

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 1

Introduction To Divine Judgment

Often, any mention of “the judgment of God” conjures up images of anger, wrath, hellfire, brimstone, plagues, and death. Though these might be examples of God’s judgment, they do not demonstrate the fullness of biblical judgment. The purpose of these lessons is to set forth a solid doctrine and biblical understanding of the judgment of God and to help believers familiarize themselves with the nature of God and the types of judgment the Bible records. This first lesson will provide a very broad overview of the subject. We will dig deeper in the coming lessons.

THE LORD IS THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

The reality that we must quickly come to terms with is simply **the Lord is the Righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8)**. God is not *a* judge. God is *the* judge. He is judgmental. “**The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good**” (Proverbs 15:3). Ultimately, His judgment rewards good but punishes evil. We can’t have one and not the other.

God is also perfect, and He wants us to be like Him. If we are going to be like our God and represent Him in the earth, we must have a biblical understanding of proper, righteous judgment.

KRÍNŌ—NEW TESTAMENT JUDGMENT

Often, people ignorantly believe that the New Testament in general, and Christians in particular, are 100% free from any kind of judgment because of the work of Christ at Calvary. This sentiment fails to understand the nature of divine judgment as revealed in the New Testament. All Greek New Testament judgment begins with the Greek root word **krínō**.

- **Krínō** means *to separate, distinguish, decide between, judge, approve, determine, condemn*.
- **Krínō** is used 114 times in the Greek NT.
- The **krínō** family of 23 cognate words:
 - **akatakritos, anakrino, anakrisis, apokrínomai, autokatakrisis, diakrínō, diakrisis, diakaiokrisia, enkrino, eilikrineia** (meaning, *judged in the pureness of the sun’s light*), **eilikrines, epikrino, katákrima, katakrínō, katákrisis, krima, krisis, kritérion, krités, kritikós, prokrima, sunkrino, hupokrinomai**
- These words are translated: *to judge, approve, determine, condemn, distinguish, pick, choose, estimate, examine, investigate, to search (the scriptures), bring to trial, lead, rule, decision, verdict, justice, court, a decider, to discern accurately and precisely (the Word), to sentence, condemnation, doom, punishment, make a distinction, to separate, to discern, insight, to reckon, to accept, to approve, compare; sincerity, evidence, tribunal, preference, evaluate, class together, to pretend; to answer* (256x—after all, you can’t answer someone without first judging how you will answer.)
- These 23 cognates are used 312 times in the New Testament.

- This does not include any of the 39 synonyms of *krínō* or their cognates.
- Conclusion: sound New Testament doctrine includes more than just loving your neighbor and helping the stranger. There is a LOT of judgment involved.
- Salvation and mercy can only be appreciated in the face of judgment and condemnation.

NOT ALL JUDGMENT IS CONDEMNING

Many of the definitions from the New Testament Greek words for “judgment” are quite positive. These include:

- Approve
- Distinguish
- Pick
- Choose
- Examine
- Make a distinction
- To accept
- Compare
- Evaluate
- Class together

These synonyms and definitions for biblical judgment do not carry a negative connotation. Many of them are actually encouraging (e.g., approve, accept). We should also recognize these types of judgment as part of normal day-to-day activities. To me, these terms even sound necessary for normal scientific purposes. We mustn't fear judgment.

WHAT DOES GOD JUDGE?

The Bible demonstrates that God is impartial in His judgment. He has exacted divine judgment upon everything in creation:

- Angels—**Isaiah 14:12-20; Ezekiel 28:14-18; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6**
- Individuals—**Genesis 4:11; 1 Samuel 2:27-36; 2 Samuel 12:1-15; 2 Kings 20:1-7; Daniel 5:30; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:20; Revelation 2:21-23**
- Families—**Genesis 20:3, 17; Joshua 7:24-25; 1 Samuel 2:34-36; 2 Kings 10:10-11; 2 Chronicles 22:8**
- Churches—**2 Corinthians 12:20-21; 1 Peter 4:17-18; Revelation 2:4-5, 14-16; 3:3-5, 19**
- Cities/Regions—**Genesis 19:24-25; Jonah 1:2, 3:10, 4:11; Matthew 11:21-22; Luke 19:41-44; Revelation 18:2, 10, 21**
- Nations—**Exodus 3:20; Daniel 5:28; Matthew 25:31-34**
- The whole earth—**Genesis 3:17, 6:13; Zechariah 5:3; Luke 21:26; Revelation 21:1**
- The Son—**Psalms 22:1; Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34**

