plagues are falling even as the Voice of God sounds from heaven, to deliver the faithful from physical threat (*GC 636-638*).

"Then I saw that the seven last plagues were soon to be poured out upon those who have no shelter, yet the world regarded them no more than if they were so many drops of water that were about to fall. **I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God. I saw that His anger was dreadful and terrible,** and if He should stretch forth His hand or lift it in anger, the inhabitants of the world would be as though they never had been or would suffer from incurable sores and withering plagues that would come upon them, and they would find no deliverance, but be destroyed by them. Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel, and begged of him to cause the sight to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful."—*Early Writings, 64-65*.

God not only manifests His power in sending judgments on the wicked, but He manifests it in delivering His faithful ones.

"He [God] has always chosen extremities, when there seemed no possible chance for deliverance from Satan's workings, **for the manifestation of His power.**"—*5 Testimonies, 714*.

"It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: 'It is done.' Revelation 16:17."—*Great Con-*

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART SIX OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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“The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God.”—*Early Writings*, 41.

“After the people have heard the voice of God they are in despair and trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and in this the people of God will suffer affliction. The clouds of heaven will clash, and there will be darkness. Then that voice comes from heaven and the clouds begin to roll back like a scroll, and there is the bright, clear sign of the Son of man. The children of God know what that cloud means.”—*9 Manuscript Releases*, 251 (*Morning Talk*, September 21, 1886).

“The 144,000 triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God.”—*Early Writings*, 37.

“When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of Life.”—*Great Controversy*, 654.

“The day of wrath to the enemies of God is the day of final deliverance to His church.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 727.

“The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened **only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.**”—*Great Controversy*, 562 (*Signs*, December 8, 1909).

“**The Lord in judgment will at the close of time walk through the earth,** the fearful plagues will begin to fall. Then those who have despised God’s Word, those who have lightly esteemed it, shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it . . . The ministers of God have done their last work, offered their last prayers, shed their last bitter tear for a rebellious church and an ungodly people.”—*Maranatha*, 264 (*Manuscript 1*, 1857).

“**God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 762.

“Every eye in that vast multitude is turned to behold the glory of the Son of God. With one voice the wicked hosts exclaim: ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!’ It is not love to

Jesus that inspires this utterance. The force of truth urges the words from unwilling lips. As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion. **They have no new probation in which to remedy the defects of their past lives.** Nothing would be gained by this. A lifetime of transgression has not softened their hearts. A second probation, were it given them, would be occupied as was the first in evading the requirements of God and exciting rebellion against Him.”—*Great Controversy*, 662.

“**At His own will God summons the forces of nature to overthrow the might of His enemies—**‘fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word.’ Psalms 148:8. When the heathen Amorites had set themselves to resist His purposes, God interposed, **casting down ‘great stones from heaven’** upon the enemies of Israel. We are told of a greater battle to take place in the closing scenes of earth’s history, **when Jehovah ‘hath opened His armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of His indignation.’** Jeremiah 50:25. ‘Hast thou,’ He inquires, ‘entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?’ Job 38:22-23.

“The revelator describes the destruction that is to take place when the ‘great voice out of the temple of heaven’ announces, ‘It is done.’ He says, ‘There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.’ Revelation 1:17, 21.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 509.

“In the day of the Lord, just before the coming of Christ, **God will send** lightnings from heaven in His wrath, which will unite with fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrible streams of lava, destroying gardens and fields, villages and cities; and as they pour their melted ore, rocks and heated mud into the rivers, will cause them to boil like a pot, and send forth massive rocks and scatter their broken fragments upon the land with indescribable violence. Whole rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed, and there will be dreadful eruptions and earthquakes everywhere. **God will plague the wicked inhabitants of the earth until they are destroyed from off it.**”—*3 Spiritual Gifts*, 82-83.

The outpouring of God’s wrath marks the beginning of the Battle of Armageddon. It is a battle, fought on behalf of His faithful ones, between God and wicked men and angels. (*For additional quotations on this, read Volume 7A, 982-983.*) That battle does not actually end until the wicked are

forever blotted from existence.

“The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle. But **Providence has a part to play in the Battle of Armageddon.**”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 983.

“He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings and Lord of Lords leads forth the armies of heaven on white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white . . . **The captain of the Lord’s host will stand at the head of the angels of heaven to direct the battle.**”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 982.

“**The judgment scene** will take place in the presence of all the worlds; **for in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and His law will stand forth as ‘holy, just, and good:** Then every case will be decided, and sentence will be passed upon all. Sin will not then appear attractive, but will be seen in all its hideous magnitude.”—*Sons and Daughters*, 361.

“**I thought of the day when the judgment of God would be poured out** upon the world, when blackness and horrible darkness would clothe the heavens as sackcloth of hair . . . My imagination anticipated what it must be in that period when the Lord’s mighty voice shall give commission to His angels, ‘Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.’

“Revelation 6 and 7 are full of meaning. **Terrible are the judgments of God revealed.** The seven angels stood before God to receive their commission. To them were given seven trumpets. The Lord was going forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth . . . When the plagues of God shall come upon the earth, hail will fall upon the wicked about the weight of a talent.”—*Maranatha*, 284 (*Manuscript 59*, 1895).

It appears that the terrible immensity of the seven last plagues will continue right down to the second coming of Christ. The devastating intensity of these plagues is mammoth.

“The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage. The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.”—*5 Bible Commentary*, 1110.

“The earth’s crust will be rent by the outbursts of the elements concealed in the bowels of the earth. These elements, once broken loose, will sweep away the treasures of those who for years have been adding to their wealth by securing large possessions at starvation prices from those in their employ.”—*3 Selected Messages*, 391 (*Manuscript 24*, 1891).

“The great general conflagration is just ahead, when all this wasted labor of life will be swept away in a night and day.”—*4 Testimonies*, 49.

“There will be . . . great destruction of human life. But as in the days of the great deluge Noah was preserved in the ark that God had prepared for him. **So in these days of destruction and calamity, God will be the refuge of His believing**

ones. Through the psalmist He declares, ‘Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.’ ‘For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion . . .’ Then shall we not make the Lord our surety and our defense?”—*Maranatha*, 283 (*Letter 258*, 1907).

“**The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity:** the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’ ‘And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet . . . In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and **by the awful outpouring of God’s unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth**—priests, rulers, and the people, rich and poor, high and low. ‘And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.’ ”—*Great Controversy*, 656-657.

“ ‘Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities . . . In the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double . . . Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire [before it is all over with]: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her . . .’ **Such are the judgments that fall upon Babylon in the day of the visitation of God’s wrath.** She has filled up the measure of her iniquity; her time has come; she is ripe for destruction.”—*Great Controversy*, 653.

“Now they are stripped of all that made them great and are left destitute and defenseless. They look with terror upon the destruction of the idols which they preferred before their Maker . . . The gain of a lifetime is swept away in a moment. The rich bemoan the destruction of their grand houses, the scattering of their gold and silver. But their lamentations are silenced by the fear that they themselves are to perish with their idols. The wicked are filled with regret, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow men, but because God has conquered . . . The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion . . .

“Saith the Lord . . . ‘Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! . . . **Behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings.**’ ”—*Great Controversy*, 654-655.

“**The wrath of God in the seven last plagues had been visited upon the inhabitants of the earth,** causing them to gnaw their tongues from pain and to curse God. The false shepherds had

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been the signal objects of Jehovah's wrath. Their eyes had consumed away in their holes, and their tongues in their mouths, while they stood upon their feet."—*Early Writings*, 289-290.

**PEN PICTURES
OF THE FINAL CATAclySM**

Some of the following descriptions occur before the millennium and some afterward, but they are grouped here to clearly show how God will climax His controversy with the wicked.

Second Advent and Executive Judgment:

"The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. Then the tares are bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner of God. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' Then 'the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 75.

Prior to the Second Advent:

"Before the Son of man appears in the clouds of heaven, everything in nature will be convulsed. Lightning from heaven uniting with the fire in the earth, will cause the mountains to burn like a furnace, and pour out their floods of lava over villages and cities. Molten masses of rock, thrown into the water by the upheaval of things hidden in the earth, will cause the water to boil and send forth rocks and earth. There will be mighty earthquakes and great destruction of human life. But as in the days of the great Deluge Noah was preserved in the ark that God had prepared for him [Noah], so in these days of destruction and calamity [just before the Second Coming], God will be the refuge of His believing ones."—*7 Bible Commentary*, 946.

"The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near! . . . It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—*Messengers to Young People*, 89-90.

Before the Second Advent:

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the

nations. He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword.' Jeremiah 25:31. For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men. 'The Lord hath a controversy with the nations'; 'He will give them that are wicked to the sword.'

"The mark of deliverance [the Seal of God—5T 212] has been set upon those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done: Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given: 'Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary: Says the prophet: 'They began at the ancient men which were before the house.' Ezekiel 9:1-6. The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall . . .

"The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.' Isaiah 26:21. 'And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.'"—*Great Controversy*, 656-657.

Satan's confession after millennium; events prior to Second Advent:

"God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law . . .

"The time is not far distant when God will arise to vindicate His insulted authority. 'The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.' Isaiah 26:21 . . . How terrible must be His tribunal when He comes for the execution of these sacred statutes. How will those who have trampled upon His authority endure His glory in the great day of final retribution?

. . . The voice of the Archangel and the trump of God shall summon, from the whole earth, both the living and the dead to the presence of their Judge . . .

“When Christ shall come in glory with His holy angels the whole earth shall be ablaze with the terrible light of His presence. ‘Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.’ A fiery stream shall issue and come forth from before Him, which shall cause the elements to melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 339-340.

Probably referring to the Second Advent:

“Never since man was created had there been witnessed such a manifestation of divine power as when the law was proclaimed from Sinai . . . ‘Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven’ . . . ‘The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation’; ‘and the heavens and the earth shall shake’ . . . And every mountain and island shall be moved out of its place . . . ‘Therefore shall all hands be faint,’ all faces shall be ‘turned into paleness,’ ‘and every man’s heart shall melt. And they shall be afraid’ . . . ‘And I will punish the world for their evil,’ saith the Lord, ‘and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible’ . . . And they shall say to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?’ . . . ‘for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.’ ”

At this point, the scene probably changes to the final destruction of the wicked:

“Then it will be seen that Satan’s rebellion against God has resulted in ruin to himself and to all that chose to become his subjects . . . It will be seen that ‘the wages of sin is death.’ ‘For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.’ Satan, the root of every sin, and all evil workers, who are his branches, shall be utterly cut off. An end will be made of sin, with all the woe and ruin that have resulted from it. Says the psalmist, ‘Thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou has put out their name

forever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end.’ ”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 340-341.

“Against every evildoer God’s law utters condemnation. He may disregard that voice, he may seek to drown its warning, but in vain. It follows him. It makes itself heard. It destroys his peace. If unheeded, it pursues him to the grave. It bears witness against him at the judgment. A quenchless fire, it consumes at last soul and body.”—*Education*, 144-145.

Disobedience to God’s Moral Law is what destroys man. God, who made the law and the man, is the One who executes the sentence. Someone must finally do it, and **no one else is qualified to do it in total justice and fairness, than the Giver of the law which has been violated.**

Probably the Final Execution of the Judgment:

“From India, from Africa, from China, from the islands of the sea, from the downtrodden millions of so-called Christian lands, the cry of human woe is ascending to God. That cry will not long be unanswered. God will cleanse the earth from its moral corruption, not by a sea of water as in Noah’s day, but by a sea of fire that cannot be quenched by any human devising.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 179.

Executive Judgment, “the final conflagration”:

“The hand of Omnipotence is at no loss for ways and means to accomplish His purposes. He could reach into the bowels of the earth and call forth His weapons, waters there concealed, to aid in the destruction of the corrupt inhabitants of the old world . . .

“Water will never destroy the earth again, but the weapons of God are concealed in the bowels of the earth, which He will draw forth to unite with the fire from heaven to accomplish His purpose in the destruction of all those who would not receive the message of warning and purify their souls in obeying the truth and being obedient to the laws of God.”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 946.

Wording indicates identity with above passage:

“In the bowels of the earth God has in reserve the weapons that He will use to destroy the sinful race. Since the Flood, God has used, to destroy wicked cities, both the water and the fire that are concealed in the earth. In the final conflagration God will in His wrath send lightning from heaven that will unite with the fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and pour forth streams of lava.”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 946-947.

Before and at the Second Advent:

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART SEVEN OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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“His wonderful works in their deliverance from bondage and His dealings with them in their travels through the wilderness were not for their benefit alone. These were to be an object lesson to the surrounding nations. The Lord revealed Himself as a God above all human authority and greatness. The signs and wonders He wrought in behalf of His people showed His power over nature and over the greatest of those who worshiped nature. God went through the proud land of Egypt as He will go through the earth in the last days. With fire and tempest, earthquake, and death, the great I AM redeemed His people.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 286-287.

Concludes with the time just before the Second Advent:

“At this time [during the Flood] immense forests were buried. These have since been changed to coal, forming the extensive coal beds that now exist, and also yielding large quantities of oil. The coal and oil frequently ignite and burn beneath the surface of the earth. Thus rocks are heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. The action of the water upon the lime adds fury to the intense heat, and causes earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues. As the fire and water come in contact with ledges of rock and ore, there are heavy explosions underground, which sound like muffled thunder. The air is hot and suffocating. Volcanic eruptions follow; and these often failing to give sufficient vent to the heated elements, the earth itself is convulsed, the ground heaves and swells like the waves of the sea, great fissures appear, and sometimes cities, villages, and burning mountains are swallowed up. These wonderful manifestations will be more and more frequent and terrible just before the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 108-109.

Next we are told of judgments of God down through the ages:

“The depths of the earth are the Lord's arsenal, whence were drawn weapons to be employed in the destruction of the old world. Waters gushing from the earth united with the waters from heaven to accomplish the work of desolation. Since the Flood, fire as well as water has been God's agent to destroy very wicked cities. These judgments are sent that those who lightly regard God's law and trample upon His authority may be led to tremble before His power and to confess His just sovereignty. As men have beheld burning mountains pouring forth fire and flames and torrents of melted ore, drying up rivers, overwhelming populous cit-

ies, and everywhere spreading ruin and desolation, the stoutest heart has been filled with terror and infidels and blasphemers have been constrained to acknowledge the infinite power of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 109.

There are at least five ways that God can use to warn sinners to turn from their evil ways before it is too late: (1) Let circumstances work out their own retribution; (2) permit Satan to bring catastrophes upon them; (3) allow accidents to occur, from which, in their disobedience, He cannot shelter them; (4) permit the forces of nature (flood, earthquake, etc.) to awaken men to their danger; (5) bring even more direct interventions and retributions upon those who are especially bold. God can also use each of the above to bring judgments upon those resolute in their wickedness. **In the first two, He permits events and circumstances, the wicked, and Satan to work. In the next two, He may permit them or may actively use them. The fifth is a direct act of His that clearly shows its Source.** An example of this was the Flood, with its deluge of water from the skies meeting geysers of water from beneath. Another example would be the fire from Heaven upon Sodom at its destruction. Note in the above paragraph, that natural disasters may be judgments from God.

There are three types of judgments: (1) Less severe—often the removal of possessions or personal injury. God's goodness is given to lead men to repentance; but, when this fails then His judgments begin to fall, as a last effort to awaken men (as an example, the Battle Creek fires in 1902). (2) More severe—frequently results in death: Without judgments upon the emboldened wicked, the world would soon be demoralized and the righteous would be destroyed; for the evil and criminal-minded would gain the ascendancy and would blot out the faithful from the earth. (An example: During the Dark Ages, international warfare, coupled with the Turkish threat, kept the wicked from focusing their full attention on wiping out the Christians.) (3) Most severe—very often resulting in death: Judgments may fall upon those who have passed their personal probation and whose lives are only a curse to the world (the destruction of Sodom, etc.). As we consider these various types of judgments, we note that the reason for them dictates their nature and intensity.

The Second Advent:

“Said the prophets of old, referring to scenes like these: ‘Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heav-

ens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence! When Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, Thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at Thy presence.' 'The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 109.

THE DEATH OF THE WICKED AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

What causes the death of the wicked at the Second Advent of Christ?

(1) Some of the wicked die at the hands of one another.

After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God, **the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another.** The earth seemed to be deluged with blood, and dead bodies were from one end of it to the other."—*Early Writings*, 290.

"**The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity:** the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.' 'And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet . . . **In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants** of the earth—priests, rulers, and the people, rich and poor, high and low. 'And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.' "—*Great Controversy*, 656-657.

(2) Many of the wicked die from the plagues.

"More terrible manifestations than the world has ever yet beheld, will be witnessed at the Second Advent of Christ. 'The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger?' 'Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out Thine arrows, and destroy them.'

"I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.' 'And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.' 'And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,

every stone about the weight of a talent.'

"As lightnings from heaven unite with the fire in the earth, the mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrific streams of lava, overwhelming gardens and fields, villages and cities. Seething molten masses thrown into the rivers will cause the waters to boil, sending forth massive rocks with indescribable violence and scattering their broken fragments upon the land. Rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed; everywhere there will be dreadful earthquakes and eruptions. **Thus God will destroy the wicked from off the earth.**"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 110.

