

THE COMING  
JUDGMENTS  
OF GOD

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# THE COMING JUDGMENTS OF GOD

*There is a time—we know not when, a point—we know not where, that marks the destiny of men to glory or despair; There is a line, by us unseen, that crosses every path, the hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath.*

*—Taken from the poem, “The Doomed Man,” written by Presbyterian minister Joseph Alexander (1809–1860)*

**T**his little book contains good news and bad news. First, the bad news. Believe it or not, life on planet earth is going to get worse—much worse—before it gets better. But the good news is that when life finally gets good, it will be unimaginably fantastic. Back to the bad news. In the sacred pages of the Holy Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth declares,

*I will punish the world for its evil.*

—Isaiah 13:11

Why would God do such a thing? Why would He “punish” a “world” that He Himself created? The above Bible verse offers a simple answer. “I

will punish the world for *its evil*,” declares the Lord Almighty. Thus it is when humans become so abominably “evil” that God will finally implement His punishments.

Before going any further, we should clarify the truth about God’s perfect character and principles, and make it very clear that it is *not* God who is “evil.” No, no. “God is love,” reports His Book (see 1 John 4:8). As stated above, it is because of *aggravated evil* that He will finally act in judgment. To better understand the Lord’s actions, we need to understand the various attributes of His character. The Bible records:

*And the LORD passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.*

—Exodus 34:5–8

First and foremost, God is “merciful,” “gracious,” and “abounding in goodness.” Aren’t you glad? If He wasn’t, we would all be dead. Yet mercy

and graciousness don't completely summarize His holy character. He is also a God of "truth." He hates lies and every form of falsehood (see Proverbs 6:16–19). Even more, He is supremely and impartially just. "By no means clearing the guilty" were His exact words to Moses. Now don't miss this next point. According to the Eternal One's own self-disclosure, He also "visits," which means "punishes," the "iniquity," or sins, of those who persistently revolt against His perfect will and ways.

Ever since Adam and Eve first rebelled against their Maker amidst luscious, fruit-laden trees in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 1–3), the Lord's mercy, grace, and forgiveness have been constantly exercised toward fallen humanity. Throughout human history—up to this very moment—God has been appealing, wooing, urging, and pleading with wayward humans. "Repent now everyone of his evil way" (see Jeremiah 25:5), spoke the Lord many times through His holy prophets. "'For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,' says the Lord God, 'therefore turn and live!'" (Ezekiel 18:32).

But there is a limit to divine patience. If sinners willfully, stubbornly, and persistently resist His overtures, despise His mercy, mock His messengers, and become hardened in rebellion, eventually, an invisible line is crossed, "the hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath."

## LESSONS FROM NOAH AND THE FLOOD

Perhaps the most striking historical example of a time when God's patience ceased, and His wrath commenced, occurred in Noah's day. Remember him? Noah was the man who built the ark. The story is so famous that Hollywood recently made a movie about his life, although it stretched the facts quite a bit. The Bible states that "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9).

In Noah's time, a lot had changed since the pristine days of Eden. Now, instead of happy families, innocent children, holy pursuits, and loving behavior, "the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:5, 11).

*Get it?* It wasn't God who had morphed into a cosmic Bad Guy; rather, it was earth's inhabitants who had become ferociously violent and utterly corrupt. *What a nightmare*, God must have thought to Himself. "And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Genesis 6:6). Finally, "the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast ... for I am sorry that I have made them'" (verse 7).

Yet before the destruction, Noah was divinely instructed to build a gigantic three-story boat and to warn an apostate world of impending judgment; which in this case would take the form of massive amounts of rain descending unstoppably from thundering skies. The New Testament calls Noah “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5). Faithful to his holy calling, Noah built, preached, and pleaded for 120 years. Near the close of this merciful period of probation, a host of wild animals unexpectedly strolled peacefully into the ark. Flocks of birds flew inside too. Onlookers were shocked and bewildered. *Could Noah be right?* many wondered. *Will there really be a global flood?* “The flood is coming!” Noah thundered. “This is God’s last call!” pleaded His prophet at the door of the boat.