NEW TESTAMENT JUDGMENT

We will see many of these verses again in future lessons, but for now let us look at the picture the New Testament produces concerning judgment:

- Jesus commanded us to judge “righteous judgment” (**John 7:24**).
- Spiritual people judge everything (**1 Corinthians 2:15**).
- We can’t be rewarded without judgment (**1 Corinthians 3:13-15**).
- Paul thought nothing of being judged (**1 Corinthians 4:3**).
- Paul judged the Corinthian fornicator to a death sentence (**1 Corinthians 5:3-5**).
- The church is commanded to judge those within the church (**1 Corinthians 5:12**).
- The saints shall judge the world and angels (**1 Corinthians 6:2**).
- The church is commanded to judge anything that pertains to this life (**1 Corinthians 6:3**).
- Self-judgment can prevent physical weakness, sickness, and premature death (**1 Corinthians 11:28-30**).
- Self-judgment prevents other forms of judgment (**1 Corinthians 11:31**).
- Judgment is the part of the LORD’s chastening designed to perfect and mature us (**1 Corinthians 11:32**).
- Prophecy is designed to convict and judge people (**1 Corinthians 14:24**).
- Love abounds with judgment (**Philippians 1:9**).
- Judgment begins in the Church (**1 Peter 4:17**).
- 9 of these 12 facets came from **1 and 2 Corinthians**.

THE JUDGMENT SPECTRUM

Like so many things in the Kingdom of God, judgment spans a wide spectrum which can flow one of two ways as follows:

Positive Judgment

(Self) Judgment—Correction—Evaluation—Approval—Promotion—Rewards

Negative Judgment

(Self) Judgment—Correction—Rebuke—Resistance—Opposition—Abandonment—Wrath/Vengeance

JUDGMENT DEFINED

The current Western culture demonstrates a strong aversion to nearly any form of judgment, and therefore, rejects any notion of divine biblical judgment. That being said, biblical judgment is a very wide subject with many facets and attributes. First and foremost, we must understand that not all judgment is punitive, condemning, or destructive. As we will see, some judgment is actually corrective, beneficial, and rewarding. Because judgment is part of God’s nature and character, it must also be part of ours.

We will define **divine judgment** as *the authority, right, and requirement of God’s holy character and love to investigate all actions, persons, and assemblies; rewarding what is determined to be righteous but correcting and warning before punishing that which is deemed wicked.*

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 2

Different Types Of Judgment

Remember we are defining **divine judgment** as *the authority, right, and requirement of God's holy character and love to investigate all actions, persons, and assemblies; rewarding what is determined to be righteous but correcting and warning before punishing that which is deemed wicked.*

God is a just God. His judgment is just. **"I know, O LORD, that your judgments are righteous" (Psalm 119:75 NASB).** To understand divine judgment, it helps to understand that, like the natural realm, the spirit realm operates on a cause and effect basis. And because causes differ, so then do the effects. That is to say, not all judgment is the same. But the basic purpose of judgment is the same: remove sin and glorify God, to **"be reformed by me by these things" (Leviticus 26:23a).**

JUDGMENT AS INSPECTION

All divine judgment begins as inspection.

- **The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.**
Proverbs 15:3

It is God inspecting us, our works, and our motives and comparing them to His standard as declared in the Bible. Once we have been inspected, divine judgment moves into its second phase, which we will cover later.

- **...for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.**
1 Chronicles 28:9b
- **And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**
Romans 8:27

Here, the Lord Jesus inspects the hearts of men in order to aid in the Holy Spirit's intercession for the individual. This is a judgment that can save us from a lot of pain and loss.

