

The Apocalypse
A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ
by
J. A. Seiss, D.D.

Note: The previous lecture, which we have not posted, dealt with the first of the famous "four horsemen of the Apocalypse." With most scholars, Dr. Seiss takes the rider to be Jesus Christ. He begins this lecture with a rather lengthy discussion of the phrase in the Apostles Creed, "to judge the quick and the dead." His point is somewhat difficult to discern. However, his exposition of the second, third, and fourth horsemen is excellent. It gives you a real sense of how truly terrible the tribulation period will be. -- Ken Morgan

Lecture Twelfth

JUDGMENT OF THE QUICK AND OF THE DEAD--FALSE NOTIONS CORRECTED--THE SEVERAL SEALS PARTIALLY CONTEMPORANEOUS--OPENING OF THE SECOND SEAL--BRINGS WARS AND BLOODY STRIFES--THIRD SEAL--BRINGS SCARCITY AND FAMINE--FOURTH SEAL--BRINGS GOD'S FOUR SORE JUDGMENTS--THE WAY TO ESCAPE THESE DREADFUL CALAMITIES--THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF GOD EVER SAFE

Rev. 6:3-8 (Revised Text):

And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living one saying, Go! And there went forth another, a red horse; and to him who sat on him--to him was given to take away peace out of the earth, and that [men] shall slay one another: and there was given to him a great sword. And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living one saying, Go! And I saw and behold a black horse, and he who sat on him having a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard as if a voice in the midst of the four living ones, saying, A measure [choenix] of wheat for a penny [denarius], and three measures [choenixes] of barley for a penny [denarius]; and the oil and wine injure thou not. And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard [the] voice of the fourth living one saying, Go! And I saw, and behold a pale-green horse, and he who sat on him [was] named Death, and Hades was following with him, and there was given to them power over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

It must be borne in mind in dealing with these seal openings that we are dealing with the scenes of the judgment. They relate to "the day of the Lord." Anticipatory fulfillments have occurred, but the proper breaking of these seals and whatever is connected with their opening belongs to the future, and to that momentous period now at hand which is to close up the entire order of things now existing. The whole scene presents the action of the judgment throne in heaven toward those then living upon the earth.

There is an important distinction noted in the Scriptures, and in all the creeds, between the judgment of "*the quick*" and the judgment of "*the dead*." The common idea is that all men--those who have died and those who are found living at the time--shall be judged alike and in one and the same great congregation. It is conceived that the dead will all be simultaneously resurrected and all the living simultaneously changed, and that only then the judgment will sit for the adjudication of the eternal destiny of each. Painters and poets have outdone themselves in their efforts to portray the overwhelming majesty and terror of so grand and universal an assize. But it is not according to the plain letter of the Scriptures or of the creed of the Church.

If the day of judgment is ever to come, it must find people living upon the earth, who are described as "the quick." They must, therefore, either be judged in the flesh while still living in their natural life, or they must meet with some miraculous transformation--equivalent to the resurrection--by which they lose the distinctive character of "quick." Such a change before the judgment has also been accepted and affirmed concerning all who shall be living when the day of judgment comes. Thus, Bellarmine teaches that the breaking in of that day will instantaneously end the natural life of all the living, that they will all be suddenly struck dead and by the same stroke transformed into precisely the same state in which the resurrected shall be, and that then all distinction between "*quick* and *dead*" will have entirely and forever disappeared. And, if we take the doctrine of the simultaneous judgment of all men, we are necessitated to accept some such explanation. But then what becomes of the judgment of "*the quick*," as distinguished from the judgment of "*the dead*?"

