

Judgment of the Nations

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The sermon discusses the judgment of the nations, which is one of seven judgments mentioned in the Scriptures, and how it will determine who among the nations will enter the kingdom.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:31

Topics: "Divine Judgment", "Eschatology"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer delves into the concept of seven distinct judgments described in the Scriptures, contrary to the common belief in a single final judgment. These judgments include the judgment of the cross where Christ bore the righteous judgment for sinners, the believer's judgment for persistent sin, the judgment of Israel at the end of the Great Tribulation, the judgment of believers' works at Christ's return, the judgment of nations, the fallen angels, and the Great White Throne judgment. The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding these various judgments and their significance in God's plan for humanity.

Transcript

While but three judgments are considered particularly in this series, the Bible distinguishes seven in all, which fact is in marked disagreement with the almost universal conception that there is but one final and all-inclusive judgment. The seven judgments described in the Scriptures are:

1. The judgment of the cross wherein Christ as Substitute bore that righteous judgment from God which was due the sinner because of his sins (Joh 5:24; Rom 5:9; Rom 8:1; 2Co 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:26-28; Heb 10:10, Heb 10:14-17; 1Pe 2:24). At that judgment the Substitute was executed and perfect deliverance was secured for all who will believe.
2. Chastisement from the Father upon the believer because of persistent and willful sin (1Co 11:31-32), which judgment may be avoided if in true penitence and confession the believer will judge himself before God.
3. The judgment of the nation Israel at the close of the Great Tribulation and in connection with the Second Coming of Christ. The object of this judgment is to determine those among that nation who will be accounted worthy to enter the covenanted, earthly kingdom (Eze 20:37-38; Mat 25:21).

4. The judgment of the believer's works at the coming of Christ to receive His own (Rom 14:10; 1Co 4:5; 2Co 5:10; Eph 6:8; 2Ti 4:8; Rev 22:12) -- the theme of the last chapter.
5. The judgment of the nations which is the subject of this study.
6. The judgment of the fallen angels (Jud 1:6).
7. The judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15) which is the theme of the next chapter.

Among the world-transforming events which are to occur at the Second Coming of Christ, Israel will be judged first. This is the order which obtains in Matthew, Chapters 24 and 25. It is there stated that at His coming He will gather His elect people -- Israel -- (Mat 24:31) from among the nations (note Deu 30:3-6; Isa 11:11-12; Isa 14:1-3; Isa 60:1-22; Jer 23:6-8; Jer 32:27, Jer 32:38; Jer 33:7-9; Eze 36:16-38; Eze 37:21-25; Mic 4:6-8), and while it is true that all Israel shall be saved (Rom 11:26), it is equally true that He will purge out the "rebels" (Eze 20:37-38), and that only the spiritual among Israel will enter the covenanted, earthly kingdom. Of two grinding at the mill, or two in the field, one shall be taken away in judgment and one shall be left to enter the kingdom glory (Mat 24:40-51). Five virgins will enter the marriage feast, and five will be excluded (Mat 25:1-13). So, likewise, Israel will be judged as to the use of God-given talents, and from one shall be taken even that which he hath, and he shall be cast into outer darkness (Mat 25:14-30).

Following the judgment of Israel, the nations are to be judged by Christ who, accompanied by the holy angels, will have returned to the earth with power and great glory, and who will have been seated on the throne of His glory (Mat 25:31-46). At the present time, Christ is seated on His Father's throne awaiting the appointed time of His return to the earth (Rev 3:21). His own throne (Rev 3:21) is the throne of David (Luk 1:31-33), which is the throne of His glory on the earth.