The Holy Spirit tugged on the heartstrings of those who beheld these wondrous events. Many must have been deeply convicted, yet they resisted Heaven’s last offer of mercy. Tragically, only eight humans entered the ark. Then an unseen hand lifted the heavy door and it closed. “And the LORD shut him [Noah] in” (Genesis 7:16). Noah and his family were safe inside the ark, while a deluded, mocking, doomed crowd remained outside.

Exactly seven days later, the sky became black with ominous storm clouds. Lightning flashed. Thunder boomed. The first drops of rain must have

created an uncontrollable panic in the hearts of those who had convinced themselves that Noah was merely a nutty, delusional old man. Harder and harder the rain fell. “Noah! Open the door! We changed our minds!” multitudes must have screamed as they banged on the massive door. But it was too late. The time for forgiveness was past. The voice of mercy had ceased. It was time for judgment—for the bolts of God’s wrath. The Holy Book reports:

*In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. ... And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. ... So He [God] destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.*  
—Genesis 7:11, 12, 21, 23

Fast-forward to the time of Jesus. Near the close of His loving ministry on earth, our Savior warned, “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37,

emphasis added). Did you catch that? As it was in Noah's time, so shall it be right before Christ's Second Coming. Perhaps you've heard this famous saying: "Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat its mistakes." How true that saying is. According to Christ's prediction, our modern, hi-tech, entertainment-mesmerized civilization will also descend into a similar state of rampant violence, utter corruption, and godless pleasure. Once again, the sober voice of conscience will be banished.

The Bible says we are living in "the time of the end" (see Daniel 12:4). Consistent with His divine character and tender compassion, God is now offering mercy, forgiveness, and eternal salvation to all who are willing to repent of their wicked ways. But there is a limit to Heaven's invitation of grace. "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Genesis 6:3), warned the Lord in Noah's time. It's the same today. His Holy Spirit is still pleading, but He will not do so indefinitely. As it was anciently, even so the just judgments of God are pending *again*. Indeed, they are *already* falling upon our increasingly debased, degenerate, depraved world.

#### THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Let's delve deeper by rewinding to the time when the Lord proclaimed His merciful and just

character to Moses as recorded in Exodus 34:5–8. Biblical chronologists place the date of that event sometime around 1400 B.C. The place was the summit of Mount Sinai, nicknamed “The Mountain of God,” located in Arabia (see Galatians 4:25). Significantly, the broader context of God’s self-revelation to Moses was His earlier proclamation on the same summit of His holy law of Ten Commandments. About that earlier time, the Bible reports:

*Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.*

—Exodus 19:16–19

Never before in human history—or since—has God revealed Himself which such majestic manifestations of His personal glory as when He proclaimed the Ten Commandments to Israel and to the world. A loud trumpet sounded. Fire blazed. Smoke ascended. The earth shook. Then

God communicated “the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone” (Deuteronomy 4:13).

The Bible contains many laws (moral, ceremonial, civil, judicial). Earthly human governments have also legislated countless rules and regulations. But the Ten Commandments are in a class by themselves—above all other laws. What makes the Ten Commandments so unique is that they were written, not with a pen or pencil, ancient stylus, or even with sophisticated hi-tech voice recognition software, but “with the finger of God” on two “tablets of stone” (Exodus 31:18). “Stone” means *solid rock*, thus showing their unchangeable character.

If you’re fuzzy about what the Ten Commandments actually command, here is a slightly abbreviated version (to read the full version, see Exodus 20:1–17):

*And God spoke all these words, saying:*

- 1. You shall have no other gods before Me.*
- 2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image.*
- 3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.*
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day [Saturday] is the*

*Sabbath of the LORD your God. ... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth. ... Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

5. *Honor your father and your mother.*
6. *You shall not kill.*
7. *You shall not commit adultery.*
8. *You shall not steal.*
9. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*
10. *You shall not covet.*

—Taken from Exodus 20:1–17

This short, comprehensive, straightforward “law is truth” (Psalm 119:142), because its eternal Author is “the God of truth” (Isaiah 65:16). “The commandment is holy and just and good” (see Romans 7:12) because God is holy, just and good. Because “God is love” (1 John 4:8), this law is a reflection of His character of love (see Matthew 22:36-30; Romans 13:10). This being so, when human beings willingly ignore, or break, any one of the Ten Commandments, they are really opposing God Himself and His love. In a nutshell, they are rebelling against the good government of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.