After the Voice of God sounds from heaven delivering His people from the physical oppression of the wicked, **those who are lost realize the terrible situation and turn upon one another—and injury and deaths result. But this is in addition to the outpouring of the wrath of God.**

Some therefore speculate that it is the fist-fighting among the wicked, following the Voice of God, that causes all the wicked to die by the time Christ returns. But this is not true. A careful reading of *GC 640-644* and *653-656-657* reveals the following:

Although some have died from violence or the plagues, all strife and passion cease when Jesus appears in the skies. The wicked are frozen by fear into silence; and then, as they attempt to run and hide—**they are destroyed by the brightness of the presence of Christ.** Every man who is destroyed will have destroyed himself (*COL 84*) . . . It is the sins they have clung to that are the cause of their death. The purity of Christ's presence will consume sin, but the wicked have cherished it until they have become identified with it. And then, viewing the brightness of the presence of Christ, they die from its nearness.

After the Voice of God and before the Second Advent:

"The mark of deliverance has been set upon those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done.' **Now the angel of death goes forth,** represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given: 'Slay utterly old and young . . . but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.' Says the prophet: 'They began at the ancient men which were before the house.' The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall."—*Great Controversy* 656.

"At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied

of its inhabitants. **'Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.'** 'The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.' 'Because they have transgressed the laws . . . changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.' Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5-6. The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness."—*Great Controversy*, 657.

"My attention was again directed to the earth. **The wicked had been destroyed,** and their dead bodies were lying upon its surface."—*Early Writings*, 289.

During the millennium, Jesus and the righteous are involved in a special work of determining the amount of punishment that each of the wicked shall receive at the time that they are finally blotted from existence in hellfire (*Rev 20:4; 1 Cor 6:1-3; EW 52-54, 291; GC 660-661*). **If it is wrong for God to put the wicked to death for their sins, why is it right for Him and holy beings to decide on the details of that executive sentence?**

AFTER THE MILLENNIUM: THE EXECUTIVE JUDGMENT

"In His teachings, Christ sought to impress men with the certainty of the coming judgment, and with its publicity. **This is not the judgment of a few individuals, or even of a nation, but of a whole world** of human intelligences, of accountable beings. **It is to be held in the presence of other worlds,** that the love, the integrity, the service, of man for God, may be honored to the highest degree. There will be no lack of glory and honor . . . The law of God will be revealed in its majesty; and those who have stood in defiant rebellion against its holy precepts will understand that the law that they have discarded, and despised, and trampled underfoot is God's standard of character."—*Review*, November 22, 1898.

"Their faces shone with glory, for they were in the express image of Jesus; and as they arose and moved all together to the top of the city, I was enraptured with the sight. Then the wicked saw what they had lost; **and fire was breathed from God upon them and consumed them. This was the executive judgement.** The wicked then received according as the saints, in unison with Jesus, had meted out to them during the one thousand years. **The same fire from God that consumed the wicked** purified the whole earth. The broken, ragged mountains melted with fervent heat, the atmosphere also, and all the stubble was consumed."—*Early Writings*, 54.

"When the Judgment shall sit, and everyone shall be judged by the things written in the books, **the authority of God's law will be looked upon in a**

light altogether different from that in which it is now regarded by the Christian world . . . The law of Jehovah is great, even as its Author is great. In the judgment it will be recognized as holy, just, and good in all its requirements. Those who transgress this law will find that they have a serious account to settle with God; for His claims are decisive."—*7 Bible Commentary*, 986.

"In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. **And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence** upon the rebels against His government **and executes justice** upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people . . .

"As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed."—*Great Controversy*, 666.

"Though all nations are to pass in judgment before Him, yet **He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny** as if there were not another being on earth."—*7 Bible Commentary*, 986.

Why is there such a careful analysis of each case—if, afterward, the carrying out of the sentence is haphazardly turned over to the devil?

"The awful spectacle appears just as it was. **Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work.** Each actor recalls the part, which he performed . . . All behold the enormity of their guilt. **They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty** of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming: 'He died for me!' "—*Great Controversy*, 667.

"**The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason** against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and **the sentence of eternal death is pronounced** against them."—*Great Controversy*, 668.

"**Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain.** The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. **Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated.** It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created . . . The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that **with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created.** With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare:

Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”—*Great Controversy*, 670-671.

“The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed into silence. The clash of arms, the tumult of battle, ‘with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood’ (*Isaiah 9:5*), is stilled. **Nought now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation.** The cry bursts forth from lips so lately scoffing: ‘The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?’ The wicked pray to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected.

“That voice which penetrates the ear of the dead, they know. How often have its plaintive, tender tones called them to repentance. How often has it been heard in the touching entreaties of a friend, a brother, a Redeemer. To the rejecters of His grace no other could be so full of condemnation, so burdened with denunciation, as the voice which has so long pleaded: ‘Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?’ *Ezekiel 33:11*. Oh, that it were to them the voice of a stranger! Says Jesus: ‘I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof. *Proverbs 1:24-25*. That voice awakens memories which they would fain blot out—warnings despised, invitations refused, privileges slighted . . .

“In the lives of all who reject truth there are moments when conscience awakens, when memory presents the torturing recollection of a life of hypocrisy and the soul is harassed with vain regrets. But what are these when compared to the remorse of that day . . . **when ‘destruction cometh as a whirlwind!’** *Proverbs 1:27*. Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people now witness the glory which rests upon them.”—*Great Controversy*, 642, 644.

“Too late they are made to see that the Omniscient One is jealous of His law and that He will in no wise clear the guilty . . . **The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven.** They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and **the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them** . . . It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, **and death.**”—*Great Controversy*, 668.

“Satan’s own works have condemned him. **God’s wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated.** It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good

of all the worlds that He has created. ‘All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee’ . . . **With all the facts of the great controversy in view,** the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord—declare: ‘Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.’ ”—*Great Controversy*, 670-671.

“**He (Satan) rushes into the midst of his subjects** and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury . . . There are none now to acknowledge his supremacy. **His power is at an end.** The wicked are filled with the same hatred of God that inspires Satan; but they see that their case is hopeless, that they cannot prevail against Jehovah. Their rage is kindled against Satan and those who have been his agents in deception. **With the fury of demons they turn upon them, and there follows a scene of universal strife.**”—*Story of Redemption*, 428.

The wicked may fight among themselves, but in this they do not take judgment away from God. It is God who executes the judgment and sends the fire from heaven. It is God who destroys the wicked. It is right for Him to do this. It is just. It is honest. It is fair. And it is Biblical!

Prior to the Second Advent, some of the wicked died at the hands of other sinners; at the time of the final destruction of the wicked, though there is “strife,” none of them slay one another before the fire falls. As for Satan, we just read, “His power is at an end.”

“**Satan rushes into the midst** of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. **But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together.** I saw that some were quickly destroyed while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained.”—*Early Writings*, 294.

“Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.’ **The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them,** He hath delivered them to the slaughter.’ ‘Upon the wicked **He shall rain quick burning coals, fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest:** this shall be the portion of their cup.’ **Fire comes down from God out of heaven.** The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed—in its depth are drawn forth. **Devouring flames burst from every yawning**

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART EIGHT OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. The earth's surface seems one molten mass—a vast, seething lake of fire. **It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men**—‘the day of vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.’—*Great Controversy, 672-673.*

Fire comes from God, out of heaven, down upon the wicked; in response, fire bursts out of the ground to unite with it and the wicked are consumed by the conflagration. There is no other source for the fire that destroys the impenitent. But even if there were, it would be like a box of matches in comparison with the holocaust which God has started.

Each person is punished exactly the right amount, and then he ceases to exist. Total fairness.

“The wicked receive their recompense in the earth. They, ‘shall be stubble: and **the day that cometh shall burn them up**, saith the Lord of hosts.’ **Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished ‘according to their deeds.**’ The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit. **His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived.** After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch—Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.”—*Great Controversy, 673.*

Satan could not be trusted to punish people the right amount of time. There is nothing he ever does fairly or correctly. Nothing, not even hellfire, could be entrusted to him. God is just—and justice is not met by turning things over to Satan.

“Then they meted out to the wicked the portion which they must suffer, according to their works; and it was written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints. Satan’s punishment was to be far greater than those whom he had deceived. **His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear no comparison with it.** After all those whom

he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to live and suffer on much longer.”—*Early Writings, 291.*

“Also it would be for his [Satan’s] own interest to keep from Jesus as many as possible. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and **he must bear their punishment**, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will suffer the penalty of their own sins.”—*Early Writings, 178.*

“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.**”—*Revelation 20:9.*

“Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; **but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**”—*Matthew 3:12 (Luke 3:17).*

“Then are fulfilled the words of the prophet; ‘The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter: **Upon the wicked He shall rain quick coals, fire and brimstone**, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup: **Fire comes down from God out of heaven.**’ The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depth are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that ‘shall burn as an oven.’ The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein are burned up. The fire of Tophet is prepared for the king, the chief of rebellion; the pile thereof is deep and large, and **‘the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.’** The earth’s surface seems one molten mass—a vast, seething lake of fire. **It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men**—‘the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.’ Isaiah 34:8.

“The wicked receive their recompense in the earth. They ‘shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. **All are punished according to their deeds.** The sins of the righteous have been transferred to Satan, the originator of evil, who must bear their penalty.”—*Story of Redemption, 428-429.*

“While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. While **God**

is to the wicked a consuming fire. He is to His people both a sun and a shield.”—*Great Controversy*, 673.

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.’ The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. **Every trace of the curse is swept away.** No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.”—*Great Controversy*, 674.

“**Fire comes down from God out of heaven.** The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up.”—*Great Controversy*, 672 (*3 Bible Commentary*, 1142).

“Then the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be; **‘they shall be as though they had not been.’** Psalms 37:10; Obadiah 16.”—*Desire of Ages*, 763.

“**The justice of God is satisfied,** and the saints and all the angelic host say with a loud voice, Amen. While the earth is wrapped in **the fire of God’s vengeance,** the righteous abide safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power (*Rev 20:6*). While **God is to the wicked a consuming fire,** He is to His people both a sun and a shield (*Ps 84:11*).”—*Story of Redemption*, 429.

“The feet of the wicked will never desecrate the earth made new. **Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them—burn them up root and branch. Satan is the root, and his children are the branches.**”—*Early Writings*, 52.

“When the flood of waters was at its height upon the earth, it had the appearance of a boundless lake of water. **When God finally purifies the earth, it will appear like a boundless lake of fire.** As God preserved the ark amid the commotions of the Flood, because it contained eight righteous persons, He will preserve the New Jerusalem, containing the faithful of all ages, from righteous Abel down to the last saint which lived, Although the whole earth, with the exception of that portion where the city rests, will be wrapped in a sea of liquid fire, yet the city is preserved as was the ark, by a miracle of Almighty power. It stands unharmed amid the devouring elements.”—*3 Spiritual Gifts*, 87-88.

“The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. **No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.**”—*Story of Redemption*, 430.

There is not one quotation—not one—anywhere in the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy in describing the actual destruction of the wicked at the

Second Coming, at the final Executive Judgment, or the antitypical instances of it in the Flood and the destruction of Sodom (“As it was in the days of Noah . . . and Sodom so shall it be in the days when the Son of Man shall appear.”) **that says or implies that Satan directly causes the outpouring of fire and destruction which destroys the wicked.** Yes, it is true that Satan and the wicked are responsible for it by their sins. But, **in the execution of the Judgment, the fire comes from the presence of God and by His direct action.**

“His [Christ’s] object was to reconcile the prerogatives of justice and mercy, and let each stand separate in its dignity, yet united. **His mercy was not weakness, but a terrible power to punish sin because it is sin,** yet a power to draw to it the love of humanity.”—*7 Bible Commentary*, 935-936.

“**The final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33.

“A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword.’ For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now **all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men.** ‘The Lord hath a controversy with the nations’; He will give them that are wicked to the sword.

“I am instructed that when the Lord’s time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, **men will find that the hand that has been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God.**”—*9 Testimonies*, 13.

“Said the angel, **‘It is the wrath of God and the Lamb that causes the destruction or death of the wicked.’**”—*Early Writings*, 52.

“**God carries with Him the sympathy and approval of the whole universe** as step by step His great plan advances to its complete fulfillment. **He will carry it with Him in the final eradication of rebellion.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 79.

“**Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain.** The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan’s rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan’s own works have condemned him. **God’s**

wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated . . .

“With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare, **‘Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.’**”—*Great Controversy*, 670-671.

Read the following quotation carefully. **First, the warning of judgment to come is given to the world (Rev 14:6-12). After that, the sickle is thrust in, the earth is reaped (Rev 14:14-20).**

Now is the time to give the message! We must not exchange it for a message of peace and safety to the sinner!

“[In our day] men in their blindness boast of wonderful progress and enlightenment; but to the eye of Omniscience are revealed the inward guilt and depravity. The heavenly watchers see the earth filled with violence and crime. Wealth is obtained by every species of robbery, not robbery of men only, but of God. Men are using His means to gratify their selfishness. Everything they can grasp is made to minister to their greed. Avarice and sensuality prevail. Men cherish the attributes of the first great deceiver. They have accepted Him as God, and have become imbued with his spirit. **But the cloud of judicial wrath hangs over them, containing the elements that destroyed Sodom.**

“In his visions of things to come the prophet John beheld this scene. This demon worship was revealed to him, and it seemed to him as if the whole world were standing on the brink of perdition. But as He looked with intense interest he beheld the company of God’s commandment-keeping people . . . ‘And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.’ Revelation 14:12-19.

When the storm of God’s wrath breaks upon the world, it will be a terrible revelation for souls to find that their house is being swept away because it is built upon the sand. Let the warning be given them before it is too late. We should now feel the responsibility of laboring with intense

earnestness to impart to others the truths that God has given for this time. We cannot be too much in earnest . . .

“Now is the time for the last warning to be given. There is a special power in the presentation of the truth at the present time; but how long will it continue? Only a little while. **If there was ever a crisis, it is now. All are deciding their eternal destiny.** Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. **Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The Third Angel is to go forth with great power. Let none ignore this work or treat it as of little importance. The light we have received upon the Third Angel’s Message is the true light.** The Mark of the Beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be . . .

“There is to be no change in the general features of our work. It is to stand as clear and distinct as prophecy has made it . . . **No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened.** We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world . . . Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages [of the three angels], so that the people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time and place . . . The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of probation until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. **The law of God is to be magnified;** its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth.”—*6 Testimonies*, 14-19.

“There must be no toning down of the truth, no muffling of the message for this time. The third angel’s message must be strengthened and confirmed. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation reveals the importance of presenting the truth in no measured terms but with boldness and power . . . **There has been too much beating about the bush in the proclamation of the third angel’s message.**”—*Evangelism*, 230.

“When God sends men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. **The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image (Rev 14:9-11) should lead all to a diligent study . . . But the masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth and are turned unto fables.** The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days: ‘The time will come

when they will not endure sound doctrine.' That time has fully come. **The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions** which they love."—*Great Controversy*, 594-595.

"The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God's visitation has about come. Although loath to punish, **nevertheless He will punish**, and that speedily."—*5 Testimonies*, 209.

"Instead of being softened by the patience and long forbearance that the Lord has exercised toward them, those who fear not God and love not the truth strengthen their hearts in their evil course. But there are limits even to the forbearance of God, and many are exceeding these boundaries. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must interfere and vindicate His own honor."—*5 Testimonies*, 208.

For 6,000 years, God has predicted judgments. When Adam sinned, God sent His angels to require that the pair leave the garden (*Gen 3:22-24*). Then Cain was reproved by his brother for disobeying God. Following the death of Abel, God sent a divine judgment upon Cain (*Gen 4:1-16*). Lamech, a descendant of Cain, openly defied God and dared Him to send judgments in response to his sins (*Gen 4:23-24*; cf. *PP 81*). Enoch lived a pure life and God gave prophecies through Him that He would some day execute Judgment upon all the world for its sins (*Gen 5:21-24*, *Jude 14-15*). Fifteen centuries after Cain (*PP 78*), the world was nearly demoralized because of the lawlessness of sinners (*Gen 6:1-6*). And God said that He would destroy them (*Gen 6:7-13*). Twice He said that He would do it (*Gen 6:7, 13*) and He did it (*Gen 7*). Following this, another heavy judgment fell upon the wicked from God when He intercepted their purpose to federate together to destroy the righteous; by changing men's languages, He dispersed them (*Gen 11:1-9*).

Here are some examples from Bible times of the Judgments of God:

- SECTION TWO -
**THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD
IN BIBLE TIMES**

THE FLOOD

The Flood was a direct action by the Creator. When it took place, Satan had wanted to keep the wicked alive for his purposes; how-

ever, he was forced to see them destroyed. And amid the powerful forces unleashed by God, **the devil feared that he himself would be destroyed** before the worldwide storm and deluge was completed.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, **I will destroy man whom I have created** from the face of the earth."—*Genesis 6:5-7*.

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark . . . For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and **every living substance that I have made will I destroy** from off the face of the earth."—*Genesis 7:1, 4*.

"As men increased upon the earth, almost the whole world joined the ranks of rebellion. Once more Satan seemed to have gained the victory. But Omnipotent power again cut short the working of iniquity, and **the earth was cleansed by the flood from its moral pollution.**"—*Patriarch and Prophets*, 332.

"**The depths of the earth are the Lord's arsenal**, whence were drawn weapons to be employed in the destruction of the old world. Waters gushing from the earth united with the waters from heaven to accomplish the work of desolation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 109.

"**Satan** himself, who was compelled to remain in the midst of the warring elements, **feared for his own existence.** He had delighted to control so powerful a race, and **desired them to live** to practice their abominations and continue their rebellion against the Ruler of heaven."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 99.

"With all their boasted philosophy, men found too late that their wisdom was foolishness, and the Lawgiver is greater than the laws of nature, that **Omnipotence is at no loss of means to accomplish His purposes.**"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 104.