In the context of Matthew, Chapters 24 and 25, and continuing to 25:31, Christ is seen executing judgment over regathered Israel. Beginning with Mat 25:31, He is seen judging the nations, which judgment is to determine who among the nations shall enter the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Mat 25:34. Note Psa 72:11, Psa 72:17; Psa 86:9; Isa 55:5; Dan 7:13-14; Mic 4:2; Zec 8:22). The test in this judgment will be the treatment the nations will have accorded to Israel, who are here called by the Lord "my brethren." This is not a reference to the Church; that company will have been with the Lord in Heaven and will have returned with Him to reign (Rev 19:7-14) before He sits upon the throne of His glory. The "brethren" are Israel -- His brethren according to the flesh.

While there has been for many centuries a degree of persecution of Israel by the nations, the present world condition in this respect lends little basis for the understanding of the issues that will exist at the end of the Great Tribulation. Among other features, that period is to be characterized by the witness to the nations on the part of a godly remnant among Israel concerning the returning King and His kingdom. The Tribulation period will be characterized also by the persecution of Israel on the part of some of the nations. Because of this fact, that period is termed "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7). At that time, the persecution of Israel will no longer be a passing event in the affairs of the world; the Gentile peoples will have been divided over the national interests of Israel and unprecedented violence will be Israel's portion.

There are two general reasons why the force and meaning of the judgment of the nations is so often misunderstood: (1) Failure in recognizing the world conditions, especially concerning Israel in her relation to the nations, which, according to prophecy, are to be consummated at the end of the Tribulation; and (2)

failure in recognizing the unique place which the chosen people occupy in the love and purpose of God. They are dear to Him as the apple of His eye, and are graven on His hand (Isa 49:16). We read in connection with the judgment which Jehovah will bring on the nations who persecute Israel: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zec 2:8), and, "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deu 32:9-10). To this people Jehovah has said: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer 31:3). He has never asked the nations to persecute Israel, and the Scriptures predict a sore judgment to fall on those nations who do persecute her. The kingdom belongs to Israel, and only the nations who have proven themselves to be kindly disposed to that people are to be permitted to share their earthly glory.

In the Scriptures, the term "sheep" is used of any people who are in covenant with, or in provisional relation of blessing to, Jehovah. The Gentile "sheep" who enter the kingdom on the ground of their merit in relation to Israel are not to be confused with the Christians of this age who enter Heaven on the ground of the finished work of Christ. Nor are those who are termed "goats" and who are dismissed into everlasting fire because of their own sinfulness and their hatred of that people who are graven on the hand of Jehovah to be confused with those of this age who are condemned because of a personal rejection of Christ as Saviour (Joh 3:18). The judgment of the nations, which prepares for the kingdom, is too often confused with the final Great White Throne judgment with which the kingdom ends. The judgment of the nations is distinctly said to be at the Second Coming of Christ. There is no resurrection, the throne of judgment is on the earth, three classes of people are in view, and no books are opened. All of this is in contrast to those conditions which are predicted for the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15). The issues of the judgment of the nations are stupendous: the righteous character of God is declared, a transformed social order is set up in the earth, and the prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," will then be answered.

QUESTIONS

1. Name the seven judgments mentioned in the Scriptures.
2. Describe the judgment of the cross.
3. a. Describe the judgment of the believer which is due to persistent sin.
b. When does this judgment take place?
4. Which judgment will be first in order of those occurring at the Second Coming of Christ?
5. Indicate the passages and parables which describe Israel's judgment.
6. a. Where is Christ now seated?
b. Upon what throne will He reign on the earth?
7. Indicate the passages which describe the judgment of the nations.
8. What evidence can you give that the Church will not be judged among the nations?
9. What will Israel's condition be in the world just before the coming of Christ in power and great glory?

10. a. Give two reasons why it is not usually understood that "my brethren" of Mat 25:40 refers to Israel.
- b. Indicate the Scriptures which declare Jehovah's love and care for Israel.
11. To whom will the earthly kingdom belong?
12. What classes of people in the Scriptures are called "sheep"?
13. In what particulars is the judgment of the nations to be distinguished from the judgment of the Great White Throne?
14. State the major issues in the judgment of the nations.

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