The Bible calls such wicked treason “sin.” We know this because, immediately after God proclaimed His Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai,

Moses told the people of Israel, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you ... that you may *not sin*” (Exodus 20:20, emphasis added). Thus God’s law is a “test” of whether we will choose “sin” or not. In the New Testament, John affirmed the same truth by stating plainly, “*Sin is the transgression [violation] of the law*” (1 John 3:4, KJV, emphasis added). “By the law is knowledge of *sin*” (Romans 3:20), dittoed Paul. Because “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23), the Bible classifies us all as *sinner*s—subject to divine judgment.

Back to the issue of love. Moses wrote: “The Lord came from Sinai ... from His right hand went *a fiery law* ... *Yes, He loved the people*” (Deuteronomy 33:2, 3, emphasis added). God wrote His “fiery law” because He loves us and desires what’s best for us. Contrary to popular belief—echoed even by some misguided preachers—the words “law” and “love” are inseparable. Essentially, real love establishes rules for the best interest of all. Are you a parent? If so, don’t you make rules for your children? I assume so. Why? The answer is obvious: *because you love your kids*. Let me illustrate with a true story.

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE FOR OUR GOOD

It was a gorgeous, sunny day at Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona. A crowd of happy

sightseers had gathered near the edge of a mile-high cliff to absorb the pristine, rugged scenery. There was nothing to fear, for everyone stood behind a guardrail built to protect visitors. As the sightseers eyed the beautiful view, a young couple who were engaged to be married in three short weeks joined them. Suddenly, to everyone's shock, the young man, whose name was Jim, hopped over the guardrail near the edge of the cliff.

"Say, young fellow," a nearby tourist said in alarm, "Don't you know what guardrails are for?" "Yes sir," Jim replied with a hearty chuckle, "I helped build these rails. I work here. I know this canyon quite well." Calmly taking hold of his sweetheart's hand, he helped her over too. Just beyond the rail was an outcropping of rock that precariously jutted out beyond the edge of the cliff. Carefully climbing onto the outcrop, the couple then sat down to enjoy an incredible view of the canyon. *That's dangerous*, thought watching tourists.

An eyewitness reported: "Presently Jim stood up and gave his hand to the girl. For better balance in helping to raise her weight, he naturally took a short step backward—just over the edge!" His girlfriend then beheld a look of sheer terror on her lover's face as he suddenly realized what he had just done, and that he was now hopelessly doomed. With a piercing wail of awful agony,

he plunged to his death far below. The girl was so hysterical she nearly fell off too. She was finally pulled to safety but had to be sedated.

The obvious lesson of this tragic story is that everyone—including you, me, families, societies, and nations—need boundary lines to protect us from ruin. *That guardrail isn't for me*, Jim confidently concluded as he hopped over the barrier. But he was wrong. *Dead wrong*. He perished because of his vain self-confidence.

*Get the point?* The Holy Bible informs us that our loving Creator, who formed us “in His own image” (Genesis 1:27), is deeply concerned about our safety, too. To protect us from the fatal consequences of sinful choices, He has mercifully given us a “guardrail” for our protection. That guardrail is the Ten Commandments, which were given for our own good, to protect us from harm. Consider even human laws. Are they not written for our protection? Traffic laws, child pornography laws, laws against stealing, or murder, are all meant to protect life and property.

