

# THE FINAL JUDGMENT

## A SERMON

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“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15

WE have, at the beginning of this chapter, Satan put under those limitations in the abyss which we have before explained; here we have, in this chapter, the truths of the gospel, which had been cast down, now raised up. John says, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” And what are these thrones but the truths of the gospel, occupied by ancient prophets, and occupied by ancient believers? But these truths had been cast down. Hence you read of the man of sin casting the truth down to the ground, and you read of the truth falling in the streets. But the Redeemer re-raised up the truths of the gospel, and the apostles occupied these thrones, and the people of God occupy these thrones to this day and judgment is given in their favor. And hence says the apostle of all the saints of God, that they are raised up together to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Hence, in close association with these truths of the gospel, which are the thrones of the saints, we have the souls of the martyrs brought forward as a sample and pattern of what all the saints of God should be. We then have the blessedness of those who partook of regeneration, called in this chapter the first resurrection. Last Lord’s day morning we noticed the mystic earth, Satan’s invasion of that mystic earth, together with his final defeat.

There are four theories founded by men upon this chapter, and they all appear to me to be like “the baseless fabric of a vision,” and just to touch which would leave “scarce a wreck behind.” First, we are told that the time is coming when the spiritual reign of Christ will commence. Now, this just refutes itself, because it seems to imply that the spiritual reign of Christ has not yet commenced. Why, my hearer, what was the religion of Abel but the spiritual reign of Christ in him? What was the religion of Enoch, and of Noah, and of all the ancient fathers and saints, what was it but the spiritual reign of Christ in them? What was the day of Pentecost but Christ’s spiritual reign? What, was the power that attended apostolic testimony but his spiritual reign? What was it that convinced your soul of its condition, and that brought you out of darkness into light, and out of enmity into reconciliation, and that delivered you from the power of Satan, and brought you to God, what was it? I answer, the spiritual reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. His spiritual reign has been ever since the foundation of the world, and his spiritual reign will continue to the end of the world.

And when the world is about to end, the people of God will be exceedingly few. The second theory is, that the time will come when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; but the more closely you investigate that, the more clearly you will find that that does not mean the old earth, the earth that we inhabit, but that it means the new earth, the kingdom of Christ. You read in the 31st of Jeremiah, and other chapters, of a covenant people, and of this covenant people it is said, "They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest." So that while, in the first typical earth, there were thousands that knew not God, for if they had, they would not have apostatized from him; in this ultimate new earth there shall not be one that has not a saving knowledge of God. That is, the earth, this new earth, that is to be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Ah, say they, but we believe the time will come when literally all the population of the globe will be converted. Where is your authority? Why, this chapter, do listen just a moment, this chapter sets before us Gog and Magog, whose number is as the sand of the sea-shore, and this Gog and Magog exist all these thousand years; and so far from Gog and Magog, at the end of the thousand years, being extirpated or converted, they are, at the end of the thousand years, in an unconverted state, the vassals and agents of Satan, to besiege the saints of God. How can men hold the doctrine, in the face of this, of universal conversion, when, so far from that, it is all but universal apostacy instead of universal conversion? And therefore, down comes that house. The third theory is, that the souls of the martyrs only will reign in this future thousand years. Well, then, the souls of the martyrs only are blessed; all the rest are damned, for "blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection;" implying that he that has not that part is neither blessed nor holy. So that that theory also refutes itself, down comes that old house. And then the fourth and last theory, the most splendid mansion of the four, is this, that at the beginning of this thousand years all the saints of God shall rise from the dead, and shall reign on this earth with Christ a thousand years; this is what they say. But there is nothing at the beginning of this chapter about the bodies of the saints being raised, not a word. Therefore, that mansion falls, for want of a foundation; and however splendid the mansion may be, if it has no foundation, then it must come down. Here is not a word said in the beginning of this chapter about the resurrection of the bodies of the saints. And then, again, the glorified bodies of the saints inhabit this earth, where Gog and Magog are! Why, there is no scripture to authorize the notion. And not only does that theory of a pre-millennial resurrection fall for want of a foundation, but this chapter itself stands point-blank against the theory; for the general resurrection of the just and the unjust are set forth at the end of this chapter, and so far from the scriptures setting forth the just as rising a thousand years before the unjust, it will come out, I think, in the course of our discourse this morning, that they are raised the same day, perhaps within half-an-hour of each other. Thus, then, if I look at those four theories, first, that the time will come when Christ will reign spiritually, just as though he had not already reigned spiritually; and second, universal conversion, and yet here are Gog and Magog unconverted to the very last, a number that no man can number; and third, that the martyrs alone will reign, and according to this doctrine, as I have said, then they only that were literally beheaded are blessed; and fourth, that the saints will rise at the beginning of this thousand years; there is not a sentence in the chapter, in the beginning of the chapter, to authorize the notion; but the end of the chapter cuts it up, root and branch. And if the saints rise at the beginning of the thousand years, what do we want with the book of life at the end of the thousand years? Here is the book of life brought forth at the end; but if all whose names were in the book of life were raised at the beginning of the thousand years, then the saints would be raised; the book of life would be done with; we should have nothing left then but the books of judgment, the books of condemnation; you don't want to

bring the book of life to the lost. But if it be a general resurrection, then you want all the books, as it here says, "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books."

