

10. Upon Whom the Ends Have Come (2Q 2025 Allusions, Images, Symbols)

Biblical material: Rev. 6:12–17; Matt. 24:36–44; Gen. 6:1–8; 2 Pet. 2:4–11; Gen. 18:17–32; Dan. 7:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 10:11, 12.

Quotes

- Awake, awake, you that sleep. Open your eyes, stand on your feet, and behold and see what a sea of blood and wrath is here!" See and believe; believe and consider; consider and fear; fear and fly; and make haste in your work. Your work is great and mighty; diversions are many; adversaries are strong; your strength is small; your time is short; your account is great. Death and judgment are at the door. Therefore, up and be doing, now or never. *John Fox*
- [God will] send the spiritual forces of wickedness, and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, and the impious, unjust, lawless, and blasphemous among men into everlasting fire." *Irenaeus*
- The most tremendous judgment of God in this world is the hardening of the hearts of men. *John Owen*
- Some Christians have taken all the justice, judgment and hatred of sin out of the nature of God – and have nothing left but a soft god. *A. W. Tozer*

Questions

What is our perspective on the end-time judgment? How does God look as the Judge? What is the best way to present the positive aspects of the judgments without using scare tactics? How does this relate to the concept of prophetic interpretation? How about presenting all this in the context of the great controversy? Good news about the judgment?

Bible summary

Revelation 6:12–17 details the opening of the sixth seal and the calamities that followed, including the "judgment of the Lamb." Matthew 24:36–44 references the unknown time of Jesus' coming and how it will be like the time of Noah and the Flood. Genesis 6:1–8 outlines God's plan to destroy humanity with the exception of Noah's family. 2 Peter 2:4–11 speaks of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, also described in Genesis 18:17–32. Daniel 7:9, 10 is the vision of the heavenly court in judgment. "All the things that happened to them [the Israelites in the wilderness] are examples to us and were written down to warn us, we who are living close to the end of time. So if you think you're strong enough to stay standing—be careful you don't fall!" 1 Corinthians 10:11, 12.

Comment

I once had a dream about the end-time judgment which I wrote out. It's worth repeating here in shortened form...

Great thrones are set up in the circling gallery above me. The place is full of rich purple, gold filigree and black velvet: an awesome scene of overpowering majesty and might. A heavy bell rings out its doleful knell of doom; a monstrous organ crashes out swirling chords; a huge gong clangs with terrifying ear-splitting noise. My head spins, my body shakes, my heart stops. Like some panic-stricken mouse I'm about to die of fright. All around and above me this vast court machine grinds on in all its relentless dignity and power. I want to fall through a crack in the floor...

Then a million million eyes stare. Hands point in accusation. Wildly I look around for some way out, but everywhere I see these same accusers chanting: "Guilty! Guilty!" The hunters have their sacrificial prey, the accused trembles in the dock, the criminal cowers to be rightly condemned.

From high above the great voice of command resounds through the echoing chambers of this awesome trial: “LET JUDGMENT BEGIN!”

I want to die... I close my eyes and wait for the ax to fall. Waiting...waiting... Pleading: “Please finish it all. I’m guilty! I confess. Just make it quick. Don’t torment me any longer. Please...”

Nothing comes. After an eternity of waiting I slowly open my eyes. A man in white smiles at me. He takes my hand and leads me away.

“But what about this...?” I turn back and point at the courtroom, the pointing fingers and the shouts of ‘Guilty!’ But they’ve all disappeared. “Oh, it’s all gone. Whatever happened to the judgment? Wasn’t I about to be sentenced? Fearful condemnation and all that. So what about that terrifying picture of God’s Last Judgment?”

“It’s not like that,” he says softly.

“Huh? Come on--what’s that text? ‘We all have to come before the judgment seat of God’ or something. And I remember the sermons: ‘And God will unmercifully smite all his wretched unfaithful servants...’”

“It’s not like that.”

“Then there’s the lake of fire and the brimstone hail and the excruciating burning of the lawbreakers. That’s the judgment, and it’s got to be done. ‘In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.’” I smile to myself: I know the texts, but this poor guy really doesn’t know his Bible! “‘Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay.’ For God to be truly good and righteous he has to pour out his wrath on the rebellious unbelievers and fearsomely punish all those who refuse to obey him. It’s only fair. Part of the reward for the righteous is avoiding all that burning alive as the wicked are punished.”

The man in white doesn’t need to say ‘It’s not like that.’ I can see it in his saddened eyes. He sighs: “Do you honestly believe that’s the Judgment of the righteous Judge? What sort of End is this? What kind of reason to be good? Certainly those who refuse my healing, my offers of rescue and reconciliation, they will experience the results of going their own way—self-destruction. The wage that sin pays is death. But I am not the Executioner. I destroy no one—they destroy themselves. Besides, what sort of person says ‘Do as I say or I’ll burn you alive?’”

He has a point there! Only a sadist, a dictator, a terrorist. Is God really like that? But there must be an End. The good must finally be vindicated. God must be proved right. And the wicked must get what they deserve!

The man in white turns slowly to me, knowing my thoughts. Looking straight into my eyes he asks quietly: “And what do you deserve?”

I keep quiet. Doesn’t seem like the time or the place to rattle off my good behavior record.

So what of this terror-filled vision of Judgment? How are we meant to think of God as the righteous Judge? At the heart of the matter is the real question: What is God like? Is he out to threaten us, to scare us to him? Does he use the “Hound of Hell” to drive us back to him in terrified obedience? Is this Judgment belief like a sword hanging over our heads, an ever-present threat that makes us want God because we are so frightened of the Alternative? Or is the Judgment something positive?

Time to think. Seriously!

Ellen White Comments

Without Christ there can be only condemnation and a fearful looking for a fiery indignation, and final separation from the presence of God. But he whose eyes have been opened to see the love of Christ, will behold the character of God as full of love and compassion. God will not appear as a tyrannical, relentless being, but as a father longing to embrace his repenting son. The sinner will cry with the psalmist, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Ps. 103:13). All despair is swept from the soul when Christ is seen in His true character. {1SM 371}