It's the same with the Ten Commandments. God Almighty proclaimed them amidst thunder, earthquake, and fiery flame from the summit of Mount Sinai, not only to impress us with their sacredness, but to prevent us from destroying ourselves by breaking them. “That it may go well with you and your children” (Deuteronomy 12:28) is

His reason for giving us His law. Our Creator loves us, and knows what's best.

As we've previously learned, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy" (Psalm 103:8). Yet we've also discovered that mercy isn't the only attribute of His character. Nor is His love like a soft, squishy marshmallow that can be squeezed in any direction. Far from it. For the safety and well-being of His entire universe, our Creator is also a Holy Guardian of Righteousness and "a God of justice" (Isaiah 30:18) who, when the time is right "executes justice" (Psalm 146:7) against evil.

Back to Noah's time. In a sense, God's decision to annihilate an entire wicked world with a global Flood was a bit like what happened to Jim on that Grand Canyon cliff. Before the rain fell, the entire world had willingly, stubbornly, and persistently rejected God's guardrail. *Moral guidelines? Away with such restrictions!* pre-Flood sinners foolishly concluded. As a result, the world became "filled with violence" (Genesis 6:13). "All flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (Genesis 6:12). In the councils of Heaven, it was finally determined that something must be done. Noah built a boat. Mercy was offered to all. When it was rejected, *everyone drowned*. In fact, biblical geologists discern that the Grand Canyon itself was formed by the catastrophic swirling action of water from that ancient Flood.

## GOD USES AGENCIES AS HIS JUDGMENTS

Notice also that in Noah's day, God didn't destroy a wicked world with His own hand directly. Instead, He used mighty agencies of nature—rain and flooding—to implement His just wrath. Something similar happened to the ancient city of Sodom. “But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord” (Genesis 13:13). They were so wicked, in fact, that holy vengeance struck there too. But this time, instead of water plummeting from the sky, “The LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground” (Genesis 19:24,25). Archaeologists have uncovered the ruins of those cities too—covered with thick layers of ash—just south of the Dead Sea.

In still another instance, God used an earthquake to punish Korah, Dathan, and Abiram for persistently revolting against His just authority manifested through the leadership of Moses (see Numbers 16:31–32). In Joshua's time, “the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven” against Israel's invading enemies (see Joshua 10:11). “Fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind” can all become instruments “fulfilling His word” (Psalm 148:8). Yes, God oversees and monitors the mighty

forces of nature—including fires, floods, storms, hail, tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanos, and even asteroids. These can all be part of His arsenal to make feeble, mortal men tremble before His infinite power and majesty. As difficult as this may sound, in every major deadly natural disaster the Lord's pleading voice may yet be heard warning sinners to forsake their sins.

This brings up yet another critical truth about God's judgments. In rare instances, as in Noah's day, and in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, holy vengeance strikes because Heaven's gracious offer of mercy has expired. That's it. Only justice remains. But by far the vast majority of divine judgments are merciful in themselves, and are designed as wake-up calls to those who are blissfully blind to the full consequences of sin: the utter ruin of human personalities and characters, hopelessness, damnation, and eternal death (see Romans 2:8, 9; 6:23). As we will soon see, the time is fast approaching when God Himself will fully humble the pride of man (see Isaiah 2:10–12) as He acts to utterly eradicate all sin, rebellion, and wickedness from His universe. The last book of the Bible predicts:

*Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men,*

*the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

—Revelation 6:14–17

As we near this cataclysmic “great day of His wrath,” all catastrophic disasters such as earthquakes, floods, tornados, hurricanes, and tsunamis are God’s mysterious sirens to awaken survivors to the perils of violating the Ten Commandments, before it’s forever too late.

