

THE JUDGMENT TO COME

A SERMON

Preached on Sunday Morning, February 17th, 1861

By Mister JAMES WELLS

At the Surrey Tabernacle, Borough Road

Volume 3 Number 113

“And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” Revelation 14:20

AFTER accommodating these words to the conquest wrought by the Savior and showing that all that stood against us was thrown into the winepress of God's wrath, into which Christ went; that he endured that wrath, and conquered those foes; after showing also that the measurement here refers to the land of Canaan, and is extensive of the completeness of his victory; that what that land was to the Israelites, that land with its produce, its city, its temple, its priesthood, its mercy seat, and the presence of God; what that land was in all these and in all other desirable respects; what that land was to the Israelites literally, the gospel is to the people of God spiritually. The measurement, therefore showing the complete conquest of the whole land, it is to show that the people of God shall come into the possession of all the truths of the gospel; and there is not one truth of the gospel into the possession of which they shall not come; the Spirit of truth will guide them into all truth; and so they shall possess that freedom which is entire, and have the full range to all eternity of the extent and advantages of that gospel of which the land of Canaan was thus a type; after showing also that the mystic horses here spoken of set forth the ministers of the gospel following the Lord Jesus Christ in all that strength and triumph by which they are saved, and by which his name is glorified, we have now to notice the words as referring to the solemnity of judgment; and which indeed is the proper meaning of the words. I therefore this morning propose in the first place pointing out *the character that is ripening for judgment*; and then, secondly, *the completeness of that judgment* denoted by the measurement; and we shall have this morning to make quite another use of the measurement; *the people who shall escape this judgment*.

First. First, we have to point out *the character or characters who are ripening for judgment*. Hence in the preceding part here is the sickle; and here the harvest is represented as being ripe; so that it sets forth those who are ripening for judgment, and you are ripening for the winepress of God's wrath, and for that eternal judgment which will it surely come as will the eternal glorification of every saved soul.

First then, we take the profane character, the man who sets religion at nothing all together; he is at home in everything that is ungodly, everything that is unhallowed, and he despises, in general terms and in a general way, religion altogether. And if I'm speaking to such now, I say, little do you think what you are doing; you are despising your own soul, you are despising your Maker, you are despising Jesus Christ, you are despising the Bible, you are despising everything, and your language is, away with religion; I do not want to be troubled about religion. Now you are ripening for judgment, you are ripening for destruction; every day set you farther and farther from God, every day increases the magnitude of your guilt, every day increases the intensity of God's wrath against you, every day makes hell hotter and hotter for you, every day makes a sentence which must be passed upon you more and more tremendous; therefore happy are you, a profane man, if you should be convinced of what you are doing, and tremble at yourself, and tremble at your position, and hear the word of the Lord say, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Dying then, as you are, you will be fearfully ripened for eternal judgment, and that judgment must overcome you, and that before long.

Secondly, there is the hypocritical professor, the man that makes a profession of religion from some worldly motive or another; perhaps because he finds it the cheaper path of the two, or because he wishes to obtain respect as a religious man, or for some more worldly and carnal motive or other he puts on the mask of profession; he goes and sits as God's people sit, he goes and hears as God's people hear, and yet at the same time he has no thought of understanding the things, he has no thought of doing the things. He can speak well of the minister as far as it serves his turn; he can speak well of the people and of the place as far as it serves his turn; when he knows at the same time in his own conscious, for if a man is a hypocrite he must know it; a real child of God, a real honest man, feelings much hypocrisy in his nature, may be tempted to think he is a hypocrite, and fear he is one; but then to have hypocrisy in our nature, and for that hypocrisy to be a burden, is entirely different from willful hypocrisy. But if you are a hypocrite, you must know it; if your profession is not real, you must so far know it. Persuade me that Judas did not know he was a hypocrite; persuade me that Simon Magnus did not know he was a hypocrite; persuade me that Demas did not know he was a hypocrite; why Demas always loved the world; and Judas always preferred silver and gold to Jesus Christ; he knew he was a hypocrite; he did not mean what he professed. Now such persons, then, are also ripened for judgment; your hypocrisy as you go on will become sweeter and sweeter to you, you will become greater adept at it than ever. Perhaps you may pick up some of the scraps of the experience of the people of God, and you may get a good sound experience in your heads; but at the same time your heart is untouched, your soul dead in trespasses and sins; and you are going on, and pretending to soul troubles, but you have never felt them; going on pretending to soul rejoicing, and never felt that rejoicing; though sometimes you may be mightily pleased with the gifts of the minister, or pleased with something or other; but at the same time your heart and affections have never been rooted and grounded upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Now such persons are ripening for judgment; and the time must come when fearfulness must surprise the hypocrites; "You hypocrites, how can you escape the damnation of hell?"