Now, having made these few remarks, I will proceed to that which constitutes the substance of our subject this morning. First, *the day of judgment*; secondly, *the order of that judgment*; and third, *the opposite destiny of the saved and of the lost*.

The first is, then, the day of judgment. There is a particular day marked and settled upon, and in which one and the same day the just and the unjust shall be raised from the dead. This appears to me to be a truth too clear to be disputed by those who take the word of God for their guide. Before I mention the proofs, I may just say to you, You will remember what the apostle said relative to the resurrection, that the saints shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; and you must remember that this globe, with its twenty-six thousand miles in circumference, will be but a mere mustard-seed in the hands of an almighty Savior; so that when he shall descend, the magnificent exercise of his infinite power, guided by an infinity of skill, shall gather his people from sea and land, from gone-by, modern, and the then present age; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shall the unnumbered millions of his people be immortalized at his right hand; to use an Old Testament phrase, not an hoof shall be left behind. It is the will of the Father that Christ should lose nothing. It will be done in that way that will be a kind of starting point to us. We shall then say we always thought we were safe in his hands; we trusted our whole salvation there, nor have we suffered shame; and this last magnificent display of his omnipotence shows that he is a Person with whom we shall be safe to a never ending eternity. His kingdom shall have no end; his power being almighty, his power is eternal. Now, let us hear the word of the Lord. I will give you the day as placed in a fourfold form. First, it is in the tenth of Matthew, and several other scriptures, called "the day of judgment;" not *days*, mind, but a *day*, the day of judgment, because, on that day the final decision will be passed. And then, in the sixth verse of the Book of Jude, it is called "the judgment of the great day," still keeping up the fact that the day itself is already settled upon. God alone knows when that day shall arrive. In the 17th of Acts, it is called an appointed day, "He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." Four times in the 6th of John, this same judgment day, this great day, this judgment of the great day, this appointed day, four times in that chapter it is called "the last day;" "I will raise him up at the last day." Then shall time terminate. Thus, then, if you look, first, at the momentary time that shall pass while Christ is raising his own people from the dead, and then look at the fact that there is a judgment day, a great day, an appointed day, the last day, our conclusion must be in accordance with the latter part of this chapter, that the resurrection will be general; and the resurrection of the just, first, and then, immediately upon that, the resurrection of the unjust.

There are in the Bible only two personal comings of Christ set before us, namely, his coming in the day of his humiliation, to accomplish salvation, and his coming the second time, without sin, unto salvation. His coming to destroy Jerusalem was called the coming of the Son of man; but then that was not a personal coming. His coming to receive the disciples again to himself by his power and by his Spirit, was a Spiritual, but not a personal coming; and his coming to convert your soul, his coming from time to time in his visitations of you, all these are called his comings; but then these are his spiritual comings. There are but two personal comings. So that first in this book you have the throne of grace; then you have, in the 14th chapter, the throne of intermediate judgment; and here, in the eleventh verse of this chapter, you have the throne of final judgment. "I saw a great