#### WHAT ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

*What a minute!* You may be thinking. *I thought “climate change” resulting from man-made pollution was the cause of increasing weather-related calamities.* I’ve heard this theory too. But something’s missing in this popular notion. While it’s true that in a broad sense, deadly natural disasters are consequences of human sin on earth—starting with Adam and Eve—yet the Bible reveals that the underlying reason our Creator either allows or directly sends devastating earthquakes, tornados, floods, and storms is *because He is punishing wicked transgressors of His righteous law.* Thus, while

carbon emissions from vehicles, plus smoggy pollution from industrial factories surely contribute to our global mess, this isn't the core problem. Notice carefully what God told ancient Israel:

*Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words, **nor My law**, but rejected it.*  
—Jeremiah 6:19 (emphasis added)

Thus “calamity” *from God* follows the rejection of His holy “law.” The prophet Hosea also listed specific violations of the Ten Commandments as the reason for divine judgments:

*The LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: “There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing [breaking the 3rd commandment] and lying [the 9th], killing [the 6<sup>th</sup>] and stealing [the 8<sup>th</sup>] and committing adultery [the 7<sup>th</sup>], they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed.”*  
—Hosea 4:1, 2, emphasis added

Can't we see this happening today? “Swearing,” “lying,” “killing,” “stealing,” and “adultery” are as common as houseflies. Speaking of “adultery,” or sexual immorality, and “break[ing] all restraint,”

remember Sodom? One reason “the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom” (Genesis 19:24) was because of the gross sexual immorality of its inhabitants; more specifically, their *homosexuality* (read Genesis 19:4, 5 and Jude 7). The men of Sodom, “leaving the natural use of the woman, *burned in their lust for one another*” (Romans 1:26, 27, emphasis added). The result was a fiery judgment. Will similar judgments strike again? As the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) movement gains traction worldwide, even among children, there is no doubt that they will. And when rising bestiality and pedophilia are mixed into the toxic brew of global Internet pornography, we can be sure that the most awful disasters are looming. *God is now warning us in advance.*

Back to Hosea’s prophecy. After listing numerous violations of the Ten Commandments, the prophet describes the awful consequences of reckless commandment-breaking:

*Therefore the land will mourn; and everyone who dwells there will waste away with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; even the fish of the sea will be taken away. ... My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. ... Because you have forgotten the law of your God. ... So I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their deeds.*

—Hosea 4:3, 6, 9

People are “destroyed for lack of knowledge.” Our modern world has “forgotten the law” of God. The Lord warned, “So I will punish them for their ways.” Just as in the days of Noah and Sodom, God is once again punishing gross human wickedness through His agencies of rain, fire, earthquakes, storms, and hail. What about Islamic terrorism? Might ruthless terrorists also become His instruments to punish other violators of His law? Ponder Jeremiah 1:14–16. When Israel sank into moral chaos, “the kingdoms of the north” (fierce Assyrians and cruel Babylonians) became instruments of His “judgments against them concerning all their wickedness” (verses 15, 16). It happened then, and it is happening now in these “last days” (2 Timothy 3:1).

Tragically, it is part of the messy consequences of sin that innocent souls often suffer with the guilty. Now mark these words. Based on the plain principles of Holy Scripture, we can expect much greater judgments (far beyond what anyone now living has ever witnessed) to strike cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Chicago, New York, London, Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, Moscow, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, plus countless others, because of their great wickedness—just like in Bible days. Remember, God Himself has stated:

*I will punish the world for its evil.*

—Isaiah 13:11 (emphasis added)

So don't be fooled by the world's leading scientists and theologians who attribute all weather-related disasters merely to man-made pollution. I can imagine similar scientists in Noah's day dismissing the whole idea of God Himself sending a flood to wipe out humanity. "*That's ridiculous,*" they probably remarked with a snicker. "*Noah is nuts.*" But they were wrong. Dead wrong. Eventually they drowned. Neither should we classify all terrorist atrocities as merely random acts of cruelty. Yes, they are abominably cruel and evil. But more is happening behind the scenes. When ancient Israel rebelled against God, He withdrew His merciful protection and allowed ruthless Assyrian and Babylonian killers to attack as part of *His judgments* against "their wickedness." Similarly, as our modern world descends into moral midnight, God Himself is again allowing satanic murderers to wreak havoc to awaken survivors to the peril of greater calamities coming upon commandment-breakers.