Then there is the third character ripening for judgment; it is possible for a man to be sincere in his religion, and his conscience bears him testimony that he is sincere in his religion: but then if he is led by the spirit of error that man is ripening for judgment, with all his sincerity he is led by the

spirit of error; and if he be led by the spirit of error, that spirit of error is the spirit of the wicked one; for the enemy of our souls is a liar from the beginning, and he is the father of lies. So that if led by the spirit of error, however sincere we may be, we are nevertheless ripening for judgment, because our love to these errors or that erroneous system, always increases, and our enmity against God's truth will increase as we go on. What a bitter deception is it that overtakes a character of this kind in a dying hour: why, he says, I have been sincere, what have I to fear? It is true that terrible doctrine of election, I always hated that. All, there is the secret, you always hated that, did you? And you are just coming to the judgment seat of God; and the voice louder than 10,000 thunders will proclaim that whosoever is not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire, and this is just what you hate. Ah, if you hate that, then you are led by the spirit of error; you may be conscientious, you may be a free Willer or a duty faith man, but be you what you may, yet if you hate that, that is a proof that you have not been rightly convinced of your condition, that you have not been reconciled to God by the perfect work of Jesus Christ, that you have never been constituted a true debtor to his grace or to his mercy for making you a vessel of mercy. Thus, then the profane man, that hypocritical man, and the man who is sincere, yet led by the spirit of error, all these are ripening for judgment. But what is my object in making these remarks? Why that the profane man's eyes may be open, that the eyes of the hypocrite may be open, that he may be a hypocrite no more, that the mask may fall off, that he may see his direful condition: that he see that while he is putting on a fair appearance before man, there is one who knows his heart, one who searches his heart, one whose eyes are upon his heart, and for every idle word that that man shall speak he shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. The Lord open your eyes, take off the mask, lay open before you your real condition before him, and bring you down on the knee of prayer: "Lord, have mercy upon me, and deliver me from this terrible hypocrisy that has been my character and my practice under the mask of fair profession." And so, the man who is sincere, and yet led by the spirit of error, he is also ripening for judgment. You do not want any proof of this? It is a solemn truth that there is not anything that can ripened a man faster for judgment than the spirit of error, because such persons take the name of the Lord into their lips and undertake to speak against him in a way that no others do. Look, for instance, at the Pharisees in olden time; where do you find the most intense malice, the most deadly enmity? Do you find it in Pilate, or do you find it in the Roman centurion; do you find it among the Gentiles? No: you find that the most deadly, the most burning enmity; you find the persons who were the most ripe for judgment, where the persons who had been governed by the spirit of error, perverted the Scriptures, and grafted the traditions of men upon the Scriptures; and that by the spirit of error, they were thus ripened for judgment.