white throne, and him that sat on it." And you will find here that the earth and the heavens fled from before him, and no place was found for them. Here we have a general description of the judgment. Now the earth and the heavens are to pass away. I will not enter very definitely into this matter any farther than just to observe that my sentiments are these, that the globe that we inhabit will pass away forever, not purified, as some tell us, for we have no evidence of that. Hence the apostle says that this earth is now "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" *day* again, "and perdition of ungodly men." My sentiment is, that this earth, and its atmospheric and cloudy heavens, will pass away, and be no more. And so it is made to synchronize with the perdition of ungodly men, because the ungodly man has no new earth to go to; he has no new heaven to go to, and therefore, when this is gone, his all is gone, and gone forever. I am persuaded we have labored under many mistakes relative to the last day, as to the destruction of the earth. Some have supposed the whole material universe is to be obliterated. That I say nothing of; I have nothing to do with distant worlds. There are worlds within the range of telescopic observation now, that existed, evidently, hundreds of thousands of years before our globe was inhabited; and those worlds will perhaps exist, not only hundreds of thousands of years after our globe is destroyed, but perhaps some of those worlds will never terminate; inhabited, for aught I know, by intelligent and unfallen creatures. That we do not at present now, but I have a strong inclination to think that we shall be made more acquainted with the wide range of the domain of the Omnipotent, when we get into that world, and are blessed with those capacities; when our range shall be such as to develop, in a vast variety of forms, the infinities of his glory, that enrapture our souls to think a God so great as this, as Watts sings, should become "our Father and our Friend." So, I pass by them, then, and come simply to the word of God, relative to the day of judgment. It appears, then, that this globe will be destroyed by fire, and that the atmospheric and cloudy heavens will vanish away like smoke. Hence it stands thus, "the day of judgment." The prophet wished to see the people of God *hasting* to the day of judgment, looking forward to it as their coronation day. He wished to see the bride looking forward to it as her wedding day; he wished to see, shall I say? the servant looking forward to it as his great and final Emancipation Day. Hence it stands thus, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look to the earth beneath: the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein" that have no other dwelling; for "Woe unto those that inhabit the earth," "shall die in like manner," they shall pass away from all hope and help, "but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." Thus, the Old Testament destroys the earth prophetically, and its heavens; but it puts into the place, shall I say? thereof, a salvation that is eternal, a righteousness that is not to be abolished. And it is by this salvation that God is our God; it is by this righteousness that God is our God; it is God that justifies. The Lord has wisely hidden from us the glories of that day; for if he were to reveal to us, as he could do, more conspicuously, the glories of that day when the dear Redeemer shall appear on his great white throne, if we could see the glories of that day, we should be too happy to live amid the clouds of mortality. On the other hand, could the sinner, could the careless sinner, could the ungodly man see the reservoir ready to burst forth and destroy the very globe he inhabits; could the careless man see the lake that can never be quenched; could he once get a little, as it were, sight of that tremendous scene; for "Tophet is ordained of old for the king" namely, for Satan, and all his agents, "it is prepared; it is deep and wide; the pile thereof is fire, and much wood," the sin of the sinner shall be the wood, that shall be the fuel by which wrath shall kindle upon him, "and the breath of the Lord, as a stream of brimstone, does kindle it." How solemn is our position this morning! We are on the way, as fast as time can carry us, to remediless woe, or else we are on the way to scenes of bliss, to thrones of honor, to the possession of the new heaven and the new earth,

wherein dwelleth righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ; and wherein there is no death, nor sorrow, nor pain; but where God wipes away all tears from off all faces.

Thus, then, these two things appear pretty clear; first, that this earth will pass away; second, that there is a day fixed upon, never to be altered, when this scene shall take place. And we shall all be there; there will be no escape from it.

Again, to show, I think, the absurdity of the notion of the saints rising a thousand years before the others, do you not find in the 25th of Matthew that the Savior has the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left hand at one and the same time? And are not the saints to unite with the Savior in the judgment of the world? Do they not judge the world now? Why, the Christian judges the world now; the Christian bears a true testimony of the world now; and the testimony which the Christian bears of the world now is summed up in one short sentence; and you will bear a corresponding testimony then as; shall I say, assessors with Christ in judgment. The Christian sums up the essence of his testimony of the world in one short sentence; it is "enmity against God." The world is enmity against God. That is the testimony the Christian bears now; that is the testimony that he will bear at that day; while unto God he will ascribe, and that readily, too, that salvation difference he has made between them and the lost. Perhaps I need not, though I might, say much more upon this solemn matter of the day being fixed, of the earth passing away. I will therefore notice the details. Now, we have at the end of this chapter sea and land, death and hell, or, as it should be rendered, death and the grave, giving up the dead; all departments of nature are giving up the dead; and here are books at that day opened; and after there were several books opened, there was another book, which is the book of life. Now I am coming to the order of judgment, and the dead shall be judged out of the things written in those books, and, says my text, "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." I may just hint, though I feel a desire in future to give a sermon upon this book of life, I can only give a hint or two; I may just hint, if you ask what the book of life is, my answer is, the gospel; or if I say the book of life is the covenant of grace, or if I say it is the gospel, in either case I should be right, because it is a self-evident truth that the gospel is the word of life, is it not? The law is the ministration of death; the gospel is the word of life. If the gospel be the word of life, then the gospel is the book of life. But what are the other books? "And the books were opened," and all whose names were not taken out of those books were cast into the lake of fire. The names of all are in those books, and if they are not taken out, and put into another book, they will be dealt with according to what is written in those books. Now there are four books besides the book of life. First, there is the book of federal law. This you get in the 5th of the Romans, where you find that by the disobedience of one many became sinners; that by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. This book will be opened, sir, and if your name be not taken from it, if you are not taken away from the first Adam, and constituted one with the last Adam; if you are not dead to the first Adam, and made alive to the last Adam, Christ Jesus, who is a quickening spirit; if you are not taken away from all confidence in the flesh, for that is confidence in the first Adam, and to have no confidence but in the last Adam, Christ Jesus; then your name being found in the book of federal law, in that, book of federal law you are under judgment, and damned to eternity you must be. An infant has no more (by virtue of what it is in itself) chance of escaping damnation than either a bloody Manasseh or the vilest tyrant that ever lived. Every infant's name is in the book of federal law, and being judged by that law, the infant as well as the adult must be cast into eternal perdition; though