There is, in that case, no such judgment. All natural life in the flesh being ended and past before any judicial awards are made, the judgment becomes only a judgment of the dead, or rather, of immortals; for there are no subjects of it except those who have ceased from the natural life and passed into the post-resurrection state. The distinction made by the Scriptures and the creeds between the judgment of "the quick" and the judgment of "the dead" is thus turned into a distinction without a difference--a mere matter of words, signifying nothing in particular. But the phraseology of Jesus and his inspired apostles, so uniformly employed wherever the subject is touched, is not thus to be slurred over and stripped of its proper and natural signification. If words have any meaning, "quick" does not mean "dead," and "dead" does not mean "quick;" and the judgment of the one cannot, therefore, be the judgment of the other.

Two distinct classes are unmistakably intended, not only as to that state in which the day of judgment finds them, but also as to that state in which the day of judgment deals with them. If the natural life of "the quick" ends before they are judged, then theirs is not a judgment of the quick any more than of the dead, and one part of the sacred description utterly falls away. We must, therefore, allow a judgment which respects men still living their natural life in the flesh, the awards of which they receive, and have visited upon them in their distinctive character as "quick."

And even as respects the judgment of "the dead," there lurks in the popular idea a mischievous and confusing error. People take the resurrection as a mere preliminary of the judgment, and view the judgment itself as something distinct from the resurrection and coming after it. The language of the last trump they conceive to be, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment." They consider that the dead are to be awakened for the purpose of being judged. It is also true that not *all* the awards of the judgment are made or go into effect till after the resurrection, but the resurrection is itself a part of the judgment.

The resurrection of the wicked is certainly something different from the resurrection of the saints. It is different both in character and in time. The one is a resurrection "in glory," and the other is a resurrection of "shame and everlasting contempt." The one is "adoption, the redemption of the body," and the other is "the resurrection of condemnation." The one is a "change of our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body," and the other is a mere reversal of the state of death, with all the corrupt fruits of the sowing to the flesh still clinging to him who is the subject of it (Gal. 6:7,8). The one is the peculiar privilege of the elect, of those who are Christ's, who rise at Christ's coming and live and reign with him the thousand

years; the other is subsequent--*afterwards* (εἰτα)--and embraces "the rest of the dead" who live not again until the thousand years are finished (1 Cor. 15:23,24; Rev. 20:4,5).

These distinctions are very plainly drawn and embrace the very highest things of our faith. Nothing that comes after the realization of them can add anything not already substantially included. The estate and destiny on both sides is thus effectually and irreversibly settled in advance. We accordingly would have the anomaly of the chief work and result of the judgment accomplished and concluded before the judgment itself sits! The truth is, that the resurrection and the changes which pass "in the twinkling of an eye" upon the living are themselves the fruits and embodiments of antecedent judgment. They are the consequences of adjudications then already made.

Strictly speaking, men are neither raised nor translated in order to come to judgment. Resurrections and translations are products of judgment previously passed, upon the dead as dead and upon the quick as quick. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" because they are already adjudged to be in Christ. And the living saints are caught up together with them to the clouds because they are already adjudged to be saints, and worthy to attain that world. And the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are finished, and the rest of "the quick" are "left" by virtue of judicial decisions already had, of which these things are the results. Whatever, in the line of increased blessedness or enhanced damnation, may come after is only the further carrying into effect of what was already predecided before there would be either resurrection or translation. And what so irreversibly fixes the estates of the persons concerned must necessarily, in the very nature of things, be their judgment.

The judgment is not a sham formality or a solemn farce. It is something real, and the substance of it is the award to every man according to his works. And when we see these awards in potent effect in the very life which the dead live again, it is absurd to be thinking of the judgment as only a grand assize to which resurrection and cessation of natural life are only preliminary. And if the true judgment thus precedes, or is already embodied in, the resurrection and translation, it must necessarily take hold of the dead as dead and the living as living. The language which the Scriptures and the creeds so carefully preserve is thus found to possess a literal accuracy and depth too generally overlooked.