Fourth, the persecutor is another character who is also ripening for judgment; there are a great many persecutors in our days, in our country, so far as circumstances will permit them. And is there a place throughout this land where the pure free grace truths of the gospel are preached that is not slandered, that is not reproached, that is not reviled? All sorts of things they say: and I have known instances in London, and in the country, a people being kept away from those places where the gospel is, simply from the slanderous things that the duty faith people and free will people have said concerning those places, concerning those ministers, and concerning the truths of the gospel. These are, as far as they can be, prosecutors. What is worse persecution than that of slander? What is worse persecution than that of trying to take away truth's reputation, the reputation of the people of God, the ministers of God, the house of God? It was in this very way that the Pharisees of old proceeded; they took the Savior's reputation away, and persuaded the people; they took away his

judgment: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away; that is, the righteous judgment that belongs to Christ, for if they had judged him righteously, they would've said he was a righteous man: truly they would've said, "This is the son of God." Even devils judged him more righteously than men did: devils said, "You are the Holy One of God;" but these men took the judgment from him that belong to him, took his reputation from him, and established it among the people that he was a wine bibber, that he was a blasphemer, that he was an up usurper, but he was a deceiver. And these were all ripening for judgment, and the judgment overtook them. So, it is then, my hearer, if you sum up these four characters, namely the profane, the hypocrite, the man also that is sincere, yet led by the spirit of error, and the persecutor; these, though they differ as to form of character, are in reality all one, and they are all ripening for eternal judgment. But there is mercy for everyone that is brought to feel his need, as I have just now said; when that profane man, the fierce lion, or bear, when he is brought down, the hypocrite made honest, and the man that is led by the spirit of error brought to see that, and to discover like Saul of Tarsus how he has been deluded, and brought into a knowledge of his own heart, and brought out of error into truth; and so the persecutor, that we might be a persecutor as tyrannical if he had it in his power as was Saul of Tarsus, "yet," said Saul, "I obtained mercy, I did it ignorantly and in unbelief;" I will grant all that, yet while there is a great deal of ignorance there is also a great deal of willfulness. These then are the persons that are ripening for judgment; and when the judgment shall come, then shall the Judge appear in that form I shall presently have to describe; the command shall come, "thrust in your sickle, for the harvest is ripe," cast these ripened grapes, ripened by sin against God, cast them into the fierceness of the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. Ah, my hearers, what an escape we have then, those of us that know the Lord, and that simply by precious faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second. But I notice in the next place the completeness of this judgment; the blood came out of the winepress 1600 hundred furlongs. We have before shown that this, being 200 miles, gives us the length of the land of Canaan, and as it denotes in the way we handled it in the completeness of the victory, here it denotes the completeness of the judgment. And I want your attention in this part of the subject very particularly because I think it may be of use to you even in years to come. There was not one part of the inheritance of any of the 12 tribes which was not destroyed, the judgment reached unto the whole land, there was not one part that was not destroyed. You will thus see that this will become a type, a kind of key, to enable us to understand the judgment of God in all other respects. And what I would impress upon your minds now, friends, is this, that the period, for there is one period in biblical history which the holy prophets take more notice of than any other period, and to which there are more prophecies referring then to in any other; and if we take care to keep to that, we shall find the measurements, and some of the dates, and various things so instructive, we shall keep away from error. I am fully aware of what the general custom of learned men is, they seem to get Rome in their eyes, and they cannot get away from Rome, and so they say all sorts of things to make these prophecies belong to Rome. But I think, after we have got the locality here spoken of, namely this 200 miles, the land of Canaan, after that we should give up locality, and take it mystically, and take this judgment to be a type not of the judgment of Rome merely, nor the judgment of Constantinople merely, nor of any other headquarters of the Dragon; but we must take this judgment as a picture of the judgment upon the whole man of sin, the profane world, the professing world, what whether Mahometan, Roman Catholic, or any other erroneous system that would overturn God's truth, that as the judgment was completed in Judea, and there was no part that was not destroyed, it sets before us the solemn truth that except we are

found in the city (for the winepress was trodden without the city) so those that are citizens of Zion, they are safe, and escape this judgment.