The Ruler of the Universe keeps accurate records of all violations of His law—including the sins of savage terrorists. "Every transgression," wrote Paul, will receive "a just reward" (Hebrews 2:2). Dear reader, *you are now being warned of the coming judgments from God.* Are you listening? Before Sodom was destroyed, faithful Lot tried to warn his relatives to flee from that doomed city,

but they thought he was “joking” (see Genesis 19:14). How about you? Would you have boarded the ark in Noah’s day, or remained outside? “Escape for your life!” (See Genesis 19:17), holy angels urged Lot before Sodom was consumed by blazing brimstone. Jesus predicted, “Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot . . . *Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed*” (Luke 17:28, 30, emphasis added). Once again, time is running out. Once again, obeying God Almighty is a matter of life or death.

#### FUTURE JUDGMENTS FROM GOD PREDICTED

The Bible’s last book reveals that a large part of future global devastation will occur when “the seven last plagues” are poured out immediately prior to the visible, climactic, personal appearing of Jesus Christ.

*Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

—Revelation 15:1

Revelation chapter 16 predicts that these “seven last plagues” will be similar in character to the “great judgments” (see Exodus 7:4) that fell upon ancient Egypt in the time of Moses. Back then, ten

plagues wasted the land (see Exodus 7–12). Before Jesus returns, seven final plagues will also decimate planet earth, its oceans, waters, and skies because our lost world will have fully rejected God's holy law (see Revelation 14:6–12; Psalm 119:126), spurned His last offer of mercy, and despised His forgiving love. As these plagues fall, a holy voice is heard saying:

*Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and  
righteous are Your judgments.*

—Revelation 16:7

God's "judgments" are "righteous." Not only that, they will come upon the world at large (as in Noah's day) and also upon those who profess religion but who, in spite of their high claims to spirituality, are nevertheless breaking one or more of the Ten Commandments in their daily lives. Consider this. In Old Testament times, God's judgments fell not only upon Egyptians, but upon Israelites too (His professed people) when they idolized a golden calf, thus breaking the second commandment (see Exodus 32), and when they committed sexual sins on the edge of the Promised Land, thus breaking the seventh commandment (see Numbers 25). Many other examples could be cited.

Indeed, God's judgments didn't fall on disobedient Old Testament Jews alone, but also upon professed believers in Jesus Christ in New Testament times, such as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira who coveted money (breaking the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment), lied to God, and were struck dead (see Acts 5:1–11). "When Your judgments are in the earth," predicted God's prophet, "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9). Are we learning "righteousness" today? Now, more than ever, we should all closely search our own hearts (see Psalm 139:23, 24), confess every sin, and make sure that we ourselves are not Ten Commandment violators. If we are, no matter what we profess, we also will not "escape the judgment of God" (see Romans 2:3).

During the seventh plague "there was a great earthquake as had not occurred since men were upon the earth ... and the cities of the nations fell. ... Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (see Revelation 16:18–20).

According to prophecy, planet earth will be depopulated, at least for a time (see Jeremiah 4:23–26; Luke 17:26–30; Revelation 19:17, 18). But it's not all bad news. Not at all! Because God hates evil, He will utterly eradicate all wickedness with holy vengeance and terrible judgments; but believe it or not, He has an infinitely loving purpose in mind. When the dust settles, His universe

will be free from sin! All who fully surrender their hearts to Him can enjoy His love forever, and share eternal bliss.

BEYOND GLOOM AND DOOM,  
A NEW CREATION IS COMING  
John the Revelator wrote:

*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. ... And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."*

—Revelation 21:1, 4, 5

Doesn't that sound wonderful? Don't you want to be there? I surely do. Now don't miss this. The biggest question is: How can we who have violated God's law find a place in His "new earth"? There's only one answer. Through a merciful Savior, who loves us so much that He Himself drank the full, deep cup of divine justice against all sin in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross (see Luke 22:39–44; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4). To feebly illustrate, read this touching story:

Years ago a little one-room schoolhouse in the mountains of Virginia housed a group of boys so

rough that no teacher could handle them. A new teacher applied for the job, willing to take the risk. On the first day of school, the new teacher appeared for duty. One big fellow named Tom whispered smugly to a friend: "I won't need any help with this one. I can lick him myself."