I am a believer in infant salvation, that infants are saved, not because they are infants, but because God is pleased to save them.

The second book to be opened is the book of national law. The Lord gave a law to the Jews, and though that may not seem at first to touch us, still it is worth our while to attend to it. There is the book of national law. The command to that nation, and the consequent duty of that nation, was to have no other gods but the true God; to love him with all the heart, with all the mind, and to renounce all idols, and keep to that God. But they did not do so; God himself has already borne that testimony: "This my covenant they broke, though I was a husband unto them." That book will be opened; and they who are under that book of national law will be damned, not only as sinners in Adam, but as violators of national law in addition to their original sin. Third, there is the book of personal law, contained, in the substance of it, in the Ten Commandments. We are all under that by nature; if we are not under the letter of it, we are under the spirit of it. It is the duty of all men to love their Maker, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their mind, and their neighbors as themselves. But instead of this, sinner, what have you done? You have hated your Maker with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul; and hated your neighbor too, except where you could gain something by him. Self has been the god that you have adored, and self is the god that men do adore. Try you, then, by this personal law, and you are a doomed man. One of old said, at least, we may almost imagine his saying so, he does in substance say so: Well, I may be tried by federal law, but I think I have a better sort of plea than the rest; I was not born altogether in sin, therefore I shall be right there. I may be tried, says Saul of Tarsus, by national law, it will not hurt me; I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, blameless; and I may be tried by personal law, for I am blameless. But when the commandment of personal law came into his heart, and showed him that every irregular desire in the heart was a violation of that personal law, alas! alas! it brought to light that he was a sinner not only by federal law and national law, but also by personal law; and then it became, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" He would stand and look at Jesus thus; he would say, Here am I, a sinner by federal law; but Jesus is the last Adam, and delivers me from that; here am I a sinner by national law, but Jesus has taken this covenant out of the way, blotted out the handwriting thereof, nailed it to his cross, and delivered me from that; here am I, a sinner by personal law, but Jesus is the end of that law, and was made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, and now he has made my feet like hinds' feet; now I can range at large, glory in my liberty, triumph in what the blessed Redeemer has done.

One more. Would that I had grace, and wisdom, and power, to express what I should like to express on the next book I have to name; for I do think the next book to be solemn to the last degree. If I have any difference of feeling, I have more trembling, I have more heart-searching, I have more solemn feeling about the fourth book I am about to mention than I have about any of the other books of judgment, solemn as they are. Why, say you, what book is that? *The book of profession* called the book of life, because such persons profess to be living souls. Ah, when your profession shall be put to the test, what will it prove to be? When judgment shall begin at the house of God, where will you be, and where shall I be? Will our religion stand the test; or will it prove at last that we are to be damned as Adam-fallen sinners, damned as enemies to national law, damned as violators of personal law, and damned as intruders into Christ's kingdom, and hypocrites in Zion? Therefore, it says that "the sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites." Now this book of profession shall be opened; and what a scene will then be! what ten thousand

boastings and doings! Then will come the multitude, saying, "We have eaten and drank in your presence; we have done many wonderful works." Says Jesus to this vast multitude, "I have never known you. Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads unto life, and few there be that find it." Is it any wonder that holy prophets and holy apostles have from time to time felt the importance of your thus examining yourselves, whether you be in the faith?