We profess to believe that Christ "shall come to judge the quick and the dead." He does not come first to raise "the dead," and then to judge them, but he judges them as dead that they may rise in their appointed lot and share the resurrection of the just. He does not first come to change "the quick" in order to judge them, but to judge and discriminate between them while yet living, in order that those accounted worthy may be "changed" and caught up together with the resurrected ones, and that those adjudged unworthy of so high a portion may be cut off from it and made to suffer still other inflictions in this world. And it is to these judicial dealings with people "left," and living in the flesh, that the action under these horses refers.

I have shown that horses, in prophetic vision, are images of God's swift, invisible, resistless power for the defense of his people, especially in its going forth upon the proud, guilty, and unbelieving world. It was so in the case of those seen by Elisha's servant and in the case of those mentioned by Zechariah.

In these four different horses and horsemen we are to see four different forms of the coming forth of the judicial power of God upon the inhabitants of the earth, looking to the breaking up of the

dominion of wickedness, the punishment and casting out of transgression, and the consummation of that long-pending revolution whose accomplishment is at once the fulfillment of all prophecy and all prayer.

We are not to suppose, however, that the action of one ceases entirely before the other comes into play. They are consecutive in their incoming, in the main stress of them, and in some of their more marked circumstances; but they are all, in a measure, contemporaneous. The action of the first horseman certainly is continuous, for he goes forth in conquest unto conquest, which terminates only in the complete victory in which the opening of the seals ends. His career, therefore, runs on through that of his three successors and through all the remaining seals. No such intense continuity is expressed with reference to the action of the other horsemen, and the nature of their work is such as not likely to extend itself so far. But there is an inner and natural relationship between the things adumbrated [partially disclosed] which renders it quite evident that their several careers overlap each other, and that the doings of the one run side-by-side with the doings of the other.

We have seen that the white horse and his crowned rider and bloodless conquests indicate mighty moral victories for the heavenly Kingdom, wrought by the spirit of judgment. When God's judgments are in the earth, then will the inhabitants thereof learn righteousness. People shall be made willing in the day of His power.

But John beheld a second horse, called into action in like manner as the first--"a red horse; and to him who sat on him was given to take away peace out of the earth, and that [men] shall slay one another: and there was given to him a great sword."

The color of this horse is *red--fiery--the hue of blood*. This itself is indicative of vengeance and slaughter. The great dragon is red, and he is "a murderer from the beginning." The mighty Hero of Salvation, travailing in the greatness of his strength and crushing his enemies beneath his feet, is red in his apparel, emblematic of his work of violent destruction. Nor can we be mistaken in regarding this horse and his rider as significant of bloody times. His work is specifically described to be the taking of peace out of the earth. A great and terrible weapon is also put into his hand; not the ordinary sword of war (ρομφαία), but a great sword of one having the power of life and death (μαζαίρα μεγάλη). And the result of his presence is war, much taking of life by public executions, and mutual killing among men.

The picture is particularly terrific. It presents not only disturbance of the relation of nations, the rising of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom, but internecine collisions, civil wars, the murderous hate of one portion of citizens exercised against another portion, and bloody commotions all over the face of society having no issue but wretchedness and depopulation. It is the rampage of human passion raging to all forms of bloodshed, and the authorities of state in vain drawing the sword to put it down.

A small specimen of this state of things was enacted in the days of Asa, when Israel had been "a long season without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law;" in which times "there was no peace to him who went out, nor to him who came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city; for God did vex them with all adversity" (2 Chr. 15:3,5).