Men take for instance, the ninth of Daniel, the 70 mystic weeks: how those weeks had been mauled about, and turned about, and twisted about by the learned, and they can make nothing of them, because they are so determined to apply them to that which they do not belong. Perhaps you will say, where is the proof that the holy prophets have referred to that period of history? What is it? The period of Biblical history to which I refer, is the period from the annunciation of the birth of Christ, to the destruction of Jerusalem. Take Daniel's first vision, the stone cut out of the mountain; "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom," and it was in the days of the Roman kings, that the kingdom of Christ was set up. Then take the ninth of Daniel, there are 70 mystic weeks, and there are 70 literal years from the annunciation of the birth of Christ, until the destruction of Jerusalem. Now what is to be done during that period? There never was such an awful period in any one age, never will be again. Look at the great events, and hence we find Peter in his second address, recorded in the third chapter of Acts, very much struck with this idea, namely, the eventful character of the period in which he lived; he says, "All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold these days." But why were these days so eventful? Why, look at it, here is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, here is God manifest in the flesh, here is Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem; there never was such a thing before, and never will be such a thing again. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ finishing transgression, making an end of sin, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness, and sealing up or confirming vision and prophecy, and becoming anointed with the oil of joy above his fellows: there never was such a thing before, and there never will be such events again. Now we see presently, I hope we shall, the meaning of all this, that this is a period of biblical history that explains 10,000 things. Hence, the kingdom of the Lord, wherever you read of the kingdom of the Lord, go to the days of Christ and his apostles; where you read of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, go to the days of the apostles; and where you read of what I have just quoted in the ninth of Daniel, go to the days of Christ and his apostles; and where you read of the mountain of the Lord's house being established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, go to the days of Christ in his apostles, and there you will find it fulfilled. What are the hills? Our sins are hills of difficulties, of hindrances, and tyrannies that are set up to oppose the people of God are hills of impediments; they are all hindrances, but the house of the Lord shall be exalted above those hills. Is it not by this new covenant establishment that we overcome all our sins, rise above them, that we rise above all the threatening's of God's word, that we rise above all error? Is it not in the establishment of this new covenant kingdom that we rise above all our tribulations? In is it not after the order of this new covenant kingdom, where in the Lord has said, that he "will wipe all tears from off all faces, and they shall sorrow no more at all." Is it not after the order of this new covenant kingdom, that every man shall "sit down under his vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid;" and that while the people will praise everyone the name of his God, and walk in the name of his God: these gods must come to nothing, but we, says the church triumphantly, will walk in the name of our God forever and forever. Ours is an everlasting God. Here then is that great period that throws a light upon everything. I very much respect the excellent letter that a friend sent me last week, and his ideas relative to Rome, at the same time, whenever we go away from inspired authority, we get into conjecture; let us keep here, and we shall see our way clearly. Thus, I would go on here very clearly to show, that this eventful period, Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection; the dissent of the Holy Spirit, as shown by Joel; explained and recognized,

and realized by the apostle Peter, and thousands with him: that these times were times that the prophets looked more to than any other times. See how eventful they were; look at the salvation which was the theme of all the prophets, to be achieved by an incarnate God; look at the heavens, the Jewish heavens, to be darkened: look at the governmental sun that was to go down to rise no more: look at the ceremonial moon, that was to withdraw its brightness: look at the constituted Jewish priests and rulers called stars, set to rise no more; and then look at the founding of the Savior's kingdom, upon the work that he had achieved; then look at the entire demolition of sin, and death and hell, the conquest he has gained, the uprising of unnumbered millions into eternal glory, by the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ. So then, when I take the latter part of my text here, and apply it to judgment, I come to the Savior's Day, and there the Jewish nation is destroyed, that destruction predicted in detail in the 28th of Deuteronomy, and again predicted in detail by the Savior himself, as you well know; and that judgment took place just as the Lord said it would. And just so sure, as judgment overtook them, just so sure, my hearer, if you are a wicked man, and die in your sins, judgment will overtake you; just so sure, if you are a dishonest man, a hypocrite, judgment will overtake you; just so sure as you are an erroneous man, though sincere, judgment will overtake you; just so sure, if you are an enemy, a prosecutor, will judgment overtake you. But if God should open your eyes, and you should see something of the wrath to come, and desire to find a way of escape, that way of escape, I will presently, as clearly as I can, point out.