"**In mercy** to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. **In mercy** He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom. Through the deceptive power of Satan the workers of iniquity obtain sympathy and admiration, and are thus constantly leading others to rebellion. It was so in Cain's and Noah's day, and in the time of Abraham and Lot; it is so in our time. **It is mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.**"—*Great Controversy*, 543.

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART NINE OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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“How was it with the rebellious inhabitants of the antediluvian world? **After rejecting the message of Noah, they plunged into sin with greater abandon than ever before,** and doubled the enormity of their corrupting practices. **Those who refuse to reform by accepting Christ find nothing reformatory in sin;** their minds are set to carry their spirit of revolt, and they are not, and never will be, forced to submission. **The judgment which God brought upon the antediluvian world declared it incurable.**”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 75.

“By the waters of the Flood, **He blotted this long-lived race from the earth,** and with them perished the knowledge they had used only for evil.”—*1 Bible Commentary*, 1089.

“We have the history of the antediluvians, and of the cities of the plain, whose course of conduct degenerated from lightness and frivolity to debasing sins that called down the wrath of God in a most dreadful destruction, in order to rid the earth of the curse of their contaminating influence.”—*1 Bible Commentary*, 1090.

“Before the destruction of the old world by a flood, there were talented men, men who . . . became corrupt in their imagination, because they left God out of their plans and councils. They were wise to do what God had never told them to do, wise to do evil. The Lord saw that this example would be deleterious to those who should afterwards be born, and He took the matter in hand. **For one hundred twenty years He sent them warnings through His servant Noah. But they used the probation so graciously granted them in ridiculing Noah** . . . Then they held a carnival over the words of Noah, calling him a crazy fanatic. God's patience was exhausted. He said to Noah, **‘The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth.’**”—*1 Bible Commentary*, 1090.

“As He called forth the waters in the earth at the time of the Flood, as weapons from His arsenal to accomplish the destruction of the antediluvian race, **so at the end of the one thousand years He will call forth the fires in the earth as His weapons** which He has reserved for the final destruction, not only of successive generations since the Flood, but the antediluvian race who perished by the Flood.”—*3 Spiritual Gifts*, 87.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

“For we will destroy this place, because the cry

of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and **the Lord hath sent us to destroy it . . . Then the Lord rained upon Sodom** and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.”—*Genesis 19:13, 24*.

“ . . . like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, **which the Lord overthrew** in His anger, and in His wrath.”—*Deuteronomy 29:23*.

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me; **therefore I took them away** as I saw good.”—*Ezekiel 16:49-50*.

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth **an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**”—*Jude 7*.

“In Sodom there was mirth and revelry, feasting and drunkenness. The vilest and most brutal passions were unrestrained. The people openly defied God and His law and delighted in deeds of violence. Though they had before them the example of the antediluvian world, and **knew how the wrath of God had been manifested in their destruction,** yet they followed the same course of wickedness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 157.

“**The inhabitants of Sodom had passed the limits of divine forbearance—‘the hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.’** The fires of His vengeance were about to be kindled in the vale of Siddim.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 159.

“**The Lord rained brimstone and fire** out of heaven upon the cities and the fruitful plain; its palaces and temples, costly dwellings, gardens and vineyards, and the gay pleasure-seeking throngs that only the night before had insulted the messengers of heaven—all were consumed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 162.

The destruction of Sodom proclaimed **the inhabitants of the most beautiful country in the world incorrigible in sin.** The fire and brimstone from heaven consumed everything except Lot, and his wife, and two daughters. The wife, looking back in disregard of God's command, became a pillar of salt.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 75.

THE PLAGUES UPON EGYPT

“And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and **multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.** But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I

may lay My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”—*Exodus 7:3-5*.

“When the miracles were wrought before the king, Satan was on the ground to counteract their influence and prevent Pharaoh from acknowledging the supremacy of God and obeying His mandate. Satan wrought to the utmost of his power to counterfeit the work of God and resist His will. The only result was to prepare the way for greater exhibitions of the divine power and glory, and to make more apparent, both to the Israelites and to all Egypt, **the existence and sovereignty of the true and living God.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 334*.

“And it came to pass, that **at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn** in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.”—*Exodus 12:29*.

“**A single angel destroyed all the first-born** of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning.”—*Great Controversy, 614*.

“Each visitation from God was more severe than the preceding one, yet they would not release the children of Israel **until the angel of the Lord slew the first-born of the Egyptians.**”—*1 Testimonies, 265*.

PHARAOH AND HIS HOST DESTROYED IN THE RED SEA

“The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace . . . And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and **the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.**”—*Exodus 14:14, 27*.

“**Amid the wrath of the elements, in which they hear the voice of an angry God,** they endeavor to retrace their steps and fly to the shore they have quitted. But Moses stretched out his rod, and the piled-up waters, hissing and roaring, and eager for their prey, tumble down upon the armies of Egypt. Proud Pharaoh and his legions, gilded chariots and flashing armor, horses and riders, are engulfed beneath a stormy sea. **The mighty God of Israel has delivered His people.**”—*4 Testimonies, 25*.

JUDGMENTS PREDICTED FOR THE AMALEKITES

“And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for **I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.**

“And Moses built an altar and called the name

of it Jehovah-nissi: ‘For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that **the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.**’”—*Exodus 17:14-16*.

“The Amalekites were not ignorant of God’s character or of His sovereignty, but instead of fearing before Him, they had set themselves to defy His power. The wonders wrought by Moses before the Egyptians were made a subject of mockery by the people of Amalek, and the fears of surrounding nations were ridiculed. They had taken oath by their gods that they would destroy the Hebrews, so that not one should escape, and they boasted that Israel’s God would be powerless to resist them. They had not been injured or threatened by the Israelites. Their assault was wholly unprovoked.

“It was to manifest their hatred and defiance of God that they sought to destroy His people. The Amalekites had long been high-handed sinners, and **their crimes had cried to God for vengeance, yet His mercy had still called them to repentance;** but when the men of Amalek fell upon the wearied and defenseless ranks of Israel, they sealed their nation’s doom. The care of God is over the weakest of His children. No act of cruelty or oppression toward them is unmarked by Heaven. **Over all who love and fear Him, His hand extends as a shield; let men beware that they smite not that hand; for it wields the sword of justice.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 300*.

“The Amalekites had been the first to make war upon Israel in the wilderness; and for this sin, together with their defiance of God and their debasing idolatry, the Lord, through Moses, had pronounced sentence upon them. By divine direction the history of their cruelty toward Israel had been recorded, with the command, ‘Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.’ Deuteronomy 25:19. **For four hundred years the execution of this sentence had been deferred; but the Amalekites had not turned from their sins.** The Lord knew that this wicked people would, if it were possible, blot out His people and His worship from the earth. **Now the time had come for the sentence, so long delayed, to be executed.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 627-628*.

JUDGMENTS BECAUSE OF THE GOLDEN CALF

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him . . . And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves . . .

“And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them . . . and I will make of thee a great nation . . . And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and **there fell of the people that day about three thousand men** . . . And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.”—*Exodus 32:1, 7, 9-10, 28, 35.*

“The Israelites had been guilty of treason, and that against a King who had loaded them with benefits and whose authority they had voluntarily pledged themselves to obey. **That the divine government might be maintained justice must be visited upon the traitors.** Yet even here God’s mercy was displayed. While He maintained His law, He granted freedom of choice and opportunity for repentance to all. **Only those were cut off who persisted in rebellion.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 324-325.*

“Sinful as they were, the people of Israel were not destroyed. While those who stubbornly ranged themselves on the side of Satan were cut off, the people, humbled and repentant, were mercifully pardoned. **The history of this sin was to stand as a perpetual testimony to the guilt and punishment of idolatry, and the justice and long-suffering mercy of God.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 335.*

DEATH OF THE BLASPHEMER AND SABBATHBREAKER

“**And the Lord spake unto Moses,** saying, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and **let all the congregation stone him.**”—*Leviticus 24:13-14.*

“**God Himself pronounced the sentence;** by the divine direction, the blasphemer was conducted outside the camp, and stoned to death . . .

“**There are those who will question God’s love and His justice in visiting so severe punishment for words spoken** in the heat of passion. But both love and justice require it to be shown that utterances prompted by malice against God are a great sin. **The retribution visited upon the first offender would be a warning to others,** that God’s name is to be held in reverence. But **had this man’s sin been permitted to pass unpunished, others would have been demoralized;** and as the result, many lives must eventually have been sacrificed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 408.*

“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath day . . . And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. **And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death;** all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.”—

Numbers 15:32, 34-35.

“One of the people, angry at being excluded from Canaan and **determined to show his defiance of God’s law,** ventured upon the open transgression of the fourth commandment, by going out to gather sticks upon the Sabbath . . . The act of this man was a willful and deliberate violation of the fourth commandment—a sin not of thoughtlessness or ignorance, but of presumption . . . The sins of blasphemy and willful Sabbathbreaking received the same punishment, being equally **an expression of contempt for the authority of God.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 409.*

THE DEATH OF NADAB AND ABIHU

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commandeth them not. **And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them** and they died before the Lord.”—*Leviticus 10:1-2.*

“For burning the incense they took common instead of the sacred fire which God Himself had kindled, and which He had commanded to be used for this purpose. For this sin, **a fire went out from the Lord and devoured them** in the sight of the people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 359.*

“Contrary to God’s express direction, they dishonored Him by offering common instead of sacred fire. **God visited them with His wrath; fire went forth from His presence and destroyed them.**”—*3 Testimonies, 295.*

THE REBELLION OF KORAH, DATHAN, AND ABIRAM

“And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods. **They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them;** and they perished from among the congregation.”—*Numbers 16:32-33.*

“The eyes of all Israel were fixed upon Moses, as they stood, in terror and expectation, awaiting the event. As he ceased speaking, **the solid earth parted, and the rebels went down alive into the pit,** with all that pertained to them, and ‘they perished from among the congregation’ . . . But the judgments were not ended. **Fire flashing from the cloud consumed the two hundred and fifty princes** who had offered incense.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 400-401.*

“But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, **Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment.** And they fell upon their faces . . .

"Now they which died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah."—*Numbers 16:41, 44-45, 49.*

"God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that **the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency.** The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, 'Ye have killed the people of the Lord.' Notwithstanding they had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, **they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan,** declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. **It was this act that sealed their doom.** They committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 404-405 (see 3 Testimonies, 358).*

24,000 DESTROYED AT BAAL-PEOR

"**Moses commanded the men of war to destroy the women and male children.** Balaam had sold the children of Israel for a reward, and he perished with the people whose favor he had attained at the sacrifice of twenty-four thousand of the Israelites. The Lord is regarded as cruel by many in requiring His people to make war with other nations. **They say that it is contrary to His benevolent character.** But He who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, has unlimited control over all the works of His hands, and it is His right to do as He pleases, and what He pleases with the work of His hands. **Man has no right to say to his Maker, 'Why doest Thou thus? There is no injustice in His character.'** He is the Ruler of the world, and a large portion of His subjects have rebelled against His authority, and have trampled upon His law . . . He has used His people as instruments of His wrath, to punish wicked nations, who have vexed them, and seduced them into idolatry."—*1 Bible Commentary, 1117.*

"And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor; and **the anger of the Lord was kindled** against Israel. **And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord** against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor . . . And those that

died in the plague were twenty and four thousand."—*Numbers 25:3-5, 9.*

"**By swift-coming judgments the people were awakened to the enormity of their sin.** A terrible pestilence broke out in the camp, to which tens of thousands speedily fell a prey. **God commanded that the leaders in this apostasy be put to death** by the magistrates. This order was promptly obeyed. The offenders were slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel, that the congregation, seeing the leaders so severely dealt with, might have a deep sense of God's abhorrence of their sin, and the terror of His wrath against them."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 455.*

GOD'S STRANGE ACT AT GIBEON

"For the Lord will rise up as in mount Perazim, **He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do His strange work,** His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act."—*Isaiah 28:21.*

"**And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon,** and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died; they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."—*Joshua 10:10-11.*

"**At His own will, God summons the forces of nature to overthrow the might of His enemies—**'fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind fulfilling His word.' When the heathen Amorites had set themselves to resist His purposes, **God interposed, casting down 'great stones from heaven'** upon the enemies of Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 509.*

THE PLAGUES UPON THE PHILISTINES

"And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod . . . **But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and He destroyed them,** and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof . . . Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither. And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, **the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction . . . Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron . . . for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.**"—*1 Samuel 5:1, 6, 8-11.*

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART TEN OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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“But the Lord had not wholly cast aside His people, nor would He long suffer the exultation of the heathen. He had used the Philistines as the instrument to punish Israel, and He employed the ark to punish the Philistines. In time past the divine Presence had attended it, to be the strength and glory of His obedient people. That invisible Presence would still attend it, **to bring terror and destruction to the transgressors of His holy law.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 585.

THE DEATH OF THE 185,000 ASSYRIANS

“And it came to pass that night, that **the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand**; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”—*2 Kings 19:35*.

“When Sennacherib, the haughty Assyrian, reproached and blasphemed God, and threatened Israel with destruction, ‘it came to pass that night, that **the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand.**’”—*Great Controversy*, 512.

“The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian. **The honor of Jehovah was vindicated in the eyes of the surrounding nations.**”—*Prophets and Kings*, 361.

— SECTION THREE — UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

IS “WRATH” EVER USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN RELATION TO GOD?

There are two words for “wrath” in the Greek New Testament. They are *orge* and *thumos*. Both are applied to God and indicate divine displeasure, punishing action, and retribution. The first of these, *orge*, is used thirty-six times in the New Testament; and over twenty of these are in reference to divine wrath. Liddell and Scott tell us that **the word indicates “temperament, disposition, mood”** (*Greek-English Lexicon*, II, p. 1246).

Here are five Bible passages in which this word, *orge*, is found:

“And when He looked round about on them **with anger**, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand.”—*Mark 3:5*.

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thy self **wrath** against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”—*Romans 2:5*.

“Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from **wrath** through Him.”—*Romans 5:9*.

“For the **wrath** of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”—*Romans 1:18*.

“And (the wicked) said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb**: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”—*Revelation 6:16-17* (cf. *Rom 4:15; 9:22; Rev 11:18*).

“**Heaven stands indignant** at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? . . . How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it? . . . Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God’s child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger. **This is the wrath of the Lamb.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 825.

The second of these words is *thumos*, and is used eighteen times in the New Testament. About one-half of these refer to the divine wrath of God. Lidell and Scott tell us that **this type of wrath is keyed to emotion, strong feeling, and passion**. The well-known New Testament Greek scholar, R.C. Trench, describes this kind of wrath as “**the boiling agitation of the feelings**” (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 131). On the part of God, it is a holy wrath—a blazing out of anger against sin and those who cling to it and hurt their fellow creatures.

Here are examples of this word, *thumos*, in the New Testament:

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the **wrath** of God.”—*Revelation 15:1*.

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the **wrath** of God upon the earth.”—*Revelation 16:1*.

“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the **wrath** of God.”—*Rev-*

elation 14:19.

In some instances, the two Greek words are used together, thus strengthening even more the intensity of the thought of God's wrath against those who stubbornly cling to sin and seek to hurt and injure their fellow man:

"But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **indignation (*thumos*) and wrath (*orge*).**"—*Romans 2:8.*

"And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the **fierceness (*thumos*) of His wrath (*orge*).**"—*Revelation 16:19.*

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the **fierceness (*thumos*) and wrath (*orge*)** of Almighty God."—*Revelation 19:15.*

Part of the Third Angel's Message:

"The same shall drink of the wine of the **wrath (*thumos*)** of God, which is poured out without mixture (full strength, not diluted] into the cup of His **indignation (*orge*)** [literally, 'wine of the wrath of God . . . into the cup of His wrath']; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."—*Revelation 14:10.*

"By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice."—*Great Controversy, 627.*

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF 1 SAMUEL 2:6?

"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up . . . The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them; the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed."—*1 Samuel 2:6, 10.*

"See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: **I kill, and I make alive;** I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand."—*Deuteronomy 32:39.*

In both of these passages, the word "kill" is translated from the Hebrew word for "to die"; and both are used in the verb form for **"to bring to death or execute death."** Interestingly enough, a different Hebrew word is frequently used when speaking about violent death brought on by man rather than by God. **The Hebrew word used in the Sixth Commandment is a different word and means "to murder."**

It is not wrong for God to execute death upon

the incorrigibly wicked. He does it (1) as a mercy to them, in their miserable lives; (2) as a mercy to those around them whose lives are made miserable by their presence; and (3) **as a warning to those who have not yet exceeded their probation.** But only our Creator can decide who shall receive this sentence. No one else can justly make a correct decision in the matter.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE JUDGMENTS?

Who is responsible for these judgments upon the wicked, which were carried out by the Israelites? For example, who was it that directed the Israelites to kill Achan? According to the Bible, **it was God who told them to do this (*Joshua 7:15*),** which they then did (*7:25; cf. Patriarchs and Prophets, 494-498*). **It was God who gave order to His people to stone to death the incorrigibly wicked.** This is clear both from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Here are additional passages to read as you have opportunity:

Great Controversy, pp. 48, 503-504, 523, 537, 539-543, 627, 634, 637-638, 653, 654, 656-657, 666, 667, 668, 670-671, 672-673, 674. *Early Writings*, pp. 54, 158, 178, 221, 289, 290, 291, 294-295. *Story of Redemption*, pp. 428-430.

*Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow, with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create, and He destroy.
Wide as the world is His command,
Vast as Eternity His love;
Firm as a rock His truth shall stand,
When rolling years shall cease to move."*
— *Issac Watts*

AS A CONDITION OF LIFE, MAN MUST OBEY GOD'S LAW

"God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 49.*

"Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods."—*Prophets and Kings, 178.*

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him."—*Isaiah 3:10-11.*

"His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself."—*Proverbs 5:22.*

"They have sown the wind; they shall reap the whirlwind."—*1 Testimonies, 269.*

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“Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 49.

“To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one’s self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.”—*Education*, 100.

“Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God . . . The warfare against God’s law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. **Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world.** All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

“Then the end will come [when the fire falls after the millennium]. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. **Satan and all who joined him in rebellion will be cut off.** Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch (*Mal 4:1*)—Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil . . . ‘I will destroy thee, O covering cherub . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.’ Then ‘the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be’; ‘they shall be as though they had not been.’ *Ezekiel 28:6-19*; *Psalm 37:10*; *Obadiah 16*.

“This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is ‘alienated from the life of God.’ Christ says, ‘**All they that hate Me love death.**’ *Ephesians 4:18*; *Proverbs 8:36*. **God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 764.

HAVING TO TAKE THE KNIFE

Calvary brings infinite good to all the universe, without exception. But it cost an infinite sacrifice, by the Godhead, in order to make this possible. It cost them an agony that none else will ever be able to fully grasp.

And, as it were, the Father’s knife was raised to slay His own Son. For He took the part of Judge and gave the cup of wrath to His Son to drink. **Although Abraham’s hand was stayed, the Godhead went all the way through with the agony to the end, which was the death of the Son and later the death of those who reject Him.**

Thank God for such a wonderful love, a love that for our sakes goes through this most difficult

experience, all the way to the end.

THE LAST MESSAGE OF MERCY

The last message of mercy is a call from a God of love. And the call is both an invitation and a warning. It is given because He loves us. The last message of mercy is a call to come back to God’s forgiveness and to His love before it is too late. The last message of mercy is a call to obey Him and, by His grace, become like Him so we may be sheltered in the coming storm.

Repeatedly, we are told that the threefold message of the angels is the final message to mankind. And, in a parallel passage, we are told that the last message of mercy to a dying world is a message of God’s love.

The warning message may seem severe; but He has to give it in order to wake us up, that we may return and not be lost. **And as repentant souls all over the world learn of this message, they reply, “God loves me enough to send me a warning. It breaks me down to think of it. He loves me enough to warn me before it is too late.** I shall respond to His love by coming back to Him.” Precious souls for whom Christ died see the love in the warning. They see that it was given in mercy. The last message is a message of mercy—a message of love. Read it: *Revelation 14:6-12*.

THE JUDGE WILL EXECUTE THE JUDGMENT

Christ voluntarily suffered under the wrath of God, unmixed with mercy, in order to deliver man from sin. Christ bore this wrath on our behalf (*5BC 1103*); for God’s wrath against transgression fell upon Him (*DA 743, 753*). God the Father assumed the character of Judge toward Christ, in Gethsemane, and withdrew His usual tenderness toward Him (*TM 246*). Christ drank the cup of wrath (*DA 642*), unmixed with mercy (*TM 246*), so that the world might escape it.

He who went through this experience in order to save man is the One who has been appointed to finally give that cup of wrath, unmixed with mercy, to the finally impenitent wicked (*read GC 621*). They were previously offered a way out—an escape from eternal death—but they consistently refused it. And the One who offered them the mercy is the One assigned to give them the cup of wrath. This is the fairness of God. A fairness without equal.

The work of Judgment belongs to the Lord alone (*AA 216*) . . . and is the responsibility of Christ alone to carry out (*COL 74*). Christ took humanity that He might become man’s Judge (*9T 185*). It should be understood that man is not the judge (*DA 314*) and neither are the angels (*9T 185*). Only

Christ can be man's Judge (9T 185), and He alone has been appointed to execute the Judgment upon the wicked (DA 210; GC 666; SR 422).

In the Investigative Judgment, God the Father presides (GC 421) while Jesus appears as our High Priest, our Advocate, and the One to individually perform the work of examination and passing of judgment upon the life of each of His professed followers (GC 419-480). He does not become Supreme Judge until His priestly work in the Sanctuary is completed (7BC 989).

In the Executive Judgment, God the Father will not be man's Judge; Jesus has been assigned this work (9T 185). Christ has been appointed to execute the Judgment (DA 210). Satan's part in this Judgment will be exposed; and he will suffer as a result of Christ's act of Judgment (GC 669; PP 338-339). Satan will not "assist" in the work of Judgment; only God who is perfectly fair and honest as a judge will do this work. Satan, the liar from the beginning, could do nothing fairly. Christ is the Judge during the millennium (EW 290; GC 660-661) and at the close of the millennium (EW 52-54; 291-294; GC 666-673; SR 421-4291).

THE SINNER WHO IS DESTROYED WILL HAVE DESTROYED HIMSELF

The responsibility for the destruction of the impenitent sinner lies at his own door. God will execute the sentence of death upon the wicked. He will carry it out; but **those who die are responsible for their own deaths**. By his persistent refusal to repent, the sinner destroys himself (COL 84-85). **God arbitrarily destroys no man**; it was the choice of that man himself. Heaven, in mercy, gave him what he had spent a lifetime asking for.

Every transgression brings punishment (1 SM 235). This punishment is proportional to the amount of light that has been received and rejected (PK 425; 4T 165). The sinner brings punishment upon himself (1 SM 235; 6BC 1110). For this reason, some of the wicked will receive more punishment than others (EW 294; GC 673); and Satan will receive the most (EW 294-295; GC 613).

In this probationary life, **God often permits sin to be punished with sin** (PP 728); **but the final punishment of the wicked is a definite act of God Himself** ((they will not kill themselves). It is God's strange act (PP 628). **God frequently uses natural laws as His instruments** (PP 114); **but the final destruction of sin will be His direct act**—by His igniting of the fire, sending it down from heaven, and then drawing up burning fossil fuels

from beneath the earth to its surface (7BC 946-947; PP 108-110; EW 54; 52; 294; GC 672-673; 3BC 1142).

THE FINAL STORM IS COMING

There are reasons why God did not immediately destroy sin as soon as it began (COL 72; DA 759; Ed 308; GC 498-499; PP 41-43; 1 SM 341). And there are reasons why the existence of sin has been continued since Christ's death (DA 161, 164). But God will not always be mocked (5T 234). **He only gives so much time. The day is coming when He will step in and cut things short.** As in all ages, when matters come to a crisis, God will interpose (COL 178).

A careful reading of *Great Controversy* will reveal that **these judgments from God are greatly intensified after the close of probation**; and truly, as we are told, they are "unmixed with mercy" (GC 629, 621). Vengeance and retributive judgments immediately begin to be poured out. The storm has then begun in full fury. God does not wait until later to initiate it.

To say it another way: In a very definite sense, **God's final judgments against sin begin as soon as human probation ends**. It is at that time that the Battle of Armageddon begins, a battle between God and Satan and his followers. The millennium provides an interlude during which the Sentencing Judgment take place. Then the wicked are raised, the Executive Judgment occurs, and the battle is forever ended.

WHEN THE WRATH BEGINS

At the close of probation, Jesus ceases His ministry as our High Priest, Advocate, and Examiner of the entries in the Book of Life (GC 613-614); and He puts off His priestly robes and clothes Himself in His garments of vengeance (EW 280-281). **He is at that time appointed the Supreme Judge** by the Father (7BC 989). Throughout most of human history, His judgments have been mingled with mercy; for they have been sent to awaken men to repent and flee from the wrath to come. But after probation closes, His judgments upon the wicked are no longer mingled with mercy (GC 629).

This wrath is especially shown in the seven last plagues that are poured out upon the wicked after probation ceases (GC 627); and, in the destructions that occur, His voice sounds, delivering His people (GC 636-638). Again, this wrath is evidenced at His Second Coming to earth (PP 338-341). And, finally, it will be manifest in the Final Execution of the

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART ELEVEN OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

Judgment at the close of the millennium, when He rains fire from heaven upon the wicked.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD HIMSELF IS A CONSUMING FIRE TO THE WICKED

God is a consuming fire to sin, wherever it is found (MB 62); He is a consuming fire to the wicked (GC 673) and a devouring fire to the transgressors of His law (GC 654). The glory of His presence is as a flame of fire (4T 151-152), as a devouring fire (PP 339).

"The whole earth shall be ablaze with the terrible light of His presence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 339.

"God is a consuming fire."—*Hebrews* 12:29; *Deuteronomy* 4:24.

"Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him."—*Psalms* 50:3.

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire."—*Isaiah* 66:15.

"A fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies round about."—*Psalms* 97:3.

"Judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."—*Hebrews* 10:27.

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."—*2 Thessalonians* 1:7-9.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."—*2 Thessalonians* 2:8.

SODOM WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE FROM HEAVEN

The destruction of Sodom by fire from God is a type of the final destruction of the wicked (2 Peter 2:4-9; Jude 6-11). We are told, in detail in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 38-140; 157-167, how this destruction was carried out. Angels of God (including Christ) were sent to investigate and see whether it should be destroyed (GC 63; PP 139).

Angels drew near on their mission of destruction (PP 157). Compare these striking passages: The destruction of Sodom (PP 156-170) was sudden and unexpected (PP 162); but, when God destroyed it, it was an act of mercy (GC 543). The

destruction was caused by fire from heaven (EW 45; GC 431; GW 126; PK 297) and fire and brimstone rained from heaven (PP 162; TM 75; 1 SM 63). This destructive act of the God of Heaven was called fiery blasts (7T 89) and balls of fire (5BC 1122), and it stands as a warning to future generations that it will happen again (PP 162-165; 5T 232-233). It was an example of how the wicked will finally be destroyed (Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6; cf. 2:4-9). Consider the vivid statements in GC 543 and TM 75. The world today is fast becoming a Sodom and preparing for a like destruction from God (4BC 1144, 1161; CH 112; Ed 228; DA 122; FE 286, 317; GW 125-126; PP 167; 5T 218; 8T 49; 9T 43; TM 457). In the outpouring of His wrath, balls of fire will again fall (Ev 29; 9T 28; Ev 43; WM 136-137).

THE DAY OF GOD'S VENGEANCE

"Vengeance is Mine; I will repay."—*Romans* 12:19 (also see: *Heb* 10:30; *Deut* 32:35; *Ps* 94:1-2; *2 Thess* 1:8).

God takes no delight in vengeance (PP 139; 628); the day is near when it shall come (GC 48; 673). But it is for God to take vengeance, not man (2BC 1022; Ed 257). Christ shall put off His priestly robes and put on His garments of vengeance at the close of His Sanctuary ministry, when human probation ends (5T 690).

GOD'S STRANGE WORK

"That He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act."—*Isaiah* 28:21.

It will be the outpouring of His wrath on the wicked (2 SM 373). The work of destruction, by God, is a strange act to Him; it is not the usual way He works, but it must be done (COL 190). A careful reading of the Spirit of Prophecy indicates that God's strange work includes more than the final destruction of the wicked. It appears that all of His judgments, unmingled with mercy, are part of this strange act (GC 627—the seven last plagues; PP 628—destruction of the Amalekites; PP 139—the destruction of Sodom). A large number of such acts begin at the close of probation (GC 629; 627; 2 SM 372-373)—and that is not very far off! We have a warning to give!

This strange act is also called "the day of wrath" (Rom 2:5); "judgment and fiery indignation" (Heb 10:27); "vengeance . . . wrath . . . indignation . . . anger . . . fury" (Nahum 1:2, 3, 5-6); "repayment" (Deut 7:9-10); the "time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:44),

etc.

THE DAY OF VISITATION

The day of judgment from God, in Scripture, is frequently called the “day of visitation”—the day when God visits with His judgments. Check this out in a good concordance and see what you find; there are over a dozen passages. The time is near when the day of God’s visitation shall come to mankind (5T 209). And when it does, it will be in a more pronounced manner than has been seen for thousands of years.

RETRIBUTIVE JUDGMENT

A terrible retribution is awaiting the sinner (GC 627). God’s retributive justice is about to descend upon them (4T 489) just as retributive vengeance fell upon apostasy in the past (GC 25).

THE WAGES OF SIN

“Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4) and **“the wages of sin is death”** (Rom 6:23). The soul that sins shall die, and it shall be an everlasting death—and then shall the wrath of God against sin be appeased (EW 51; 218). The wages of sin is death (PP 61; 341; EW 294; GC 668; 1 SM 220; 4T 363). It is the end of transgression (4T 363). **These wages of sin will be the wrath of God and the second death** (2T 210). These wages will be paid to them, in full, just before the fire falls (GC 668; EW 294; GC 668; 1 SM 220; 4T 363).

THE FINAL REWARDS

The righteous receive their reward at the Second Coming of Christ (6T 305-306). It will be eternal life (SL 76). **But the sinner’s reward will be the second death** (1 SM 220); and it will be received after the millennium (7BC 986-987; EW 290-291; GC 666-673).

This is what it will include:

- [1] Sufferings (EW 294; GC 673) and terrible pains (5T 620).
- [2] Consumed by the fire (EW 52-54; 294-295; GC 485-486).
- [3] Deprived of existence by it (GC 544).
- [4] Sink into hopeless and eternal oblivion (GC 544-545).

Satan and his followers will die an everlasting death (EW 295).

And, equally important [5], Sin will never arise a second time anywhere in the universe (GC 504).

WHEN MERCY CEASES

We are warned against resisting God’s pleadings of mercy (GC 361); for they ceased for the antediluvians when Noah entered the ark (PP 98). Christ’s mercy is also a terrible power to punish sinners (7BC 935). Let none deceive himself that

God will in mercy save the rejecters of His grace (SC 31); for the cities of the plain (Gen 19:24-29) are an example to us, that God’s justice does not eclipse His mercy (1T 23-24). Even the destruction of sinners is an act of mercy on the part of God (GC 543). Men depend every day and hour upon His pardoning mercy (5T 170). A mixture of judgment and mercy is used to bring sinners to repentance (2T 423), but **the voice of mercy will be heard only a little while longer** (9T 146); for the time is near when it will no longer be heard (1T 153). God’s judgments are mingled with mercy prior to the close of probation (GC 629); but **the offers of mercy are withdrawn when the limits of sin have been reached** by the sinner (PP 162-165). God’s forbearance will cease when iniquity has reached a stated boundary of mercy (5T 524). The door of mercy will be forever shut when probation closes (DA 636; GC 613-614). After its close God’s wrath, unmixed with mercy, will be poured out (GC 629). **The wicked desired separation from God; so they will receive separation from God—which is eternal death.**

HE SENDS OUT HIS FIRE AND DESTROYS

As has been earlier mentioned, the destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain (Gen 19:24-29) are an example to us of the final destruction of the wicked (2 Peter 2:4-9; Jude 7). **“The flames that consumed the cities of the plain shed their warning light down even to our time”** (PP 162). And the cities of the earth today are fast becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah (Ev 30).

But there are other incidents when God sent fire from the skies, or from heaven, and destroyed the wicked in Bible times. Do not forget the judgments of God against Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10; PP 359). Then there is the judgment on Korah’s company (Num 16:35; PP 401). Fire flashing from the cloud consumed 250 men (PP 401).

We are told that judgments such as these are just and that they will come again. Because of this, we are not to express sympathy.

“The Lord would teach His people to acknowledge the justice of His corrections, that others may fear. There are those in Israel whom the warning of this terrible judgment might save from presuming upon God’s forbearance . . . **It is the duty of Christ’s servants to show the erring ones their peril.**

“Those who destroy the effect of the warning by blinding the eyes of sinners to the real character and results of sin often flatter themselves that they thus give evidence of their charity; but they are working directly to oppose and hinder the work of God’s Holy Spirit; they are lulling the sinner to rest on the brink of destruction;

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they are making themselves partakers in his guilt and incurring a fearful responsibility for his impenitence. Many, many, have gone down to ruin as a result of this false and deceptive sympathy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 361.

Then there were the judgments on the wicked men who sought Elijah (*2 Kgs 1:10, 12; PP 208*). The wrath of God fell upon them in judgment (*PP 208*).

Here are six other instances in which God sent fire, usually from heaven or from the skies, and destroyed the wicked: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 71, 348, 359; and *Prophets and Kings*, 37, 45, 153, 335. In the case of four of these, “the fire came down from heaven” (*PP 71; PK 37, 45, 153, 335*).

**IN THIS TIME OF PROBATION,
GOD USES FIRE
AS A WARNING JUDGMENT**

God uses fire to chasten His people (*8T 102*) **and to warn earth’s inhabitants** (*9T 97*). In fact, He uses it repeatedly to warn men on earth to repent and prepare for Christ’s soon return (*LS 412-414*), especially in these last hours before probation closes (*PK 278*). At the touch of His hand, fire-proof buildings are destroyed by fire (*8T 99*); and He uses fire to destroy entire cities that are wicked (*Ev 27; 7BC 946; PP 109*). Satan has so much control over these profligate cities that this is the reason that God must destroy them with fire (*1 SM 269*).

CAN SATAN BRING DOWN FIRE?

We have seen many examples of the fact that God, Himself, uses fire as a warning and as a punishment—in past ages, in our day, and in the final windup of earth’s history that is just ahead. But **to what degree can Satan produce fire and send it upon people?**

(1) On his own, **Satan may be able to cause fires to break out, as God permits. These are natural fires.** But because Satan can do this, we cannot sidestep the fact that God has also done it in the past, is doing it now, and will do it again in the future.