Another small specimen of the same was realized in those times of which Josephus writes, when

"the disorders in all Syria were terrible, and every city was divided into two armies encamped one against another, and the preservation of the one party was the destruction of the other, so the daytime was spent in the shedding of blood and the night in fear." And again, when, as he writes,

"There were besides disorders and civil wars in every city, and all those who were quiet from the Romans turned their hands one against another. There was also a bitter contest between those who were fond of war and those who were desirous of peace. At first, this quarrelsome temper caught hold of private families who could not agree among themselves, after which those people who were the dearest to one another broke through all restraints with regard to each other. And everyone [then] associated [himself] with those of his own opinion, and began to stand in opposition to one another so that seditions arose everywhere; while those that were for innovations and were desirous of war--by their youth and boldness--were too hard for the aged and the prudent. And in the first place, all the people of every place betook themselves to rapine, after which they got together in bodies in order to rob the people of the country, insomuch that for barbarity and iniquity those of the same nation did no way differ from the Romans. Nay, it seemed a much lighter thing to be ruined by the Romans than by themselves.

Fancy a world which has no peace in it, no concord but that of lawless and selfish passion, no regard for life when it stands in the way of covetousness or ambition, no amity between its nationalities or internal harmony and toleration between citizens of the same city or state--but every man's sword is against his fellow, and everyone's hand rises up against the hand of his neighbor, and international slaughter, civil butchery, and private revenge and murder are the order of the day. Imagine this and you have what the earth will be under the judgment power of this red horse and his rider.

Of old, already, Jehovah threatened to bring a sword to avenge the quarrel of the covenant, and to "call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth" (Jer. 25:29). And in this horseman, with his great sword taking peace from the earth and desolating the world with violence and bloodshed, we have the final fulfillment of that threat. Nor need anyone be at a loss to see how everything is already tending to just such a condition of society and the world.

But the breaking of the third seal starts another horse--"a black horse"--at whose appearance the seer is moved to exclamation: "*And I saw, and, behold, a black horse, and he who sat on him having a pair of balances in his hand.*"

More feeling is expressed at the appearance of this power, because a more general and unmanageable plague is the subject of contemplation. Long ago did Jeremiah say, "They who are slain with the sword are better than they who are slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for lack of the fruits of the field" (Lam. 4:9). *Black* is the color of dearth and famine. When Jeremiah contemplated Judah and his gates "*black* unto the ground," it was a picture "concerning the dearth" (Jer. 14:1,2). The same prophet says, "Our skin was *black* like an oven because of the terrible *famine*" (Lam. 5:10). It is the hue of mourning, and the rest of the description identifies it as mourning by reason of scarcity.

The rider of this black horse carries a pair of balances in his hand. There is close and careful weighing, and the things weighed are the common articles of food. John also "heard as if a voice

in the midst of the four Living ones, saying, A choenix of wheat for a denarius, and three choenixes of barley for a denarius." When things are plentiful, exact weight or measure is not regarded. The Spirit, as given to Christ, was given without measure; so also in Joseph's gathering of corn and in David's gathering of copper for the temple. And when corn is abundant, it is sold by gross measure, and no attention is paid to a few hundred grains one way or the other. But when it becomes high in price and scarce, then it is strictly weighed, and every ounce is taken into account. And in numerous places in Scripture the weighing out of the bread to be eaten is given as one of the marks of great scarcity and want (Lev. 26:20; Ez. 4:10,16).

But the picture is further shown to be one of scarcity by the prices of provisions which John heard declared. People do not generally suppose that God has much to do with pricelists. They go up and down, and millions haggle over them every day, but no one thinks of anything Divine connected with them. But whether men realize it or not, pricelists are made in heaven. John hears the rates of corn and bread announced by the same heavenly powers by which these mystic horses are called into action. Whatever the weather, the crops, the quantities of money in the country, the extent of speculation in the market, or other subordinate causes may have to do with it, the prime and all-controlling cause is the decree of the throne. It is God from whom we have our daily bread, and it is by His will that it is plentiful and cheap or scarce and costly.

The prices here given are judgment prices, indicative of extreme scarcity and distress. A *choenix* is about a pint and a half of our measure, and is the ordinary allowance of wheat to a man for one day's scanty subsistence. A *denarius* was the ordinary wage for a full day's labor. And when a choenix of wheat costs a denarius, it is as much as a man can do to earn the bread he himself consumes, leaving nothing for his family or for his other needs.