I think then there is not much difficulty in understanding the measurement, that as all the tribes were entirely and forever disorganized; that so their governmental sun, moon, and stars, passed away forever; and as Satan reigns there into this day, is there a land under heaven more desolate and wretched than the land of Canaan? If the gospel should ever take root there, why, of course it will alter it altogether; but then we shall never go back to the Levitical priesthood again; we shall never go back to the human built temple again; we shall never go back to a temporal holy of holies again we shall never go back to an earthly, corruptible royalty again, these were shadows, these were clouds of witnesses, pointing to what should come, but the Redeemer has come; his kingdom is founded; the stone has become the perfect substitute; the enemy is conquered, the victory is wrought, the warfare is accomplished; and that some of us know right well. I hope the Lord will help us to take that point into consideration, then, that the days of Christ and his apostles were the days of the greatest events that ever took place, or ever can, and by applying any of these symbols to those days, you get such an explanation as you can get nowhere else; it explains the whole of them. I do not want to go to Rome; it may be remarkable that the Papal territories may be pointed out that may happen to be about the same length; there is no certainty about it. But if you come to the land of Canaan, there you get the solemn scene presented that as the judgment was universal as pertaining to Canaan, so it will be universal as pertaining to the whole world; when the earth and the works thereof shall be burned up; as no part of the land escape then, and not a Jew would have escaped, hear it, you that hate election, you that think it ought not to be preached; not a Jew would have escaped were it not that still in the loins of that people dwelt in a remnant according to the election of grace; and so the Savior, "Except those days," that is, the days of Jerusalem's destruction, "be shortened, no flesh," that is, Jewish flesh, "could be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom he has chosen, these days shall be shortened." So that whatever judgments abound in the progress of time, they can never take away one of God's elect. What will he not do for his elect? Here than in these eventful times there was with Christ a day of trouble such as he never had before, such as he never will have again; and at that time by what he did his people were delivered, even everyone found in the book. Also, at that time there was with Jerusalem as a nation a time of

trouble such as that nation never had before, and can never have again, because they will never be a nation again, but at that time the Christians were delivered, even everyone that was found written in the book. Michael, the great prince, Michael means the image of God; and Christ is the image of God; and he stood for his people saying “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Now it is said that this judgment reached to the horses' bridles. This would fairly imply that the rider should lose command of the bridle, and there should be something in this judgment that would affect the bridles and cause the horses to act very differently from that which the rider intended. To speak then without a figure, if I can, the people of that day had certain powers at command, and they used those powers with an intention of escaping the vengeance of heaven; and the very steps that they took to escape were the steps that hastened it on. So blind were they, so fearfully blind were they, that thousands of them thought that in putting Christ to death they did God a service. Saul of Tarsus tells us, and I ask this assembly this morning, if a more awful thought can lodge in the human breast: “I thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus.” And so, the Jews in their blindness said, “If we let him thus alone, the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” In order to prevent the Romans coming and taking away our place and our nation, and in order to please our Maker, we will crucify Christ. So that the very step they took to save themselves, destroyed them; and the very step they took to keep the Romans off, brought the Romans on, the very step they took to keep their place lost it; the very step they took to secure the land, destroyed the land. So, my hearer, how solemn it is; do you not see if God be against you every step you take for your welfare will turn out to be for your judgment and destruction: if God be against you, you will contrive and build up, but he will throw down; you may open up, but the Lord will close up, you may be determined to go here and there, but if the great God be against you, vain is the help of man. And therefore, we may well fear the Lord, and look to the Lord, and pray to the Lord. So, then this judgment referring to the horse bridles I think carries the idea fairly that so far from these men commanding the powers that they had really to their advantage, God left them to such fearful blindness that the very step they took for their welfare was for their destruction. Go back to Pharaoh. Now, says he, I will retrieve the whole of it: a foolish I was to let Israel go; I will retrieve the whole of my mistakes at one stroke. Little did he think that that was just the step that should complete his destruction; he was ripened for judgment, and the very step by which he thought to retrieve all his errors, and if needful annihilate these Israelites, but he could not touch one, for he himself, with all his host and all his chariots, were cast into the depths of the sea. Ah, you who are brought down to the feet of Jesus, what have you to fear? God on your side will turn your very mistakes to your advantage; he will turn your very iniquities and faults to the furtherance of your good, to magnify the riches of his grace; whereas the very good works of the others, the suppose good works, God will make use of then to help on their delusion and complete their judgment, he will send them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie; the very steps they take to escape, what God is said shall be subservient to it. Like Abimelech, a woman threw a piece of millstone upon his head, with which to break his skull, and he thought he should not recover, and he told his armor bearer to thrust him through, that it might not be said of him that a woman killed him. Well, he should've said anything about it, and he might've died quietly, and perhaps we should not have been told how he did die, but the very step he took to prevent his degradation completed it, and there it is upon the luminous page of inspiration. But while on the one hand the judgments of the most high appears so solemn, yet in the contrast his mercies appear correspondingly delightful.