(2) **Satan can miraculously produce fire. What is this fire and how does he produce it?** The prophecy of Revelation 13:13 is applied to Satan several times. We are told that he and his agents will “bring fire down from heaven”; the context explains what this means. **This fire will not be real fire, but a “lying wonder”** in imitation of the genuine, in every case in which it is described in the Spirit of Prophecy. Consider the following passages:

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and

shining with holy consecration, will [during the Loud Cry] hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. **Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men.** Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.”—*Great Controversy*, 612.

“Satan also works—with lying wonders—even bringing down fire.” **The fire he brings down is only in their sight;** it can be seen, like the magicians’ serpents in Egypt. But that is all, for it is not real.

“I saw that soon it would be considered blasphemy to speak against the rapping [manifestations of spiritualism], and that it would spread more and more, that Satan’s power would increase and some of his devoted followers would have power to work miracles and even to bring down fire from heaven in the sight of men.”

Then we are told how Satan does these various miracles: by an appearance only.

“I was shown that by the rapping and mesmerism these modern magicians would yet account for all the miracles wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that many would believe that all the mighty works of the Son of God when on earth were accomplished by this same power. **I was pointed back to the time of Moses** and saw the signs and wonders which God wrought through him before Pharaoh, **most of which were imitated by the magicians** of Egypt; and that just before the filial deliverance of the saints, God would work powerfully for His people, and **these modern magicians would be permitted to imitate the work of God.** That time will soon come, and we shall have to keep hold of the strong arm of Jehovah; for all these great signs and mighty wonders of the devil **are designed to deceive** God’s people and overthrow them. Our minds must be stayed upon God.”—*Early Writings*, 59-60.

“The most specious temptations of the enemy are coming in, and they are coming in on the highest, most elevated plane. These spiritualize the doctrines of present truth until there is no distinction between the substance and the shadow. You know that Satan will come in **to deceive if possible** the very elect. He claims to be Christ, and he is coming in, **pretending** to be the great medical missionary. **He will cause fire to come down** from heaven **in the sight of men**, to prove that he is God. We must stand barricaded by the truths of the Bible. The canopy of truth is the only canopy under which we can stand safely.”—*Medical Ministry*, 87-88.

Only Bible truth will enable us not to be de-

ceived by the lying wonders, when they occur.

You may recall that the children at Lourdes, France, who claimed to have seen an apparition (vision) of the Virgin Mary, also said they saw the sun dancing in the sky.

“Be not drawn from the voice of God in His Word. Let nothing divert the mind. **The wonderful, the marvelous, will be represented** and presented. Through **satanic delusions, wonderful miracles**, the claims of human agents [of Satan!] will be urged. Beware of all this.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 49.

“There is to be among God’s people no spiritual stupidity. **Evil spirits are actively engaged in seeking to control the minds of human beings** . . . Those who discard Christ and His righteousness will accept the sophistry that is flooding the world . . . **Men under the influence of evil spirits will work miracles**. They will make people sick by casting their spell upon them, and will then remove the spell, leading others to say that those who were sick have been wonderfully healed. This Satan has done again and again. **We need not be deceived**. Wonderful scenes, with which Satan will be closely connected, will soon take place. God’s Word declares that **Satan will work miracles**. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These [are] works of **apparent** healing.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 53.

Satan’s agents, with their pretended miracles, do not have the great power of God.

“On the contrary, **it is the miracle-working power of the great deceiver**. He is a transgressor of the moral law, and employs every device that he can master to blind men to its true character. We are warned that in the last days **he will work with signs and lying wonders**. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 51.

“We are coming right upon the time when Satan is to work with **all manner of bewitching influences**, and **those who are charmed** with them now, or give them the least countenance now, will be all ready to be swept right in to act a part with the devil then. Evil angels are working all the time upon the hearts of men. **Satan is working with everyone who is not under the control of the Spirit of God**. It is **the lying wonders** of the devil that will take the world captive, and **he will cause fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men**. He is to work miracles; and this wonderful, miracle-working power is to sweep in the whole world.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 51.

“The man who makes the working of miracles the test of his faith will find that **Satan can,**

through a species of deceptions, perform wonders that will appear to be genuine miracles. It was this [that] he hoped to make a test question with the Israelites at the time of their deliverance from Egypt.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 52.

Those deceived by Satan—those not remaining by the Word of God—are the ones most likely to witness these counterfeit miracles.

“**If we accept not the truth in the love of it, we may be among the number who will see the miracles wrought by Satan in these last days, and believe them**. Many strange things will **appear** as wonderful miracles, which should be regarded as **deceptions** manufactured by **the father of lies**.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 53.

In the next paragraph, we are told that false Adventists will bring down some of this imitation fire.

“The enemy [Satan] will work through his agents who have departed from the faith, and **they will seemingly work miracles**, even to the bringing down of fire out of heaven in the sight of men. By means of ‘**lying wonders**’ Satan **would deceive**, if possible, the very elect.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 54.

In summary, then, we see that (1) Satan will be permitted to bring down “fire from heaven”; but it is an imitation fire that cannot hurt or injure anyone. (2) This is the kind of fire that is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 13:13. (3) This fire is brought down directly by Satan or through his agents. (4) This fire is brought down, *not* as a destructive power, but to charm and captivate the people’s attention. **We are not once told that this satanic “fire from heaven” will be able to damage, maim, or destroy**. This is not the purpose in bringing it down. Indeed, it could not injure, anyway; for it is only magic fire (apparent fire), nothing more.

Therefore, the “fire from heaven” in the final judgment does not, and could not come from Satan!

NATURAL DISASTERS THAT WILL COME FROM SATAN

Satan’s “fire from heaven” cannot destroy because it is not real; **but he can bring disaster and destruction in other ways: When God permits, Satan can bring disease, disaster, accidents, fire setting, storms, floods, tidal waves, earthquakes, and pestilence**. He is doing this now; and he will do it at the time he appears on earth, in personation of Christ (GC 589-590). After the close of probation, Satan will bring destructive acts in a still

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PART TWELVE OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

more intensified form (GC 614).

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES WILL BE A SERIES OF JUDGMENTS FROM GOD

In a passage separate to the one referred to above, describing Satan's disasters, we are told of the seven last plagues (GC 627-630); they will come as a direct judgment from God. **We are never told, anywhere, that the seven last plagues will come through the power or instrumentality of Satan.** On the contrary, we are told that (1) God will use the forces of nature in this work (PP 509), (2) the plagues will unveil Satan's deceptions (EW 266), and that (3) the wrath of God is revealed in them (GC 627; EW 289, 64). **The wrath of God and His Strange Act against the wicked begin on a massive scale at the close of probation,** when Christ's ministry in the Sanctuary is completed (GC 629; 627). **This wrath will end at the time of their final destruction**—the day of the Lord's vengeance (GC 672-673; SR 428-429), when the wicked are finally blotted out. At that time His justice will be fully satisfied. You and I know little of the terrible wickedness that men and devils have done against God's innocent ones for thousands of years. It will require their death to satisfy God's justice in this matter.

For more on God's responsibility in sending the seven last plagues, read Revelation 15:3-16:21.

FROM THE CLOSE OF PROBATION ON DOWN TO THE FINAL DESTRUCTION

A key point in all of this is **what and who is responsible for the death of the wicked in the last days. Is it God or Satan or wicked men?** And most specifically, who causes the death of the wicked at the Second Advent of Christ and, again, when the wicked are finally blotted out of existence after the millennium? **Here is a suggestive analysis of what is ahead:**

WHAT SPECIFIC DISASTERS WILL CAUSE THE DEATH OF THE WICKED BETWEEN THE CLOSE OF PROBATION AND THE TIME OF THE VOICE OF GOD?

Before the Close of Probation: Judgments of God are sent as retribution to the wicked for the terrible injuries they bring to the righteous (7BC 946). **Warning judgments are also sent** to bring men back to Him (PK 278; LS 412-414); **but these**

usually result only in the loss of property, not death. Natural disasters sent as judgments from God would include lesser disasters before the close of probation (PK 278; 7BC 946; 9T 97) and major disasters before and after the close of probation (MYP 89:2-90; Ev 27).

After the Close of Probation:

Intensified disasters from Satan (GC 614-615; 623) and **the seven last plagues from God** (GC 627-630; EW 289; COL 286-287). **Natural disasters from God** will occur when He delivers His people by the Voice of God sounding from heaven (GC 635-638) and afterward, till the Second Advent.

WHAT WILL CAUSE THE DEATH OF THE WICKED AFTER THE VOICE OF GOD?

Natural destructions will be sent as judgments by God (COL 286-287; PP 109); both passages also refer to earlier events and continuation of the plagues).

Savage fighting among men (EW 289-290; GC 655-657).

Lightnings which He sends from heaven, uniting with fire in the earth, will cause volcanoes, explosions, and earthquakes (7BC 946; probably beginning at the Voice of God).

WHAT SPECIFIC DISASTERS WILL CAUSE THE DEATH OF THE WICKED AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST?

Some deaths occurred as a result of fighting by the wicked against one another (GC 655-657). But we would not consider that a disaster. This fighting, which began at the Voice of God (EW 289-290), ceases as they see the Son of Man drawing near to the earth. Seeing it, their silence changes to intense fear and a crying to the rocks to cover them and hide them from His presence (GC 642). They are too frightened by His presence to return to their bickering and anger with one another.

There are convulsions of nature which are caused by the Second Advent (PP 340-341; GC 641). Some of these may cause death.

The brightness of Christ's presence is a devouring fire before Him and appears to be the primary event destroying the wicked before the millennium (PP 338-340; GC 642).

Just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, God will send **lightnings from heaven** which will kindle fossil fuel fires that will cover the earth (PP 109-110). This event is referred

to in GC 638 and possibly 637 and 639; thus it may also be occurring, to a partial degree, a little before the Second Advent.

WHAT WILL CAUSE THE DEATH OF THE WICKED AT THEIR FINAL DESTRUCTION?

The following listing includes actual causes of the death of the wicked after the millennium, as well as some earlier judgments against the wicked:

Christ's death brings Satan's death knell (*GC 503-504; EW 158*).

A sea of fire caused by God (*COL 179; EW 54*).

Lightning from heaven will unite with fire that God will draw from the earth (*7BC 946-947*).

Fire breathed from God (*EW 54; Rev 20:9*).

Destruction from God (*PP 341*).

Death is caused, not by battle and bloodshed but, by fire fuel (*GC 672; Isa 9:5*).

Destruction from the Lord (*GC 672; PP 341*).

God as a consuming fire (*GC 673; SR 429*).

Fire from God out of heaven (*EW 294; SR 428*).

Quick-burning coals rained from God (*GC 672*).

Utterly destroyed by the indignation and fury of the Lord (*GC 672*).

They will be burned with unquenchable fire (*Matt 3:12; Luke 3:17*).

His mercy is a terrible power to punish sin (*7BC 935-936*).

It is the wrath of God and the lamb that causes the destruction of the wicked (*EW 52*).

Destruction without remedy from God (*7BC 946*).

The angel of death is from God (*Eze 9:6*).

The angels of God are all-powerful (*DA 700; GC 511-512; 3BC 1127; PP 748; PK 37; GC 614; DA 500; PP 157; SR 78-79; DA 51; PP 279-280; SD 227; SR 118-119; 1T 265; 4T 20-21; 5T 505; AA 151-152; PP 269; PP 748; 7BC 983; 9T 93; 3T 364; TM 431*).

Devouring fire from Him (*PP 338-340*).

He will send fire, earthquake, tempest, and death (*COL 286-287*).

Wicked destroyed by lightnings, volcanoes, and earthquakes from God (*PP 108-110*).

He will cause fire from heaven to unite with fire from under the earth (*7BC 946-947*).

Consumed by the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory (*GC 657*).

Cast by His angels into a furnace of fire (*COL 75*).

He will cleanse the earth by a sea of fire (*COL 179*).

Great stones cast down upon them (*PP 509*).

By plagues from God (*3SG 82*).

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST PARALLELS THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED IN SEVERAL WAYS

1. Prior to both, **the wicked try to blot the righteous from existence, but without success.**

2. SC (Second Coming): At the Voice of God, **the wicked give up the attempt and realize the truth of the situation.** FD (Final Death of the Wicked): At the appearance of Christ above the City, a final clear understanding of their undone condition is given to the wicked.

3. SC: **The wicked then turn in fierce anger upon one another, and especially upon the religious leaders.** This results in death to an untold number. FD: When the wicked then turn upon their religious leaders, and especially upon Satan, we are not told that there is any loss of life by this action. All of the issues in the great controversy are now settled and understood; so the fire immediately falls. It is the fire that slays them, not combat. And the amount of punishment, in this fire, that each would receive will be carefully determined in the sentencing judgment during the millennium.

4. SC: **God executes the judgment** by sending fire from heaven that kindles fossil fuel on earth; the wicked are slain amid a sheet of flame covering the earth and the brightness of Christ's glorious presence. Satan and his angels are permitted to remain alive through this event. FD: The issues in the great controversy are then understood, the fire falls from heaven and unites with fire from beneath the earth, and each wicked creature suffers only a just amount and no more. This fire then purifies the earth.

GOD HAS USED HIS ANGELS TO PUNISH THE WICKED

"The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander [at His trial before Annas]. They longed to deliver Christ. **Under God the angels are all-powerful.** On one occasion, in obedience to the command of Christ, they slew of the Assyrian army in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God!"—*Desire of Ages, 700*.

"We are informed in Scripture as to **the number, and the power and glory, of the heavenly beings,** of their connection with the government of God, and also of their relation to the work of redemption . . . As God's messengers they go forth, like 'the appearance of a flash of lightning, so dazzling their glory, and so swift their flight. The angel that appeared at the Saviour's tomb, his countenance 'like lightning, and his raiment white as snow,' caused the keepers for fear of him to quake,

and they 'became as dead men.' When Sennacherib, the haughty Assyrian, reproached and blasphemed God, and threatened Israel with destruction, 'it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand.' There were 'cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains,' from the army of Sennacherib."—*Great Controversy*, 511-512.

"Swift destruction followed. **Seventy thousand were destroyed by pestilence.** David and the elders of Israel were in the deepest humiliation, mourning before the Lord. **As the angel of the Lord was on his way to destroy Jerusalem,** God bade him stay his work of death."—*3 Bible Commentary*, 1127. (For more on this, read *PP 748*; *PK 37*; *GC 614*.)

For more information on this subject, read the following: Earthquakes caused by the angels of God (*DA 780*; *ML 20*; *SR 231*; *9T 92-93*). Judgments of God executed by "His angels" (*TM 431*). Sodom destroyed (*DA 500*; *GC 632*; *PP 157*; *SR 78-79*; *3 SG 103*). Judgments already at work in the land (*9T 93*; *TM 431*). Men who spoke falsely (*1T 202*) and the firstborn in Egypt were killed (*DA 51*; *PP 279-280*; *GC 614*; *SD 227*; *SR 118*; *1T 265*; *4T 25*). Herod Agrippa (*AA 151-152*). God caused the plague of hail in Egypt (*PP 269*) and pestilence in Israel (*PP 748*). God's wrath will be poured out on earth again.

Angels are messengers sent from the throne of God to do His will. In this world, **they seek to draw men to Christ. They also protect those who love Him:** *Heb 1:14*; *Gen 24:7, 40*; *Ex 23:20, 23*; *33:2*; *Num 20:16*; *1 Kgs 19:5*; *Ps 34:7*; *91:11-12*; *Matt 4:6*; *Isa 63:9*; *Dan 6:22*; *Acts 5:19-20*; *12:7-10*. Are these not beautiful and comforting passages?

Another work that has been given to the angels is to **punish the wicked who hate God and try to oppress and destroy His people.** Here are some examples:

The angels that went to Sodom (*Gen 19:1-25*).

The angel at the threshing floor of Araunah (*2 Sam 24:16-17*; *1 Chron 21:15-16*).

The angel from God that destroyed 185,000 Assyrians in one night (*2 Chron 32:21*; *Isa 37: 36*).

Statements in Psalms about angels of the Lord that punish the wicked (*Ps 35:5-6*).

Angels at the Second Advent (*Matt 13:41-42, 49-50*).

The angel that killed Herod (*Acts 12:23*).

Angels at the execution of the Judgment (*Jude 14-15*).

The four angels loose the winds (*Rev 7:1-2; 9:15*).

The seven angels pour out the plagues (*Rev*

15:1).

USING METAPHORS TO SET ASIDE TRUTH

There is a false teaching that has been advanced in an effort to teach the concept that God has nothing to do with the final destruction of the wicked. An individual in Australia (Fred Wright) has been prominent in this work. **He attempts to rewrite the final destruction of wicked men, by applying a Bible metaphor, as though it were literal.** Here is the passage:

"I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; **therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee,** and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."—*Ezekiel 28:17-19*.

Several theories have been developed as to how the wicked will finally be destroyed.

- One is an attempt to portray the final end of the wicked as being caused by **international warfare** that will develop into a global atomic holocaust.

- Another theory is that **the sun will accidentally blow up** just then.

- Another is that a **black hole will accidentally pass near the earth** and slay the wicked.

These ridiculous theories are invented in a desperate attempt to explain how the wicked will finally die; since, according to the "God cannot kill anyone" theory, the wicked must somehow die and God really doesn't have the capacity to destroy the wicked—though it must somehow be done.

- Another theory is based on a false interpretation of *Ezekiel 28:17-19*: **All the fire that destroys the wicked will issue forth in some magical way (not caused by God) from the body of Satan. That fire will kill Satan and then spread, killing all the wicked angels and people.**

"Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee."—*Ezekiel 28:18*.