But even at these ruinous rates there is not wheat enough. People have to betake themselves to barley--the food of horses and beasts of burden. Yet the barley is as difficult of procurement as the wheat. In ordinary times a denarius would buy twenty-four choenixes of barley; but here a denarius will buy but *three*--the scanty allowance for a day's subsistence for a slave. The arrival of things at such straits accordingly argues a severity of hard times, distress, and need almost beyond the power of imagination to depict. Yet it is but the natural result of the state of things under the red horse. The two are closely connected as cause and effect. Take away peace from the earth and inaugurate universal wars, civil strife and bloody feuds, and terrible scarcity of the means of subsistence must follow.

One mitigation attends this fearful judgment. The command to the invisible messenger is, "The oil and the wine do not injure." These would naturally be less affected by the diversion of the population from their proper business to their bloody work than those crops which depend more upon human efforts. Olive trees and vines, when once established, will grow and produce year after year without much attention; but not wheat and barley. Yet these also depend upon God, and grow and produce only by his command. And it is by his special order that their fruitfulness is preserved in the midst of this reigning scarcity of other things. And it is a matter of grace that the minister of vengeance is so far restrained.

But the very reservation also reflects the intensity of the famine as respects the ordinary means of subsistence. It carries with it the intimation that, but for the preservation of the oil and wine, it would be impossible for men to find sufficient food on which to keep themselves alive. Nay, though a thing of mercy as regards men's lives, it also bears with it a moral aggravation of the affliction. It is everywhere set forth as one of the characteristics of the last times that people

shall be given to luxurious habits and inordinate appetites for superfluities of diet. "Eating and drinking," and every extreme of carnal indulgence, is then to mark their modes of life. The staple food of mankind is despised and every expensive luxury is impatiently pursued. Hence, God shuts them in to their luxuries, partly in mitigation of judgment, but at the same time also in aggravation of it. Just as Israel, lusting after flesh and no longer satisfied with the bread Jehovah provided, was compelled to live on flesh until it became almost impossible for the people to swallow it (Num. 11:19,20). So God in judgment takes away what men despise and forces them to live on luxuries made loathsome because there is nothing else, that they may learn the folly of their wisdom and taste the fearfulness of their guilty hallucination.

But while all this is being experienced, a fourth seal is broken and out comes another horse and horseman still more terrible. This is the last and the climax of this particular series of terrific images. The first horse is pure white--mighty, but bloodless in his career; the second is fiery red--blood-colored and revengeful; the third is black--mournful, gloom-shaded. And when we would think everything dreadful in color has been exhausted, another breaks upon the view, more terrible than any that have gone before. A pale, death-green, and cadaverous horse appears. $\chi\lambda\omega\rho\omicron\varsigma$, translated *pale*, denotes a leprous color (Lev. 13:49; 14:37). It properly means *green*, and is several times so translated in the Apocalypse and elsewhere (Rev. 8:7; 9:4; Mark 6:39). There are instances of its use in the classics to denote the wan and deathly expression of the face when overwhelmed with fright or faintness. When applied as here, it can only mean a greenish ghastliness, something like the color of a corpse or putrefying flesh. It describes this last horse as unspeakably more horrible than either of the others.

But his rider and attendants intensify the awfulness of the picture. That rider is *Death*, and *Hades* follows with him. There is also given to them power over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and by means of the wild beasts of the earth. The preceding pictures continue and repeat themselves in this, but with increased intensity and still other additions. The rider of the red horse is War, destroying peace and exciting all manner of strife and bloodshed. The rider of the black horse is Famine, taking away the staff of bread and oppressing the world with terrible scarcity. And the rider of this ghastly-colored horse carries on the work of his predecessors to still more horrible excesses, and matures their fruits in death-plague and depredations of the animal tribes. The several forms of affliction advance from the lesser to the greater, and one naturally grows out of the other.

