

GOD'S PROPHECIES

FOR

PLAIN PEOPLE

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Chapter Eleven -

How Will CHRIST Judge the Nations?

"**God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**" Thus spoke the Apostle to the Gentiles in his proclamation of the Gospel in the great Gentile city of Athens (Acts 17:30,31).

This word concerning judgment may include, at least in principle, all judgment. The whole world, embracing all human beings who ever have lived and all who ever shall live, must sooner or later face the Son of GOD in judgment, excepting only those who have taken their place under the sheltering blood of the covenant. These have already passed out of death into life, and shall not come into judgment: "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**" (John 5:24). For the rest, since they have persisted in turning from GOD's offered salvation in grace, nothing remains "**but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries**" (Hebrews 10:27).

What About the Heathen?

If some one asks how this affects the case of the heathen world which has not heard the Gospel, the answer is that "**they are without excuse**" who refuse to worship GOD (Romans 1:20). The JUDGE of all the Earth knows how to do right (Genesis 18:25), and He knows how to measure responsibility. We may therefore - as indeed we must - leave the heathen world to His righteous judgment. Only let us see to it that no part of the heathen world is left in ignorance of the Gospel through any fault of ours. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST has plainly marked out our task, and we are to be His witnesses "**unto the uttermost part of the Earth**" (Acts 1:8). "**He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world**" (I John 2:2), and it is for us to carry the Good News to every creature. As some one has said, "**The question is not so much what GOD will do with the heathen who have not heard the Gospel, as what GOD will do with us if we fail to send the Gospel to the heathen.**" The Son of GOD is "**the Saviour of the world**" (John 4:42), and it is a tragedy that the greater part of the world has never heard of Him. Whose fault is that?

But the LORD JESUS is not only the SAVIOUR: He is also the JUDGE of all the Earth.

"**For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man**" (John 5:22-27).

In a former study in this series we had before us the question [What Occurs at CHRIST's Judgment Seat](#) There we looked upon the Bema scene in Heaven, when the saved ones appear before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST for the judgment of their works, in order to determine their rewards, in addition to the gift of salvation. In the present study we return to Earth again and look upon the Judgment of Living Nations, as described in Matthew 25:31-46.

Let us avoid confusing the Judgment of the Nations with the Judgment of the Lost Dead, described in Revelation 20:11-15. Both of these accounts are often headlined, "The Last and General Judgment," but there is no such things as a "General Judgment" known to Scripture. The Judgment of the Lost Dead follows the Millennium, but the Judgment of the Living Nations preceded the Millennium. A comparison of Matthew 25:31-46 with Revelation 20:11-15 will reveal many contrasts. In the later Judgment there is a resurrection and books are opened; in the earlier Judgment these features are absent. We shall be studying the Judgment of the Lost Dead later on in this series. Let us now look at the passage for our present study, Matthew 25:31-46:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them,

saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:31-46).

When and Why Nations are Judged

1. The Time of the Judgment - This is determined by the words "when" and "then," in the 31st verse. It will be at the time "**when the Son of man shall come in his glory**" (verse 31), at the end of the age. The Seventieth Week of Daniel will by that time have run its course, "**the church which is his body**" will have been "**present with the Lord**" for seven full years, the terrible scenes of the Great Tribulation will have come to an end with the Battle of Armageddon, and the LORD JESUS will have been "**revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels**" (II Thessalonians 1:7). "**then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory**" (verse 31). He has come to "**judge and make war**" (Revelation 19:11). Revealed from Heaven "**in flaming fire**," He comes to take vengeance on them "**that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ**" (II Thessalonians 1:8).

2. The Subjects of the Judgments - The location is indicated in Joel's account of this Judgment of Nations, in the 3rd chapter of his Prophecy:

"I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land" (Joel 3:2).

"Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about" (Joel 3:12).

3. The Subjects of the Judgment - In the Joel passage the same word, *goiim*, is translated "nations" in the second verse and "heathen" twice in the twelfth verse. It is equivalent, in both Joel and Matthew, to "Gentiles." This is distinctly a Judgment of Gentiles. Arraigned before the throne of glory will be those Gentile peoples who are found living upon the Earth at the Second Advent of CHRIST to the Earth. If it be objected that the Valley of Jehoshaphat could not contain all these Gentiles at once, it is sufficient to answer that they may not all be there at once. They must, however, pass in review before that throne, and be divided by the Son of Man upon the throne, "**as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.**"

4. The Tests of the Judgment - The basis of this judgment, by which the Gentiles will be tested, is their treatment of a third group, called by the King, "**my brethren.**" These, as will be seen in Joel's account, are Jews. Doubtless they are those Jews that shall have turned to the LORD after the catching away of the church. At once upon their conversion, this Jewish remnant becomes GOD's evangelizing agency and begins the work of proclaiming the King's approaching advent "**in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory**" (Matthew 24:30). "**And** (at that time) **this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations** (i.e., Gentiles); **and then shall the end come**" (Matthew 24:14). "**I will send those that escape of them unto the nations . . . that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles**" (Isaiah 66:19).

How Are You Treating the Jews?

The KING on the throne identifies Himself with these Jewish evangelizers, His "brethren," His "**kinsmen according to the flesh**" (Romans 9:3, 5). The "sheep" on the right hand are commended for ministering to Him, and the "goats" on the left hand are condemned for failure to do so. The "sheep" have believed the Gospel of the Kingdom and have therefore received and harbored those who preached it to them. The "goats" have rejected the message and have therefore turned from the messengers. Both classes are surprised to learn that in thus dealing with the Jewish remnant they have been dealing with the KING Himself. The same principle was revealed to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus highway. He thought he had been doing GOD service in persecuting the Christians, but he learned that all the time he had been persecuting the LORD JESUS Himself: "**Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**" In all our afflictions He is afflicted.

Turning now again to Joel 3, we read:

"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.

Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:

And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the Lord hath spoken it.

Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I

am strong.

Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.

Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim"
(Joel 3:1-18)

The correspondence between this passage and that of Matthew 25 is very striking. The Gentiles have a long score to settle on account of their treatment of the Jews, and this settlement must be made with the man now sitting at GOD's right hand, in the day "**when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe**" (II Thessalonians 1:10).

5. The Result of the Judgment - This is summed up in a brief sentence (verse 46):

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: and the righteous into life eternal."

The adjective is the same in both clauses of the sentence. The punishment is *aionian*, and the life is *aionian*. Both are *endless*. Endless punishment, but there it stands along with the endless life. Both are *aionian*, that is everlasting, eternal, endless. Let no one trifl with this solemn declaration, "**for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.**"

~ end of chapter 11 ~