Here are several reasons why *Ezekiel 28:18* is inadequate to explain away the Bible truth, that God executes the final judgment by sending fire down from heaven:

(1) **Such a view is contrary to dozens of Bible-Spirit of Prophecy statements.** One passage is never to be twisted to explain away a multitude of other texts.

(2) This fantastic theory was devised to show that God kills no one. But the verse says that God causes the fire to come out of Satan! So, **if the verse is to be taken literally, then God causes the**

death of Satan. He kills him.

(3) According to the theory, **Satan dies first, and everyone around him watches him go up in smoke** (*Eze 28:17-19*). That means he suffers the least from the fire, having died the quickest. He suffers the least for his sins. This is contrary to Scripture.

(4) If this verse is to be interpreted literally, then **the fire only kills Satan and none of the onlookers.** The wicked stand around watching him die. They are terrified at his death; for, as the passage says, never shall he be anymore (*Eze 28:19*).

(5) If Ezekiel 28:17-19 is literal, before the fire is drawn out of him, **Satan will lie down before the kings** that are there (*Eze 28:17*).

The wisdom of man's speculations is foolishness with God; and it ought to be foolishness with us also.

(6) According to Scripture, real fire destroys the wicked. But **this theory is based on destruction by a magical fire.**

What is the actual meaning of this passage?

(1) **Ezekiel 28:18 is actually a metaphor and is couched amid other nearby metaphors.** The "fire" is a symbol of Satan's wickedness. And this fact alone should alert us to the truth of the matter.

(2) **Here are some other examples of Bible metaphors about the final death of the wicked, which we do not try to apply literally:** The wicked are not literally bound up into **bundles and then burned** (*Matt 13:30*) or bound and then **cast into outer darkness, without being burned up** (*Matt 22:13*). *Education*, 144-145, says that the wicked are relentlessly **pursued by the law and burned up by it.** Matthew 13:39, especially verses 4-42, says that the angels of God shall be sent to **reap the wicked like weeds**, gather them, and then **cast them into a super-heated furnace.** Matthew 24:51 says they shall weep and grind their teeth because they will **"be appointed his portion with the hypocrites."**

(3) **In Ezekiel 28:17-19, we are given yet another metaphor:** Fire from the midst of Satan, drawn out by God, is what will consume him. **The meaning is obvious: It is the evil nature which Satan has developed which will cause his destruction.**

(4) **Note earlier metaphors in this chapter about Satan:** He is the King of Tyrus, has stone clothing and pipes; and, where he used to live, in heaven, there are hot stones which produces fire lying around on the ground (*Eze 28:12-14*).

(5) Indeed, **if we are to take this chapter literally, it is not talking about Satan at all**, but only a Phoenician king! (*Eze 28:12*)

(6) A very significant fact: **Ellen White never quotes this disputed phrase** ("therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee"). If it were such an important phrase, would she not have quoted it?

(7) Another very significant fact: We cannot say she overlooked it; for **she quotes the phrase just following it—and she does it in a description of how God, Himself, will destroy Satan!** Read *Great Controversy*, 503-504. The phrase is quoted on page 504.

(8) We should **never try to establish a doctrinal teaching solely on a single phrase.**

Many folk who defend the error that God has no responsibility for the death of the wicked will, when pressed by the facts, keep coming back to this one phrase as their last hope of doctrinal defense when all else has collapsed. Then when you explain Ezekiel 28:17-19 to them—they return to all the other errors you disproved earlier:

Satan produced all that water for the Flood. A volcano nicely exploded by accident at just the right time to save the angels of God from lying when they said that the city was about to be destroyed; but then they still lied, because they said that they would do it (*Gen 19:13-14, 21, 24-25, 29*), not an accidental volcano. The wicked all die from fistfights at the Second Advent, and on and on.

Back and forth it will go for an hour or two, from Ezekiel 28:17-19 to volcanoes, to sun explosions, to fistfight fatalities, and back to Ezekiel 28:17-19 again.

Above all, remember that if Ezekiel 28:17-19 is to be taken in a fully literal sense, **this disputed phrase still proves that God is responsible for the death of Satan.** If literal, the fire is brought forth by God, in order to burn the devil to ashes. Satan does not bring it out; God does. And Satan does not use it to kill others. In fact there is, in this entire passage, no mention that anyone except Satan will die because of this fire or for any other reason.

This disputed sentence simply means that Satan is responsible for his own death. It is the seething torrent of pride, hatred, and violence that he has multiplied in his mind over the ages which ultimately causes his destruction. This is the reason why he must die. This is what kills him. This "fire" within him to mutilate and kill others can no longer be tolerated. It is because of God's very good-

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

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The Terrible Storm

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ness that Satan's pent-up hatred bursts forth continually. It cannot be contained. There is no way he can stay in the universe any longer. The fires of passion and selfishness, continually pouring out of him, in response to the manifestation of God's character of love, is the reason he must die. And **God declares that He, the One who created Lucifer, shall bring this strange being to ashes in the sight of the onlooking universe. Ezekiel 28:12-19 is a discussion of the origin, Fall, and death of Satan.**

Consider the clear teachings of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. After the millennium:

1. No man or devil kills man or devil.
2. Only the fire kills them.
3. The fire that slays them is caused by God.
4. In dozens of references—all except one metaphorical passage—fire comes from God out of heaven.
5. In that one passage, Ezekiel 28:17-19, apparently fire is drawn by God out of Satan; and it devours Satan.
6. In every instance, the destructive force is fire alone; and each time it is caused by God alone.
7. Not once are these destructive forces caused by men or by devils.
8. It is God's *strange act*—not Satan's act. Satan started the great controversy, but God will finish it.

“God has given in His Word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law.

Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that ‘the wages of sin is death,’ that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression . . .

“The sinner is treasuring up unto himself ‘wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds’; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that

doeth evil.’ Romans 2:5-6, 9 . . . **God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin.** ‘The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.’ Exodus 34:6-7. ‘All the wicked will He destroy.’ ‘The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.’ Psalms 145:20; 37:38. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion . . .

“Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there . . . could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity . . . A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.

“The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. [“Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself.”—COL 84:4.] **Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.**

“Like the waters of the Flood **the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable** . . . In mercy to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. In mercy He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom . . . **It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.**”—*Great Controversy*, 539-543.

ONLY THE CORRECT VIEW SOLVES THE PROBLEM AND REVEALS THE LOVE OF GOD

The incorrect interpretation of Ezekiel 28:17-19 teaches that God's love for the wicked is so great that He abandons them to the tender mercies of Satan for their extermination. But such would be a surprisingly shallow love. The only other possibility is that God is so helpless, He is not in control of what takes place in the universe.

In reality, the Bible-Spirit of Prophecy portrayal

of the final death of the wicked is a far more profound revelation of the love of God, in the manner in which **He mercifully puts the rebellious to death as soon as He can while still being consistent with justice. No one suffers one instant longer than he should. God was merciful to them all through their lifetime; He is merciful to them in their final death.** He does not say, “Well, it is too late for them now; I shall let Satan finish them off.” Instead He personally does the distasteful—because He alone is authorized to do it (for He alone made them). He alone can render them a perfectly fair final death.

God does not delight in this. He wanted them all to live, not die. But since it must be done, He Himself will bear the responsibility of carrying the great controversy through to its final end—though **it is His own precious creatures, whom He died for, who must now be blotted out by His action. He has never avoided an unpleasant duty before and He will not do so now.** The Father did His duty toward His Son while He bore our sins, and it resulted in His death. Now the Son will do His duty toward the rejecters of the only means of their salvation.

Jesus carries the great controversy through to the end—as the only one in all the universe who is qualified to do so—the only one who, by Redemption and Atonement, is appointed to do it. And, by His appointment, He will stay with it to the end—that each may suffer fairly, impartially, and not a bit longer than is necessary. Herein is the love of God shown for mankind. He loves the righteous and He loves the rebellious; He gives the best to each that their decisions permit Him to render. And it is a love that will not let the sinner suffer one moment longer than is necessary. It is a love that will complete the great controversy in such a way that no questions can ever again arise; for He will complete it Himself. For the sake of the wicked and for the sake of all the righteous throughout the universe, God will finish the sin problem.

For six thousand years, misery for earth’s inhabitants and anguish for the beings of the universe has not come from the destruction of sin and sinners; it comes from permitting them to live! But, in order to work out the issues in the great controversy and to fully answer Satan’s charges, sin and sinners had to continue for a time. Yet that time will soon end.

Sadness came to all while the rebellious had life. Merciful relief will come to all at their destruction. Yes, the final death of the wicked, by the Lawgiver (whose law they hated) will be **an eternal act of love**, an act with eternal consequences of mercy to the wicked and good for all the rest of the

universe.

A SPECIAL WARNING CALL IS ALWAYS GIVEN FIRST

Every major judgment that God has ever sent upon the earth has always been preceded by a warning. This striking fact is easily borne out by the Word of God. In fact, much of the Bible is a description of either the warnings or the judgments that later fell. Here are some examples:

Enoch gave a special warning message to men in his time (*PP 86-87; 1BC 1087-1088*); and, for 120 years, Noah did also (*PP 90-104*; specifically note 102). Then the Flood came (*Gen 6-8; PP 105-110*). Both Abraham and Lot gave the cities of the plain an example in Godliness that they needed (*PP 135-136; 157-158*). And then fire fell from heaven upon the doomed cities (*Gen 19; PP 160-168*). First Joseph and then Moses told the Egyptians about the true God (*PP 257-272*); then the plagues came (*Gen 7-11*). Abraham, Moses, and the children of Israel gave lessons in right conduct to the Amorites; they were also given additional probationary time—but, when they still did not repent, they were destroyed (*Gen 15:13-16; PP 435, 523*).

First the merciful call; then the judgments.

THE CREATOR CAN REMOVE LIFE

The Ten Commandments teach, “Thou shalt not kill” (*Ex 20:13*). The question then is: **“Since this is the sixth commandment, can God then blot out the wicked?”** Two principles apply here:

(1) Both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy teach that though it is wrong to slay the innocent; yet **hardened criminals and those who have fully sold themselves to work evil and injure others must be slain.** This is technically called by the name of “capital punishment” (see Bible references in the next section). The vile and destructive in this world must be legally slain by the authorities, or they will kill everyone; before it is completed, they will have demoralized the world as well. **Excessive permissiveness demoralizes both children and adults. If the wicked are not blotted from the universe, eventually the same process will take place in all the other worlds also.**

Therefore, **by command of God, the wicked were to be stoned to death** (see Bible references, below). Not only does God kill the wicked (and we have an abundance of references and quotations along this line elsewhere in this study), but He commanded His theocracy, the nation of Israel, to do it also. Slaying the wicked is not only good for God to do, it was good for His special nation to do also. It was an unpleasant, but necessary, good that had to be done.

(2) **God has the right to kill the wicked and**

tell His chosen nation to do likewise, because **He is the Creator.** He who has imparted life to all of His creatures has the right to remove that life from any who wish only to live to hate Him and hurt and destroy their fellow creatures. He who made man has the right to do as He pleases with His creation. God is our Potter; **The Divine Potter has the right to smash the vessels that ultimately live only to receive His wrath.** It is not murder for God to remove life from His creatures that do not want to use it in accordance with His specifications.

“God Himself pronounced the sentence; by the divine direction, the blasphemer was conducted outside the camp and stoned to death . . . **There are those who will question God’s love and His justice in visiting so severe a punishment** for words spoken in the heat of passion. But both love and justice require it to be shown that utterances prompted by malice against God are a great sin. The retribution visited upon the first offender would be a warning to others, that God’s name is to be held in reverence. **But had this man’s sin been permitted to pass unpunished, others would have been demoralized;** and as the result, many lives must eventually have been sacrificed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 408.*

“**The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice** . . . Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God’s verdict—that the wicked are incurable . . . **It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace.**”—*Great Controversy, 543.*

For an excellent quotation, read *Early Writings, 221.*

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE BIBLE

“Capital punishment” is a legal term. It means the death penalty. **When a man is sentenced to death for his crime, he is given capital punishment.** And the crime for which he receives it is called a capital offense. He receives death for his crime. Is it wrong to punish crime? We shall discuss that later in this study. But when we ask that, we are really concerned about a more specific question: **Is it wrong to inflict the death penalty for crime?** For this is a key point in this entire study, *The Terrible Storm.*

Is it wrong for an authority to give a legal death sentence for crime and then to carry it out? No, it is not wrong to do this. For (1), as we have seen repeatedly in this study, God has done this Himself and will do it again; (2) God commanded in the Bible that it be done by magistrates and courts of law. (3) If it is not done, soon the entire population suffers harm at the hands of the evil men, and many emulate their example.

Here is the evidence for the second point:

MINOR OFFENSES which were punishable by scourging: Lev 19:20; Deut 22:18; 25:2-3; Prov 17:10; 19:29; 20:30.

CAPITAL OFFENSES were punished by death: *Murder:* Gen 9:5-6; Num 35:16-21, 30-33; Deut 17:6. *Adultery:* Lev 20:10; Deut 22:21-24. *Incest:* Lev 20:11-12, 14. *Bestiality:* Ex 22:19; Lev 20:15-16. *Sodomy:* Lev 18:22; 20:13. *Rape:* Deut 22:25. *Perjury:* Zech 5:4. *Kidnapping:* Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7. *Fornication:* Lev 21:9. *Witchcraft:* Ex 22:18. *Offering human sacrifice:* Lev 20:2-5. *Striking or cursing Father or Mother:* Ex 21:15, 17; Lev 20:9. *Disobedience to parents:* Deut 21:18-21. *Theft:* Zech 5:3-4. *Blasphemy:* Lev 24:11-14, 16, 23. *Sabbath desecration:* Ex 35:2; Num 15:32-36. *Prophecying falsely or propagating false doctrine:* Deut 13:1-10. *Sacrificing to false gods:* Ex 22:20. *Refusing to accept the decision of the court:* Deut 17:11-13. *Treason:* 1 Kgs 2:25; Esther 2:23.

HOW THE DEATH PENALTY WAS IMPOSED:

Burning: Gen 38:24; Lev 20:14; 21:9; Jer 29:25-26; Eze 23:25; Dan 3:19-23. *Stoning:* Lev 20:2, 27; 24:14; Num 14:10; 15:33-36; Deut 13:10; 17:5, 22:21, 24; Josh 7:25; 1 Kgs 21:10; Eze 16:40. *Hanging:* Gen 40:22; Deut 21:22-23; Josh 8:29. *Sword:* Ex 32:27-28; 1 Kgs 2:25, 34, 46.

EXECUTED BY: *The Witnesses:* Deut 13:9; 17:7. *The Congregation:* Num 15:35-36; Deut 13:9 (*on the testimony of at least two witnesses:* Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15).

WRATH REVEALED IN TWO WAYS

God can manifest His wrath in two different ways:

1. **By direct divine intervention:** God Himself pours the judgments upon the wicked. He especially uses such direct judgments in the final blotting out of a race that has no further probationary opportunity for salvation thereafter. Examples: The destruction of the **Antediluvians, Sodom** and the cities of the plain, the wicked at the **Second Advent**, the wicked **after the millennium.**

2. **By abandonment of the wicked to human destruction**—destruction by human action: God permits the wicked to destroy one another by their own violent passions. He often uses this approach in the overturning of nations and in any such situations when their descendants may still have opportunity for salvation. It is a destruction, but not a final destruction. Examples: The **destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and, in A.D. 70, by Titus.**

DOES SATAN EVER CAUSE DISASTERS?

Yes, the greater number of the disasters that have occurred in human history have been caused directly or indirectly by Satan. The amount of misery that creature has brought to this

world is fantastic. It is Satan who destroys the innocent. It is Satan who starts the wars that slay millions—both innocent and wicked. God (1) only punishes the wicked and never the innocent; and (2) He primarily punishes the wicked directly when their probation has closed.

The classic example of a disaster permitted by God, but directly caused under Satan's tutelage, is the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

"For nearly forty years after the doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced by Christ Himself, the Lord delayed His judgments upon the city and the nation. Wonderful was the long-suffering of God toward the rejecters of His gospel and the murderers of His Son . . . The command had gone forth, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' (*Luke 13:7*) but divine mercy had spared it yet a little longer . . . The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus they rejected the last offer of mercy. **Then God withdrew His protection from them and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen** . . . Satan aroused the fiercest and most debased passions of the soul. Men did not reason; they were beyond reason—controlled by impulse and blind rage."—*Great Controversy*, 27-38.

It is error to say that God never punishes sin with death. And it is equally in error to say that He alone brings death. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is clearly and fully an act of Satan and wicked men, permitted by God. To say it again: **The vast majority of all the deaths that have taken place in this world up to the present time have not been a result of God's direct punishment of sin.**

IS THE BIBLE TRUTHFUL?

This is a very serious question and must be faced by anyone who is dabbling with the "God never kills the wicked" theory. **The leading advocates of this error openly admit that the Bible does not say what they believe; and that it cannot be believed as it reads. Very simply, they teach that the Bible does not mean what it says.** They know that the Bible teaches that God does indeed kill many wicked people. So they unashamedly tell people that the words of Holy Writ must be "adapted" and "explained" and cannot be taken in a literal sense. Whenever it says that God kills wicked men, it means that He cannot do this, He

will not do this, and He does not have the capacity to do this.

Here is how Mike Clute explains away the war in heaven:

"A number of people have told me that **God does make war against His enemies because He made war against Satan in heaven** and kicked him out. They quote Revelation 12:7 to prove their point . . . [Mike then explains his version of what really happened in heaven.] This is what the angels had decided in the precincts of heaven in the beginning of the controversy. **The loyal two-thirds of the angels voted him out**, and Satan left to go to the remainder of the universe to see if he could gain a following and prove them [their vote] wrong."—*Into the Father's Heart*, pp. 35-36.