General war and bloody strife becomes the occasion of famine, and famine brings pestilence; and their combined depopulation of the earth encourages the increase and ferocious instincts of wild beasts and the multiplication of noxious creatures. God does not work miracles where none are needed; and evils are all so closely related that it is only necessary to start one to bring down the whole train. A state of general war and bloody civil strife is terrible enough, but when to it is added scarcity, black hunger, desolating pestilence, and the ravages of depredacious animals--when, as in this instance, Death takes the reins and the living world is overrun by the legions of the dead--then comes "the great and terrible day of the Lord."

Death is not a being, but the fruit of a power which operates through many different agencies. It is here personified and represented under the picture of some mighty Caesar, mounted and riding forth in fearful triumph.

Hades is not a being. It is the grave--the dark region of the dead--the realm which remorselessly swallows up all the living. It is here personified under the image of some great voracious

monster stalking after the rider on the ghastly horse, indicating that whither this horseman comes, Hades comes, and the world of the dead takes the place of the world of the living.

The means by which these awful desolations are wrought are God's "four sore judgments--the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence to cut off man and beast" (Ezek. 14:21). These are the most dreadful plagues with which God usually chastises men. They are not reserved exclusively for the last periods of time. We can trace them under Roman emperors, but also before there were Roman emperors and since Roman emperors have ceased to be. But the height and fullness of them falls within the period to which these seals relate.

The true sample, as it was in some sort the beginning of the tribulation set forth under these horses, was given in what befell the Jews in the past period of their state. War was there in all its fearfulness. Commotion and strife distracted and distressed the whole land. Wholesale butchery was the order of the day. Whole cities were turned into mere graves, full of dead. Millions of men, women, and children fell by the sword, famine, exposure, fright, and other forms of death. Shut in at last to their holy city by the tight cordon of Rome's legions, the soul sickens over the recitals of the sufferings, oppressions, cruelties, and living death which settled down upon the doomed people. Perishing by houses and families every day, the dead became too numerous for the living to bury; and the wretchedness was so great that men, and even mothers, forgot their sympathies. Affection died; all regard for the rights of one another died; and the glorious city of David and Solomon was turned into a tomb under the prancings of the ghastly horse whose rider is Death, whose attendant is Hell, and who is yet to dash through the world and trample it in like manner under his dreadful hoofs.

We are not to infer, however, that there is to be an utter extirpation and extinction of the race of mankind under these visitations. Only "the fourth part of the earth" is put under this fourth horseman's sway. There are also other seals to be broken and other judgment scenes to be enacted, of which men in the flesh, nations and earthly confederations are largely the subjects. We have thus far only the first acts in the terrible drama. We have been contemplating merely the beginning of sorrows, which multiply and grow in fearfulness till the last seal is broken, the last trumpet sounded, and the last bowl of wrath emptied. Other and worse impieties are to come, and still more awful displays of Almighty vengeance upon the enactors of them. The greatest masterpiece of hell yet awaits full development, and the greatest thunders of God's judgment remain for its wreck, and the final ruin of its unsanctified abettors.

I know not, my friends, what degree of credit or thought you may give to these things. But as Paul told the assembly on Mars Hill, so I tell you, that "God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world [*the living world of mankind*] in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained; whereof he has given assurance unto all men in that he has raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). You may shrink back and exclaim as Balaam did, "Alas, who shall live when God does this!" Like Balaam you may also turn away from it to pursue the wages of unrighteousness. But I beseech you to beware, lest you procure for yourselves a Balaam's end. The picture may be dark and awful beyond what you are willing to contemplate; but it must be filled out in the real world some day, as certainly as God's word is true.

Neither has it been so graphically sketched without a purpose. The Almighty intends that we should look at it, that we should be premonished [warned beforehand] by the contemplation of it, and that it should have effect upon our hearts and lives. He would have us see and know to what this vain, proud, and guilty world is coming, that we may separate ourselves from it and

secure a better portion.