Every man is responsible to God for the profession that he makes. "Your talent has gained five talents;" your truth has done my soul good; he could give a good account. "Your two talents have gained two more; he could give a good account. The other thought nothing of the truth; he hid it, put it away from him, and traded with something else: and his profession proved to be a thing of nothing. Here, then, the book of profession will be opened. But if you can give a good account, and can say, I have fought a good fight; I have sided with God in his sovereignty, for I felt my need of that sovereign mercy; I have sided with Christ in his achievement, I felt my need of it; I have sided with the Eternal Spirit in the revelation of that eternal covenant ordered in all things and sure, for that is the Holy Spirit's law of life, making us free from the law of sin and death; I have sided with that; God, my covenant God, has taken care of me, and I have stood by that, and stood against everything else; and so I have fought a good fight, not against God's truth, but for it; contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; I have kept the faith, finished my course, and now there is a crown laid up for me; if you can give this account, then you can know, you can understand the song that none can understand but they that are redeemed from among men: "Unto him that loved us;" that will be your spirit and that will be your position; "and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God." When the book, then, of profession shall be opened, oh, what numbers will be blotted from that book of life; what numbers whose part which they professed to have in the new Jerusalem shall be taken from them; and he that has not vitality and reality, from him shall be taken even that, Luke says, which he seemed to have, which he has only in profession. Thus, then, I think you can understand these books. Here is the book of federal law; the book of national law; the book of personal law; the book of profession; the one profession good, the other bad. I may just give in this part (for I must hasten, I see, to a conclusion), one little hint, and it is this, that when the Savior came he opened all these books; then he opened that book of life that I have no time to dwell upon this morning. He opened especially the book of profession. What was the result? Here is a multitude of rulers, chief priests, and scribes, and people; and when Christ opened the book of profession, he demonstrated that their profession was all nothing, from first to last. Oh, what numbers, who thought they were on the threshold of heaven, were all the time standing upon the precipice of hell! Numbers that expected the congratulations of heaven met its solemn denunciations. "You generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?" Well, the Lord is the judge; I don't pretend to be infallible, but God's word is infallible; and I believe that the progress of duty-faith now is passing over the churches as an awful blast to these churches. When I look around at ministers, I can find men that professed at one time to stand out for these same things are gone over to the deceiving tragical scheme of working upon the fleshly feelings of the people, and throwing out everlasting malice against those that stand out for the truth. The Lord is the judge. If you profess the truth, sir, and then go away from it, that is quite enough to damn your soul; it proves what you are. Where is your scripture? say some. Here it is: "They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." Don't let religion be with you a mere sight-seeing affair; don't let the sabbath with you be a mere holiday's amusement; don't let the house of God with you be a place where nothing is to be attended to but

what is seen. Let the house of God be the house of God and seek in the house of God the God of the house, the Christ of the house. Go to the house of God earnestly; God help you to go prayerfully, and to remember that you are responsible for the profession that you make; and the great demand will come, "Who has required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" for he shall cast out of his kingdom all things that offend; and we must be cast out too, if our profession be a thing of nothing; for all these books will be opened, and men shall be judged out of those books according to their works.

After showing that the day of judgment is a fixed day; after showing what the books are, denoting the order of judgment, we now come to the contrast. And there are a great many scriptures that set forth this contrast but owing to time and space I must name only one. There is a scripture that applies to different ages of the world. I allude now to the beginning of the last chapter of the Book of Daniel. "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone," here is the book, you see, "that shall be found written in the book." Now, what is that time of trouble? Let us apply that time of trouble to three circumstances. First, when Christ died, that was with Christ such a time of trouble as never was before and never will be again. Second, apply those words to the destruction of Jerusalem, together with the persecutions of the saints. What times of trouble they were; but through it all, Jesus stood up for his people. And if they are stoning Stephen to death, Jesus has risen from his seat. "I see the Son of man *standing*." In other places he is sitting, but he now rises from his seat; and in the East it is always reckoned a very great honor done if you go into the presence of great personages, and one should rise from his seat. Jesus, to do Stephen great honor, grace enabled Stephen to do God great honor, for his face was as the face of an angel, and with power from on high he testified of Jesus. Now, Stephen, you are honoring me on earth, I will honor you in heaven. He rises from his seat. "Behold," says Stephen, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." "Lord Jesus," I see you are ready to take me, and I am ready to come; "receive my spirit;" and so he did. But if we apply these words to the ultimate judgment, the time is coming that there shall be for this world, professing and profane, I mean merely professing, such a time of trouble as never was since there was a nation upon the earth. Oh, what a day of days will that be! But at that time also, shall "Michael the great prince" (and Michael signifies the image of God, or likeness of God, which Christ is) "stand up for your people; and at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book;" that is, this book of life. There is the general declaration. Now comes the contrast. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall wake, some to everlasting life," they are the saved, and some to shame and everlasting contempt;" as they put God's truth to shame, and put God's Christ to shame, and put God's people to shame; they, dying in that state, shall wake up from the ground to shame and everlasting contempt, the omnipotent and eternal contempt of the most high God. But they that are delivered from all that, "they that be wise," made wise unto salvation, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Amen.