But God's Word tells a different story:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels **fought** against the dragon; and the dragon **fought** and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."—*Revelation 12:7-8*.

"All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father to have each case decided. It was there determined that Satan should be expelled from heaven, with all the angels who had joined him in the rebellion. **Then there was war in heaven. Angels were engaged in the battle;** Satan wished to **conquer** the Son of God and those who were submissive to His will. But the good and true angels prevailed, and Satan, with his followers, was **driven** from heaven."—*Early Writings*, 146.

"The evil continued to work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into **active revolt. Then there was war in heaven**, and Satan with all who sympathized with him, was cast out. **Satan had warred for the mastery in heaven, and had lost the battle.**"—*7 Bible Commentary*, 973.

"The Father decides the case of Satan, and declares that he must be turned out of heaven for his daring rebellion, and that all those who united with him in his rebellion should be turned out with him. **Then there was war in heaven.** Christ and His angels **fought** against Satan and his angels, for they were determined to remain in heaven with all their rebellion. But they prevailed not. Christ and loyal angels triumphed, and **drove Satan and his rebel sympathizers from heaven.**"—*7 Bible Commentary*, 973.

For more information on this first physical battle in the working out of the great controversy, you may want to refer to some of the following:

There was war in heaven between the good angels and the evil angels: *EW 145-146; ML 305;*

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART FOURTEEN OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

SR 17-19; 6T 456; 3SG 36-38; 7BC 972-973.

Christ and the loyal angels fought in this battle and won it: DA 119, 490; MH 94; SR 19; IT 626; EW 145-146; 7BC 973.

As a result of this battle, Satan and his angels were expelled from heaven: GC 499-500, 513, 582; PP 42; 1 SM 222, 316; SR 19; IT 294, 440; 3T 114-115; TM 145; 4BC 1143; 6BC 119; 7BC 973; CT 32, 205; DA 490, 761.

“Concerning the popular system of interpreting or misinterpreting, the Scriptures, Wolff wrote: “The greater part of the Christian church have swerved from the plain sense of Scripture, and have turned to **the phantomizing system of the Buddhists**, who believe that the future happiness of mankind will consist in moving about in the air, and suppose that when they are reading *Jews* they must understand *Gentiles*, when they read *Jerusalem*, they must understand the *church*; and if it is said *earth*, it means *sky*; and for the coming of the *Lord* they must understand the progress of the *missionary societies*, and going up to the mountain of the Lord’s house, signifies a grand *class meeting of Methodists*.”—*Great Controversy*, 360.

Some of the advocates of this strange theory teach that **Adam and Eve were not driven out of Eden**. They decided they didn’t like it there anymore. **Abraham did not fight** in that battle of Genesis 14:12-23. He merely encouraged Mamre and Eshcol and Aner to do it on his behalf. **Satan brought that water out of the skies** and out of the ground—and then got so much coming that he feared for his life amid the warring elements? **God did not kill Korah**, Dathan, and Abiram by having the earth open from beneath them and swallowing them. It was caused by a sudden, unexpected, and totally accidental earthquake! **The children of Israel did not go out to war** against their enemies at the command of God, as we are told in Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and Chronicles. Because He slew no one at His First Advent, therefore **Christ cannot slay anyone by the brightness of His coming** at His Second Advent. **The words wrath, kill, slay, fight against, destroy, burn up, and consume do not mean that**, whenever applied to acts of God in the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy. Such are the twistings of Scripture needed to support this error.

It is utter blasphemy to attribute the power of God to Satan! Fred Wright dared to say that, not God’s direct act but, an accidental earthquake

opened up the ground and caused the death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. But read this:

“God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that **the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency**. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘Ye have killed the people of the Lord.’ Notwithstanding they had the most convincing evidence of God’s displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, **they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan**, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. **It was this act that sealed their doom**. They committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man’s heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 405 (see *3 Testimonies*, 358).

Do you grasp the significance of the above quotation? Declaring that God does not punish the wicked—sealed the doom of thousands.

The next quotation says that such words encourage the wicked to continue sinning until it is too late.

“The Lord would teach His people to acknowledge the justice of His corrections, that others may fear. There are those in Israel whom the warning of this terrible judgment might save from presuming upon God’s forbearance . . . **It is the duty of Christ’s servants to show the erring ones their peril**.”

“Those who destroy the effect of the warning by blinding the eyes of sinners to the real character and results of sin often flatter themselves that they thus give evidence of their charity; but they are working directly to oppose and hinder the work of God’s Holy Spirit; they are lulling the sinner to rest on the brink of destruction; they are making themselves partakers in his guilt and incurring a fearful responsibility for his impotence. Many, many, have gone down to ruin as a result of this false and deceptive sympathy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 361.

TAKING THE BLAME

Thus, this new error weakens our hold on the Word of God and removes our confidence in what it says. This new error teaches us that we can trust those advocating it, because they have a system of explaining away the plain teachings of

Scripture. Clearly then, “God does not kill the wicked,” because the Bible cannot be trusted to say what it means. In proof of this, **some teachers of this error try to locate places in the Bible where God or Christ or the angels lied—as proof that the Bible does not really mean what it says!** Then, when you ask them why the Bible does not mean what it says, **some, like Mike Clute, will reply that “God always takes the blame.”** Well, that seems simple enough. He is just so good and kindly that when Satan kills 185,000 men in one night—God covers for him and says “No, don’t blame him! I did it; blame Me! I don’t want you to think badly of him.”

“Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there . . . For I will defend this city, to save it, for Mine own sake, and for My servant David’s sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”—*2 Kings 19:32, 34-35 (read 2 Kgs 19 and Isa 37).*

Now, that may sound good and kindly for God to say that He did it when Satan really did it; but would such a cover-up really be goodness and kindness or even honesty?

For example, Mr. Jones tells the police that he burned down his neighbor’s house, when in reality another man living nearby did it—because he enjoys burning down people’s houses. “Oh,” someone will say, “he was just being nice; he takes the blame!” Down here on earth, we are all quite used to deception; but the pure and truthful God of heaven does not use such tactics. He always tells the truth. Do you believe that? I do.

The issues in the great controversy demand honesty on the part of God. It will not be solved by confusing people as to what is taking place and lying about circumstances and events. **Covering for a criminal is something that fellow criminals do—not good men or the police or the courts of law.** But we live in a time when it is *culturally good* to cover for criminals. Don’t arrest them; don’t sentence them; don’t punish them. Kindness demands that we soften the entire experience for them. Child-raising experts and adult psychologists say that punishment is not psychologically beneficial.

What kind of goodness and kindness do we think God has? We think He is altogether too much like ourselves. **We live in a generation that disbelieves in obedience to law and punishment of sin—and even preaches it from the pulpits of the land. But God is not as we are.**

Do you believe that God is a liar? **The basic issue in the “He always takes the blame” ex-**

cuse is that some people would rather believe that God lies about criminals than that He will punish them!

As for me and my house: We reject the “God will not punish the wicked” teaching as wrong, unscriptural, illogical, and dangerous. Anyone who accepts this teaching is imperiled by it; ere long he may dabble with other errors, simply because “they seem nice to me.” He has opened the door to the most profound heresies. He needs only time before he walks all the way in.

IS IT WRONG TO PUNISH CRIME?

Well, is it? Our Western culture is leaning heavily toward the concept that it is wrong to punish criminals. **This is the basic issue in the “God does not kill the wicked” concept. Is it wrong for God to punish criminals?**

Our source of guidance to truth is Scripture. **The Bible teaches that it is not wrong to punish criminals.** It is not wrong for God to do it; it was not wrong for Israel to do it at His command; it was not wrong for their court system to do it. He even told them what acts to kill criminals for and how to do it. (See the section, *Capital Punishment in the Bible*, given earlier in this study.)

God instructed His people to search out the criminal and put him to death in a certain way. And sometimes God stepped in (especially when no one else would do it or, because the job was so immense, no one else could) and killed the criminals Himself.

The United States is becoming overrun with criminals because they receive little or no punishment. The police cannot effectively apprehend them because of Supreme Court regulations; the courts often free them or give them only light sentences. In California only the worst crimes receive over six years’ prison sentence—by action of the California State Legislature—simply because the prisons are so overcrowded that offenders must be turned out quickly, to make room for more. We have come to the time, now in California, when the criminals are going in and out so fast, that the majority are outside and have little fear of conviction or heavy sentencing, even if caught. So they warn the prison guards by phone that, if they are not careful with their friends, their families will be given special treatment while they are at work. Our nation is becoming demoralized because it is not nice to punish criminals who are murdering our neighbors, lying in wait for our friends, raping their wives, and selling dope to the children. And now it is becoming part of our religion. People think that God must not hurt the criminals either, or He is not “good and kind” to the people on earth or to the heavenly universe.

Is it wrong to punish crime? If you think it

is wrong, then you are on the wrong side of the great controversy; and, in the day when God rains fire out of heaven, you may learn too late that crime and criminals are something that God will not tolerate in His clean universe.

Read again chapter 29 of Great Controversy. This chapter, *The Origin of Evil* (pp. 492-504), will show you the whole picture—and correctly. God had to permit sin in the beginning, so that all could see the issues involved. This is why He did not kill Cain (read PP 78-79). But **the day is coming when He will burn up sin and sinners with a terrible fire. And if you don't think that hardened sinners beyond probation, whose every momentary thought is only evil continually, deserve a terrible fire from God, then there is something wrong with your thinking.**

WHY DID GOD NOT KILL CAIN?

This strange error teaches that God is too kindly to kill anyone, no matter how evil he may be. But, on the other hand, it could be asked, Why did God not kill Cain who, after murdering his brother, expressed no remorse or repentance?

Up to this point in time, God had never killed anyone. For the good of the entire, watching universe, Cain was permitted to live out his life. Future years would reveal the terrible results of letting incorrigible sinners live. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 78-79 explains this in detail.

STEPS DOWN TO SAVAGERY

“God does not kill” means “God will not remove life from the wicked.” God did this when He took away the Tree of Life. It resulted in the “first death” to an entire race. God will do this again when He sends fire down from heaven upon the finally impenitent. This will result in the second death. But the responsibility for the death, in all cases, is that of the wicked themselves. **There is a world of difference between the act of the criminal and the later act of justice required by the criminal's act.**

Here are the steps down to savagery, that modern man is bent upon taking:

Step 1: **Teach the people that it is no longer necessary to keep the Ten Commandments.** The people will thus perceive that true religion is wrongdoing.

Step 2: **Teach that it is not right for anyone to punish wrongdoing.** Parents should not do it. No one else should do it. God should not do it.

Step 3: **Demand that intentional murderers no longer be put to death.** There should be no more capital punishment—neither by man nor by Heaven. The people will soon decide that hardened criminals should not even be put into prison. “Let

them run free; that is the Christian thing to do.”

WHAT DOES THIS ERROR REALLY TEACH?

We have mentioned that this erroneous speculation should really be called “Does God punish impenitent criminals?” For **by calling it “Does God kill?” the thought is projected that, if He does, He might kill us all someday. And this is not true. He would never hurt the smallest child that trusts in Him.** But the truth is that He is mighty to defend them against the cruel and vile that live only to plot against that little child and seek to destroy it.

IT IS DANGEROUS TO TOY WITH ERROR

When we dally with error, we soon come to like it. Then we begin defending it. And this requires twisting Scripture; for, because it is error, it is unscriptural.

First, **we have entrenched ourselves on the side of a non-Biblical concept.** Second, and equally bad, **we have accustomed ourselves to twisting Scripture** to fit our cherished imaginings. Our pattern of thought and deductive powers have been damaged; and now, unless we repudiate the error and the erroneous path by which we “proved” it to ourselves, we shall be open to more dreamy speculation and text twisting in the future.

Our only safety lies in staying with the obvious statements of Scripture and, unless a metaphor is clearly intended, taking them as they read.

You and I need to know what God's Word clearly says, and we need to share it with others. But we do not need to know everything in the universe. Trying to pry into every secret can be dangerous.

“He [Satan] is constantly seeking to excite a spirit of irreverent curiosity, a restless, inquisitive desire to penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom and power. In their efforts to search out what God has been pleased to withhold, multitudes overlook the truths which He has revealed, and which are essential to salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 54-55.

A LETTER WE RECEIVED

We received the following letter about a year ago:

“I received . . . but I don't agree with . . . He keeps stressing the ‘God does not kill’ idea. Recently I read a book he sent me about this. I didn't read all of it as I found so much error. He twists the Scripture so much. So I spent a whole day with the Spirit of Prophecy. He claims:

- “God doesn't test people.
- “God didn't initiate the sacrificial system.
- “God didn't bring about the Flood.
- “God didn't ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.
- “God doesn't pour out the seven last plagues.

“God doesn’t consume the wicked by fire.

“Instead, he credits Satan with all this.

“Here is some of what I found in the Spirit of Prophecy. *Patriarchs and Prophets* has so much to disprove his theory:

“48-53: Test of obedience.

“68: Sacrificial offerings ordained by God as perpetual reminder of sin and its consequences, plus deliverance.

“99: Satan, compelled to remain in midst of Flood, feared for his own existence and desired people to live (instead of die in Flood) so they could continue to rebel against God.

“101: By the Word of God the world perished.

“104: Scientists say that the world cannot be destroyed by fire, but God can use the works of His hands to serve His own purpose.

“109: The depths of the earth are the Lord’s arsenal.

“147: Abraham’s last test was the most trying—and was from God.

“148: Satan suggests to Abraham that he must be deceived and tried to prevent his obedience.

“154: The reason for this test.

“155: Abraham’s test greater than Adam’s.

“162: The Lord rained brimstone and fire from heaven.

“274: Slaying of the first-born.

“313: Instruction to build the Sanctuary given by God.

“400: Korah, Dathan, and Abiram slain.

“403: 14,000 slain for rebellion.

“406: Continuance of tabernacle service testifies that He had not forsaken His people.

“628: Reason for destroying the people.

“Then there is *Prophets and Kings*:

“37: Abraham went to Mount Moriah in obedience to God.

“236: Elisha and the she-bears—an awful judgment from God.

“276-278. Note this one: End of God’s forbearance—God’s agencies in destruction of the wicked.

“297: Fire—one of God’s agencies.

“And I looked in *Acts of the Apostles* also:

“72-73: Manifestation of God’s wrath—given to guard the young church.

“627: God’s strange act—unmingled wrath.

“672: Fire from heaven—devouring flames from the earth.

“And then I looked in *Early Writings*:

“52: The wrath of God—the seven last plagues.

“54: Fire breathed from God is what finally consumes the wicked.

“289, 294-295: Fire from God.

“I sent him all these quotations and told him that he was deceiving many folks who don’t study for themselves. How could he come to such a conclusion with so much Bible and Spirit of Prophecy against his idea? Within a week I received a letter telling me that I should pray and study more—that God had given him this special revelation. I’m getting older, but I can *still read!* Surely I can’t be that deceived. ‘It is written.’ That’s enough for me.”

CAN THE DEVIL BE ENTRUSTED WITH HELL?

Amazing Facts has as one of its twelve Amazing Facts Information Folders, a study on the punishment and death of the wicked. That which it teaches is regular Adventist doctrinal belief. However, the title is something worth our attention: ***Is the Devil in Charge of Hell? Can he be trusted to be impartial?*** (*Information Folder B*) Emblazoned behind these vivid words is a color sketch of a devil with smaller-sized people suffering as they stand and cry in flame in the open palms of his hands. **Thus, the title and picture is pointing out the Roman Catholic view that the devil is in charge of hellfire.** Inside the folder, of course, the reader is presented with the correct view of the matter.

By the way, here is the opening paragraph of the Amazing Facts tract, mentioned above: **“Well, what about it? Is the devil in charge of hell? Does God keep such a crooked, sneaky, low-down demon on His payroll . . . and trust him with that important position—General Superintendent of Hell? The very reputation of God is involved in the answer to this question.”**

Now, think about that a moment. Do you see the implications? **The “God will not kill the wicked” advocates teach that God is not in charge of hellfire—Satan is!** They suggest that he starts the fire and then burns up the people. God has nothing to do with the affair; but, rather, he stands afar off while Satan has the whole procedure in his own control. God does not start it; God does not stop it. For however long that he may decide to let it drag out, Satan is in charge of the whole thing.

How much different is that from the Roman Catholic error? Not much. Only the length of time varies. The Second Angel warns us to flee from Roman Catholic error. The Third Angel solemnly tells us what will happen if we don’t.

The love of God is a mature love—a love that pleads, warns, and protects. And it is a love that can act and stop. It is a deep and genuine love.

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART FIFTEEN OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

THE CATHOLIC VIEW OF HELL

The Biblical view of hell: God is in charge of destroying the wicked in hellfire.

The Roman Catholic view of hell: Satan punishes the wicked.

The following quotation is from a Roman Catholic doctrinal book "for the spiritual enjoyment of little children." (The quotation includes their Roman numerals.)

"XVI. The Soul before Satan.

"The devils carry away the soul which has just come into hell. They bear it through the flames. **Now they have set it down in front of the great chained monster, to be judged by him, who has no mercy. Oh, that horrible face of the devil!** Oh, the fright, the shivering, the freezing, the deadly horror of that soul at the first sight of the great devil. **Now the devil opens his mouth. He gives out the tremendous sentence on the soul.** All hear the sentence, and hell rings with shouts of spiteful joy and mockeries at the unfortunate soul.

"XVII. The Everlasting Dwelling-place of the Soul.