- **And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.**
Zephaniah 1:12

This example of an inspection-judgment further reveals that the Lord's concern rests in the heart of man. After this inspection, God was going to punish those who had not changed their attitude toward God.

JUDGMENT AS CORRECTION

After divine judgment has accomplished its necessary inspection (of the heart), typically correction will follow. Here, we will group correction together with chastisement, rebuke, and scourging.

- **And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.**
Hebrews 12:5-8

For correction or chastisement to occur, it is obvious that inspection-judgment has already taken place, and something has been found lacking when compared to God's standard. The New Testament commands us to neither despise nor faint at this form of judgment. This correction-judgment actually proves that God claims us as His children.

- **But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.**
1 Corinthians 11:32

Once again, chastisement is equated to God's judgment. The Bible promises us that partaking of correction now will keep us from suffering in the world's judgment.

- **Yet he sent prophets unto them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.**
2 Chronicles 24:19

Often, God uses a prophet or preacher to correct with the intention of turning the situation around by calling to repentance. Sometimes this works. Often it doesn't.

JUDGMENT FOR REMUNERATION

Those that have a judgment-aversion fail to see that before anyone can be honored, paid, rewarded, or awarded they must first be judged. Judgment investigates who is worthy of what. Judgment ensures that individuals get what is just.

- Honors are paid once the recipient has been judged worthy of honor, e.g. war veterans, purple-heart recipients, the first astronaut, etc.
- Paychecks are disbursed based on the number of hours you worked.
- Rewards are only given out when criteria (from the Greek, *kritérion*) are met.
- Olympians are only given the gold medal after their performance has been judged against all the other competitors.

This commonsense premise is also found in the Bible. Every man's work must be judged in order for God's rewards to be justly distributed.

- **After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. ²⁰The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’ ²¹The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’**

Matthew 25:19-21 NLT

The master had an obligation to judge each steward by calling them to give an account. After his inspection, he could decide how to reward them based on their performance and faithfulness. No judgment, no reward.

- **Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.**

1 Corinthians 3:13-14

At the great day of judgment, all of our works will be judged by the fire of God to determine what sort of work it was. We will be rewarded for God-honoring works. No judgment, no reward.

- **Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. ²⁵Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.**

1 Timothy 5:24-25

This passage promises us that eventually all of our behavior will be judged, both sins and good works. Some are judged now, resulting in rewards or punishments; and some will be judged later, resulting in rewards or punishments.

- **And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

Revelation 22:12

Jesus Christ promises to reward His servants based on the merit of their works, whether they be good or evil.

- **But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

Hebrews 11:6

Judgment rewards, not the mediocre seeker, but the *diligent* seeker. This aspect of judgment can be summarized with a simple maxim: no judgment, no reward.

JUDGMENT AS PUNISHMENT

This is probably the form of judgment with which we are the most familiar. There are several different forms of punishment-judgment, ranging from resistance and opposition all the way up to wrath, vengeance, and destruction.

Resistance-Judgment

- **But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.** James 4:6 (cf. 1 Peter 5:5b)

Resistance can be likened to standing in the way of someone. When God resists us, He simply stands in our way and things get a lot harder. Pride causes God to stand in our way.

Opposition-Judgment

- **But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments...
¹⁷And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies...** Leviticus 26:14, 17a
- **And God's anger was kindled because he [Balaam] went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.** Numbers 22:22
- **Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them. ⁶Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute (*harass, pursue*) them.** Psalm 35:5-6
- **For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.** 1 Peter 3:12

There is a substantial hostility increase when moving from resistance to opposition. If God resists you, He simply prevents you from advancing in your purposed direction. This usually results in a lot of frustration and pain. When God's judgment advances to opposition-judgment He will begin to take action against you. This may include sending His angel to persecute you.

Wrath-Judgment

The wrath of God is what most people think of when they think of divine judgment. **Wrath** means *fierce anger*.

- **And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them [Egypt] as stubble.** Exodus 15:7

This verse is taken from *The Song of Moses*, prophesied by Israel's leader after their deliverance from Egypt. It is the first recorded mention of God's wrath. It should come as no surprise that God's fierce anger was manifested against Egypt, given how many miraculous opportunities

He gave them to let Israel go, or just leave them alone. It should also come as no surprise that the second mention of God's wrath is 17 chapters later when God is ready to destroy Israel for their golden calf.