"Good morning, boys," the teacher began. The boys shouted back, making fun of the wimpy-looking teacher. "Now, I want a good school, but I need your help. Let's start with a few rules. You tell me what they should be, and I'll write them on the blackboard." "No stealing!" one student yelled. "Be on time!" shouted another.

Finally, ten rules appeared on the blackboard.

"Now," said the teacher, "all laws are worthless without a penalty. What shall we do to someone who breaks the rules?" "Beat him across the back ten times without his coat on!" was the class response. "That's pretty severe, boys. Are you sure you're ready to stand by that?" "I second the motion," one kid screamed out. "All right," said the teacher, "So be it. Class, come to order!"

A few days later, "Big Tom" discovered that his lunch had been stolen. In time, the thief was located—a hungry little boy about ten years old. "Okay. We caught the thief," said the teacher. "He must be punished according to your rule—ten stripes across the back. Jim, come up here!" The little fellow, trembling, walked up slowly with a big coat

fastened up to his neck. "Teacher," he pleaded, "you can lick me as hard as you like, but please, don't make me take my coat off!"

"You must take it off," the teacher replied. "That's the rule!" So, he did. To everyone's amazement, the little boy had no shirt underneath—just a little, bony, crippled body. *How can I whip this kid?* the teacher thought. *But I must maintain respect at this school.* The classroom was as silent as a cemetery.

"How come you aren't wearing a shirt, Jim?" the teacher inquired. "My father died and my mother is poor," the boy replied. "I only own one shirt, and my mother is washing it today. I wore my brother's big coat to stay warm." The teacher, rod in hand, hesitated. *Oh, what should I do?* he thought. Just then Big Tom leaped to his feet and said, "Teacher, if you don't object, I'll take Jim's licking for him."

Thinking a moment, the teacher replied. "Very well. None of our rules say that one person can't be punished for another's crime. Are you all in agreement?" "Yes!" shouted the class. So off came Tom's coat. After five lashes the rod broke! The teacher bowed his head and thought, *How can I finish this awful task?* Then he heard some students sobbing. What did he see? Little Jim had reached up and grabbed Tom with both arms around his neck. "Tom, I'm sorry I stole your lunch, but I was so

hungry. Tom, you'll be my friend until I die for taking my licking for me!"

Dear reader, this story parallels what our Best Friend, Jesus Christ, did for us. Indeed, God says, "I will punish the world for its evil." But oh, what love! In His infinite desire to save our souls from His just judgment, Jesus experienced the exact same punishment we deserve for breaking the Ten Commandments. Amazingly, divine justice against the wicked sins of the whole world *pierced His innocent soul*, so we could live forever through His mercy. An ancient prophecy predicted:

*He was pierced because of our rebellions and crushed because of our crimes.  
He bore the punishment that made us whole; by his wounds we are healed.*

—Isaiah 53:5, C.E.B.

Just as Big Tom took skinny Jim's beating, Jesus "bore" our sins and "punishment" upon a cruel cross. Now we have a chance to repent (turn from sin), be forgiven, and in His strength, step over to the safe side of God's guardrail as we await His soon return.

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12, KJV) is Heaven's description of God's final, transformed-by-grace

people who loyally obey the Ten Commandments during earth's last days because they passionately love their Savior, who died for them.

Which group will you be in—that of commandment-keepers or commandment-breakers? Will you join self-confident sinners doomed to eternal death for rejecting God's guardrail—just like that foolish man who fell over that cliff at the Grand Canyon? Or will you be among the faithful who are prepared for Jesus Christ's soon return with countless holy angels (read Revelation 14:12–14; Matthew 24:30, 31)? That choice—with its eternal consequences—is up *to you*.

As you contemplate this decision, remember, only eight humans boarded Noah's ark.

*Choose Jesus Christ today.*