"As soon as the sentence is given, the soul is snatched away and hurried to that place which is to be its home for ever and ever! Crowds of hideous devils have met together. With cries of spiteful joy they receive the soul. Is. xxxiv. Demons and monsters shall meet, the hairy ones shall cry out to one another: See how these devils receive the soul in this time of destruction. Eccus. xxxix. 'In the time of destruction, they shall pour out their force. The teeth of serpents and beasts, and scorpions, the sword taking vengeance on ungodly unto destruction' . .

"XVIII. The Striking Devil.

"Prov. xix. 'Striking hammers are prepared for the bodies of sinners' . . Little child, if you go to hell there will be a devil at your side to strike you. He will go on striking you every minute for ever and ever, without ever stopping . . little child, it is a bad bargain to make with the devil, to commit a mortal sin."

The reference for the above quotation is as follows: *J. Furniss, Tracts for Spiritual Reading, New York: P.J. Kennedy, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House, 1882, pages 12-14.*

The following approbation (recommendation) appears in the front of this official Roman Catholic theological work written for children:

"I have carefully read over this Little Volume for Children and have found nothing whatever in it

contrary to the doctrine of Holy Faith; but, on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct and edify our youthful classes, for whose benefit it has been written."—*William Meagher, Vicar General, Dublin, December 14, 1855.*"

THIS ERROR LEADS MEN TOWARD UNIVERSALISM

In the January-February 1995 issue of Mike Clute's tabloid, *God's Last Call*, he quoted a letter from one of his supporters, and then commented on it. The letter and Mike's approval revealed that Mike had moved into a belief in universalism. Mike brought out these points: Satan will produce the final (hell) fire, but it will only be "symbolic fire." It will only burn the wicked till they are "purified," and then, pure in heart with no traces of sin, they will all be welcomed into the city of God, there to live forever. Even Satan will be saved! He will be reinstated as the leading angel, and once again lead the choirs of heaven. All the redeemed will respect Satan more than the other angels, since he is now the leading angel. Mike freely admitted that the name of this doctrine is "universalism." The Spirit of Prophecy strongly condemns universalism (*See GC 537-538, 548; 1T 344. Also see our tract, Universalism [WM-615], May 1995.*)

- SECTION FOUR -

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Here are 147 passages of Scripture which should clear away from your mind any lingering questions as to the truth of the matter. They not only vindicate the character of God, but they solidly defend His justice in all His decisions.

JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO DEEDS

"According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies."—*Isaiah 59:18.*

"Thou renderest to every man according to His work."—*Psalms 62:12.*

"For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways."—*Job 34:11.*

"If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? And He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? And shall not He render to every man according to his works?"—*Proverbs 24:12.*

“I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”—*Jeremiah 17:10*.

“Now is the end come upon thee. And I will send Mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations . . . I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them, and they shall know that I am the Lord.”—*Ezekiel 7:3, 27*.

“For thus saith the Lord God: I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hath despised the oath in breaking the covenant.”—*Ezekiel 16:59*.

“According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them.”—*Ezekiel 39:24*.

“Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us.”—*Zechariah 1:6*.

“But I say unto you: That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”—*Matthew 5:22*.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels. And then He shall reward every man according to his works.”—*Matthew 16:27*.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer. Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.”—*Matthew 23:14*.

“And that servant which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. And to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”—*Luke 12:47-48*.

“Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”—*Jeremiah 32:19*.

“Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send Mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And Mine eye shall not spare thee neither will I have pity. But I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee. And ye shall know that I am the Lord . . . I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the Lord.”—*Ezekiel 7:3-4, 27*.

“And the Lord said unto him [the angel]: Go

through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others He said in mine hearing: Go ye after him through the city and smite. Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women. But come not near any man upon whom is the mark, and begin at My sanctuary.”—*Ezekiel 9:4-6*.

“The Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways, according to his doings will He recompense him.”—*Hosea 12:2*.

“He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. And he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard: Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. *Cut it down*. Why cumbereth it the ground?”—*Luke 13:6-7*.

“He said therefore: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded . . . Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me.”—*Luke 19:12-15, 27*.

“He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”—*John 12:48*.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloak for their sin . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin. But now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.”—*John 15:22, 24*.

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds . . . unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.”—*Romans 2:5-6, 8-9*.

“He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done. And there is no respect of persons.”—*Colossians 3:25*.

“If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.”—*Hebrews 2:2-3*.

“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy

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[by the direction of God] under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.”—*Hebrews 10:28-30*.

“If they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.”—*Hebrews 12:25*.

“So speak ye and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.”—*James 2:12-13*.

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”—*1 Peter 1:17*.

“All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts. And I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”—*Revelation 2:23*.

“And 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. And 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.”—*Revelation 20:12-13*.

**JUDGMENT SHALL COME
TO THE WICKED**

“Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”—*Genesis 2:17*.

“God shall hear and afflict them, even He that abideth of old. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.”—*Psalms 55:19*.

“But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but that ye break My covenant: I also will do this unto you: I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart. And ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set My face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride

of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass . . . And if ye walk contrary unto Me, and will not hearken unto Me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins . . . And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me; then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury . . . And I will destroy your high places and cut down your images and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols and My soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation.”—*Leviticus 26:21, 27-28, 30-31*.

Although God may use various agencies to punish sin, yet He Himself takes direct responsibility for the punishment.

WHY JUDGMENTS COME

“And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.”—*Deuteronomy 13:10*.

Here is clear guidance from the Bible about capital punishment.

“And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die. So shalt thou put evil away from among you. And all Israel shall hear and fear.”—*Deuteronomy 21:21 (cf. 17:13 and 19:20)*.

“When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise.”—*Proverbs 21:11*.

“So that the generation to come of your children that rise up after you and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it . . . Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. For they went and served other gods and worshipped them; gods whom they knew not, and whom He had not given unto them. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book. And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.”—*Deuteronomy 29:22, 24-28*.

“The Lord is known by [because of] the judgment which He executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.”—*Psalms 9:16, 20*.

“Consume them [the wicked] in wrath; consume them, that they may not be. And let them know

that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.”—*Psalms 59:13*.

“With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early. For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—*Isaiah 26:9*.

“For every one of the house of Israel or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from Me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the Lord will answer him by Myself. And I will set My face against that man and will make him a sign and a proverb and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. And ye shall know that I am the Lord.”—*Ezekiel 14:7-8 (cf. 21:3, 25:6-7; 38:19-23)*.

Read Daniel 4—the story of a man who had left God and how the Lord of heaven brought him back to an understanding and acknowledgment of His Creator.

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted . . . Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”—*1 Corinthians 10:6-11*.

THE JUDGMENT ON THE WICKED IS INEVITABLE

“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.”—*Proverbs 11:21*.

“But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.”—*Job 11:20*.

Judgment and death is all that the wicked can look forward to with certainty.

“Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.”—*Proverbs 16:5*.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape.”—*Jeremiah 11:11*.

“Then said the Lord unto me: Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people. Cast them out of My sight and let them go forth.”—*Jeremiah 15:1*.

“And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the

earth, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Jeremiah 25:28-29*.

“Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath. But the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy. For He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.”—*Zephaniah 1:18*.

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers: How can ye escape the damnation of hell?”—*Matthew 23:33*.

“Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest [thou] the same, that thou shalt escape the judgments of God?”—*Romans 2:3*.

“And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts. And I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”—*Revelation 2:23*.

JUDGMENTS THREATENED AND ENACTED

“And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh . . . And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air. For it repenteth Me that I have made them . . . And God looked upon the earth and, behold, it was corrupt. For all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah: The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”—*Genesis 6:3, 7, 12-13*.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book . . . In the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf.”—*Exodus 32:33-35*.

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day. And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God.”—*Deuteronomy 11:26-28*.

“The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me.”—*Deuteronomy 28:20 (cf. verses 15-68)*.

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil . . . I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”—*Deuteronomy 30:15, 19*.

“For I know that after my death ye will utterly cor-

The Three Angels' Message is the last message in history. It is a final warning call, sent by God to all the world, to repent of sin and disobedience and return to God before it is forever too late; for just ahead is —

PART SIXTEEN OF SIXTEEN

The Terrible Storm

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

rupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."—*Deuteronomy 31:29*.

SOME OF THE MOST SOLEMN PASSAGES IN ALL THE BIBLE

"If ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed."—*1 Samuel 12:25*.

"The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."—*2 Samuel 3:39*.

"With the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure, and with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself unsavoury. And the afflicted people Thou wilt save, but Thine eyes are upon the haughty, that Thou mayest bring them down."—*2 Samuel 22:27*.

"Behold, I will bring evil upon thee and will take away thy posterity."—*1 Kings 21:21*.

"If you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you."—*2 Chronicles 15:2*.

"They that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed."—*Job 4:8-9*.

"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man; neither will He help the evildoers . . . They that hate Thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought."—*Job 8:20, 22*.

"The triumphing of the wicked is short . . . Though his excellency mount up to the heavens and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish . . . God shall cast the fury of His wrath upon him . . . This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God."—*Job 20:5-7, 23, 29*.

"This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty . . . For God shall cast upon him and not spare; he would fain flee out of His hand."—*Job 27:13, 22*.

"But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge . . . Thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked."—*Job 36:12, 17*.

"The ungodly are not so but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."—*Psalms 1:4*.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."—*Psalms 2:9*.

"Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly."—*Psalms 3:7*.

"The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight. Thou hatest all workers of iniquity."—*Psalms 5:5*.

"God is angry with the wicked . . . He hath also pre-

pared for him the instruments of death; He ordaineth His arrows against the persecutors."—*Psalms 7:11, 13*.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."—*Psalms 9:17*.

"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest. This shall be the portion of their cup."—*Psalms 11:6 (cf. 18:4)*.

"Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger; the Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt Thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men."—*Psalms 21:9-10*.

"Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build them up."—*Psalms 28:5*.

"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."—*Psalms 34:16*.

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb . . . For evildoers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth . . . Wait on the Lord and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it."—*Psalms 37:1-2, 9, 34*.

"Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."—*Psalms 50:22*.

"God shall likewise destroy thee forever. He shall take thee away and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place and root thee out of the land of the living."—*Psalms 52:5*.

"Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction."—*Psalms 55:23*.

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away. As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God."—*Psalms 68:1-2*.

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castest them down into destruction . . . For, lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish; Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee."—*Psalms 73:2-3, 16-18, 27*.

"In the hand of the Lord there is a cup and the wine is red. It is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same. But the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them . . . All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off."—*Psalms 75:8, 10*.

"The Lord is righteous: He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked."—*Psalms 129:4*.

“Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.”—*Psalms 139:19*.

“The Lord preserveth all them that love Him. But all the wicked will He destroy.”—*Psalms 145:20*.

“The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.”—*Proverbs 2:22*.

“The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.”—*Proverbs 3:33*.

“The mouth of the foolish is near destruction . . . The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him; but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.”—*Proverbs 10:14, 24*.

“Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.”—*Proverbs 11:31*.

“Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.”—*Proverbs 16:5*.

“He that keepeth the commandments keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth His ways shall die.”—*Proverbs 19:16*.

“God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness . . . It is joy to the just to do judgment; but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.”—*Proverbs 21:12, 15*.

“He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.”—*Isaiah 11:4*.

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate. And He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.”—*Isaiah 13:9*.

“For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.”—*Isaiah 26:21*.

“And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it . . . For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim; He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.”—*Isaiah 28:18, 21*.

“Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear, but did evil before Mine eyes.”—*Isaiah 65:12*.

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed . . . Therefore . . . in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. I will surely consume them, saith the Lord.”—*Jeremiah 8:12-13*.

“And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord. I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them . . . Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”—*Jeremiah 13:14, 16*.

“Thus saith the Lord unto this people: Thus have they loved to wander. They have not refrained their feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them. He will now remember their iniquity and visit their sins . . . I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.”—*Jeremiah 14:10, 12*.

“I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.”—*Jeremiah 21:14*.

“A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth: For the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; He will plead with all flesh. He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.”—*Jeremiah 25:31 (cf. 36:31; 49:12)*.

“I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God: Surely, because thou hast defiled My Sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall Mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity . . . Thus shall Mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them . . . Moreover I will make thee waste . . . when I shall execute judgments in thee . . . I the Lord have spoken it.”—*Ezekiel 5:10-11, 13-15*.

“I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee. And ye shall know that I am the Lord.”—*Ezekiel 7:4*.

“Can thine heart endure or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? . . . As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it. So will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury. And I will leave you there and melt you. Yea, I will gather you and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath. And ye shall be melted in the midst thereof . . .

“Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath. Their own way have I recompensed upon their head, saith the Lord God.”—*Ezekiel 22:14, 20-21, 31 (cf. 24:13)*.

“I will cut thee off from the people and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries. I will destroy thee.”—*Ezekiel 25:7*.

“Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.”—*Ezekiel 33:20*.

“Woe unto them! . . . because they have transgressed against Me. Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against Me.”—*Hosea 7:13*.

“They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah. Therefore He will remember their iniquity; He will visit their sins . . . For the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of Mine house.”—*Hosea 9:9, 15*.

“They shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.”—*Hosea 10:8*.

“Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the

mountains; a great people and a strong. There hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.”—*Joel 2:1-2*.

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.”—*Joel 3:13*.

“I will punish you for all your iniquities.”—*Amos 3:2*.

“I will slay the last of them with the sword: He that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into hell, thence shall Mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from My sight in the bottom of the sea, thence, will I command the serpent and he shall bite them. And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them. And I will set Mine eyes upon them for evil and not for good. And the Lord God of hosts is He that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn. And it shall rise up wholly like a flood and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt . . . All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.”—*Amos 9:1-5, 10*.

“Who can tell if [because we decide to repent] God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?”—*Jonah 3:9*.

“Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins.”—*Micah 6:13 (see verses 2-3)*.

“The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies. But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies . . . He will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time . . . They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.”—*Nahum 1:2, 8-10*.

“At that time I will . . . punish all those . . . that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good neither will He do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation . . . The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation . . . And I will bring distress upon men . . . because they have sinned against the Lord, and their blood shall be poured out as dust . . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire.”—*Zephaniah 1:9, 12-15, 17-18*.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. And the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels. And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righ-

teous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven. And all the proud; yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble. And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings. And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 3:16-4:3*.

“He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”—*Matthew 3:12 (Luke 3:17)*.

“In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn . . . The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels . . . The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire.”—*Matthew 13:30, 39, 41-42*.

“Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.”—*Matthew 15:13 (cf. Matt 5:13)*.

“He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen . . . And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”—*Matthew 21:41, 44*.

“Then said the king to the servants: Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness.”—*Matthew 22:13 (note 23:33; 24:50-51; 25:30-33, 41, 46)*.

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”—*Luke 13:3*.

“But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me.”—*Luke 19:27*.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”—*Romans 1:18 (just as strong: Rom 2:5)*.

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”—*1 Corinthians 3:17*.

“Wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”—*1 Thessalonians 1:10*.

“It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you . . . Rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels; in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*2 Thessalonians 1:6-8*.

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.”—*2 Thessalonians 2:8*.

“God spared not the angels that sinned . . . and spared not the old world, but saved Noah . . . and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow . . . The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”—*2 Peter 2:4-6, 9*.

“The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.”—*Jude 5*.

“Enoch . . . prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment.”—*Jude 14-15*.

“I will kill her children with death.”—*Revelation 2:23*.

“Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come.”—*Revelation 6:16-17*.

“Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants . . . and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”—*Revelation 11:18*.

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice: If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand; the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. And He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone.”—*Revelation 14:9-10*.

The seven last plagues are poured out by the angels of God upon the wicked (*Rev 16*).

“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations . . . and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”—*Revelation 19:15*.

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun . . . saying to all the fowls . . . Come and gather yourselves together . . . that ye may eat the flesh of kings . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”—*Revelation 19:17-18, 20*.

“And I saw a 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. And 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. And 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. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”—*Revelation 20:11-15*.

“The abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”—*Revelation 21:8*.

The truth that God punishes the wicked is no small matter in Scripture. We have had the opportunity to observe, to some extent, how much attention the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy give to this subject. We have repeatedly seen the following theme: God often uses instrumentalities to punish the wicked; but He always takes full responsibility for His decision and, very often, the act of punishment itself. But the blame for committing the sin which requires the punishment lies at the door of the wicked. Repeatedly we have seen that it is not wrong for God to punish hardened criminals. He who can give existence can remove it. He is the Creator; and every action of His stands above criticism. The Bible teaches God’s mercy and God’s justice. To reject either will cloud your understanding of Scripture and bring Satan’s enchantments.

For every generation there is a special truth—a “present truth” that it must accept and proclaim. God has entrusted Seventh-day Adventists with the Three Angels’ Messages. Those messages are given in expanded form in the book, *Great Controversy*.

It is the work of our people to tell all men everywhere that they must come to Jesus, turn in His strength from their sins, and obey His Ten Commandment law. And, with this, the warning is given to flee the churches fallen in disobedience, lest the faithful be engulfed in the final outpouring of God’s wrath on the wicked. God’s last warning is a message prompted by deep love for the stubborn and rebellious, before human probation forever closes.

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“God will soon vindicate His justice before the universe. His justice requires that sin shall be punished; His mercy grants that sin shall be pardoned through repentance and confession.”—*Upward Look, 49*.

GOD DOES NOT KILL the innocent and His faithful ones who love, trust, and obey Him. But, in the final judgment, God will have to blot out of existence those who refused to return to Him before probation closes. The Third Angel’s Message is GOD’S LAST CALL for mankind to return to Him before the terrible storm begins !