Third. I will hasten now to point out *the persons who escape*. In order for you to escape, you must be in a position that the Judge can justify you. Now the Judge is represented here as coming on the white cloud; that I take to be that united testimonies of the holy prophets; they are called a cloud of witnesses; a white cloud, perhaps to denote the purity and righteousness of their testimony; to denote the luminous of their testimony; that they are a luminous; that they are not like that heathen oracles, that said and unsaid; what they have put upon record stands forever; the Scriptures cannot be broken. Now we must be in a position then that the Judge can justify, or else we shall not escape. Now when the Savior appears here as the Judge, he is said to have a golden crown upon his head, that one thought became in my mind a key, and I thought, how can I be in the position that this Judge can justify? And I went to the 28th of Exodus; the crown, it was that that caught me, that judicial crown, the crown of righteousness. I found that the high priest had a mitre or crown of gold, and on the forefront of that crown were written, "Holiness to the Lord;" and that this high priest was to bear the iniquities of the holy things, that the people might be accepted of God. The high priest comes with the sacrifices, and the sins of the people are ceremonially transferred to those sacrifices; those sins which belong to the people belong by imputation to the sacrifices. So, our sins belong to us, but the Lord imputed them to his dear Son; our sins belong to him; he bore our sin; the object being that the people may be accepted of God.

And I went again, and I came to his matrimonial character; "Go forth, you daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon;" and I thought, my soul is a daughter of Zion; I trust my soul is born in Zion; I trust my soul does love God, and live upon Zion's provision, and range in Zion's pastures; "Go forth; you daughters of Zion; behold King Solomon with his crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Ah, I said, here the king has made the marriage for his Son, and it is a matter of gladness with Christ heart; he loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might present it at last without spot or blemish, or any such thing. I said to myself, Am I on good terms with this? Yes, I am, I love the Bridegroom, and the order of the marriage; I love the union, I love the object. Then I came also to his regal crown; "he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." Well, I said, my heart is on good terms with this; I know his kingdom cannot fail, that it is an everlasting kingdom that rules overall. Then I went on to his conflicted crown; that a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

Give me Christ's mediatorial work, this relationship to him, married to him; give me this regal crown to reign over all, and Christ as the Captain of my salvation, I am then in a position that the Judge can justify, because I am in a position of reconciliation to God, love to God, justification before God, by the work of Jesus Christ. You will find the church in olden times recognize this great truth. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; your eyes shall see Jerusalem," not the earthly, but the heavenly, "a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; where in shall no galley with oars;" (slave ships) come cruising along the streams of free will, duty faith, and Popery, but cannot get into these streams. Notice the response; "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. Your tackling's are loosened; they could not well strengthen their mast," their governmental mast; they could not spread their ceremonial sail, in spite of all

they did, “then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey. And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”