And with all the universal agony in which its presumptuous dominion shall expire, there is this to be added by way of comfort, that there is no necessity that any of us should ever feel it. A way of escape exists. As there was an ark for Noah when the world was drowned, and a Pella for the saints when Jerusalem sunk under God's resentment for the murder of His Son, so there is a place of safety provided for us where we may view these horsemen, as unharmed by their fearful doings as was the apostolic seer himself. It was of this the Psalmist sung when he said, "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me" (Ps. 27:5).

Nor is the grave this hiding place. Should these scenes begin tonight, the refuge is as available and as availing as if they should tarry yet a thousand years. God's pavilion is above the clouds, not under the ground. Not hades, but heaven is the true center of the aspirations of the saints. And as Isaiah beheld these desolating judgments about to sweep the earth, he heard a voice of sweetness going before them saying, "Come my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors about you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be past" (Is. 26:20). That voice comes from heaven. It is none other than the loving Savior's voice. It is a voice that calls them to where he is. Hence the same prophet adds, "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Is. 40:31). Hence the apostle still more plainly declares, "We who are alive and remain shall be caught up...in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). Hence also that admiring song of David, "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You before the sons of men! You shall hide them in the secret of Your presence from the pride of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Ps. 31:19,20). And the direction of the apostle is that we "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18).

The only question is as to how we stand in relation to the Lamb who breaks these seals. Do we accept and rely on him as our hope and salvation? Are we trusting to his meritorious sacrifice as the satisfaction for our guilt, and to his victorious exaltation to the right hand of the Father as compassing everything needful to make us forever safe? Have we truly taken him as our Lord, confessed ourselves to his Gospel, and given our hearts and our all to his service? Are we making it the great business of our lives to "watch and pray always" and to keep ourselves in fellowship with him, patiently waiting upon him as our all-sufficient portion?

Oh, blessed, blessed is that servant who, when his Lord comes, shall be found so doing! He is safe. His judgment is passed. No dregs of wrath remain for him to drink. Christ will not leave him to suffer with hypocrites and unbelievers. And while these storms of woe are desolating the earth, he shall be rejoicing in a heavenly crown. Yea, and I would be recreant [unfaithful] to my commission as a minister of Christ if I did not declare the Master's readiness this hour to receive and seal everyone of you against all dangers of the great day of wrath.

Indeed, these pictures of coming woe have been given to awaken us from our false security, to quicken us in the search for the refuge set before us, and to bring us to unreserved consecration to the Lord our Redeemer. Only fall in with his offers, and "salvation will God appoint for walls and for bulwarks" (Is. 26:1). Cleave to him and to his unfulfilling promises and "you shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart as when one goes with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel" (Is. 33:29). Rest in

Jesus and do his commandments, and the place which he has gone to prepare is yours. And before his wrath breaks forth upon the guilty world, he will come again and receive you to himself, that where he is there you may be also. (John 14:1-3.)

You have read in the Scriptures of the superior favors of "the wise" in relation to the day of judgment. The wise virgins went in with the Bridegroom, when the door was shut against their foolish companions. Solomon wrote, "The wise shall inherit glory." But an essential part of that blessed wisdom is to "observe these things"--to understand this, to consider what the end shall be. "A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself." To close our eyes and ears against these foreshowings of God, or to delay earnest and energetic effort in view of their speedy fulfillment, is not wisdom. There must be the wakeful, observant, far-seeing eagle eye if there is to be a timely and triumphant eagle flight. And if we would "escape all these things that shall come to pass," and find a place of safety in the presence of the Son of man, we must learn to realize that the day of these fearful visitations is approaching, and that we have no time to lose and no opportunities to be neglected.

The voice of free grace cries, "Escape to the mountain." It is a voice which we have occasion to heed with solemn care and prompt obedience. "For 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, which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them who heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:2-4.)