- **And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes (*continually and carefully*), and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: ¹⁶But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16**

We see the same pattern presented here. Israel falls away into sin, but out of His compassion, God sends a messenger to correct, rebuke, and warn His people. But rather than turn from their initial sin, they add to their idolatry, mockery, rejection, and misuse of God's servants. This brought an untreatable wrath upon the nation.

Vengeance-Judgment

Vengeance has a negative connotation today, but the Old Testament concept carries with it the positive implications of justice, lawfulness, and ultimately salvation. We might define it as God's *righteous retaliation for injuries and wrongs*. And lest we get self-righteous, remember vengeance rightfully belongs to God. (See **Deuteronomy 32:35**; **Romans 12:19**; and **Hebrews 10:30**.)

- **To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;** Isaiah 61:2

Vengeance seems to be the most violent form of God's judgment. The final judgment at the coming of the Lord is called the "**day of vengeance of our God**." That will be the day He stomps His enemies to death in the winepress of His wrath (**Revelation 19:15**).

- **But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.** Jeremiah 11:20

Our pattern of heart inspection followed by some course of escalated action is demonstrated here. Jeremiah knew that the men being judged would be found worthy of God's vengeance. He did not pray for these men. He prayed against them.

There is much more to be said about each of these types of wrath. They will all be covered more in future lessons. The key is to allow God to judge and correct you now so that there may be found no reason for any greater form of judgment. Amen.

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 3

Self-Judgment

As you may recall from our first lesson, judgment is a foundational and necessary doctrine of Christianity. However, don't forget that not all judgment is negative or destructive. Judgment is necessary before promotions and rewards can be awarded. Remember, the Bible demonstrates judgment to be a spectrum increasing from positive to negative, from mild self-judgment all the way to rewards and promotions or severe punishment.

Positive Judgment

(Self) Judgment—Correction—Evaluation—Approval—Promotion—Rewards

Negative Judgment

(Self) Judgment—Correction—Rebuke—Resistance—Opposition—Abandonment—Wrath/Vengeance

This lesson is all about self-judgment.

THE MOST FAMOUS OF ALL JUDGMENT SCRIPTURES

For the modern Westerner, any judgment in any form is verboten. Consequently, the modern Christian's favorite Bible verse is no longer **John 3:16**; it's **Matthew 7:1**, "**Judge not, that ye be not judged.**" And it would seem from this single verse Christians should never judge anyone or anything. Ironically, nothing could be further from the truth. This verse actually begins a teaching on how we are to accurately judge ourselves *and* our brother.

- **And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? ⁵Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.**

Matthew 7:3-5

This passage points out the hypocrisy of any judgment if it is not preceded by self-judgment. The Lord asks three questions that actually serve as keys to sound judgment:

1. Why are you looking at your brother's issue but fail to consider yourself first?
2. Why worry about the splinter in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?
3. How can you correct sin in a brother when your sin interferes with your own vision?

Synopsis: Judge yourself first, and you will be able to more accurately judge and help your friend. All sound Christian judgment must begin with self-judgment. So, in reality, the one

verse so frequently used to diffuse any form of critique or righteous interrogation is actually the opening statement for a larger teaching on *how to* more accurately judge.

SELF-JUDGMENT

As covered previously, all judgment must begin with self-judgment. God has given every human being a built-in self-governor called a conscience. The conscience is trained by parents, culture, and discipleship.

- **Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. ¹⁵They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.** Romans 2:14-15 NLT

Our conscience is the first line of defense against catastrophic judgment, though admittedly it is not perfect. Our conscience must continuously be programmed and trained by the Word of God. Otherwise our conscience can become calloused, seared, or cold. Our conscience judges our every action and either accuses the behavior or excuses it.

A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART

David was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). His hunger to please God and to know God caused the favor and promotion of the Lord to rest upon him. David practiced self-judgment.

- **Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide. ²Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins (emotions) and my heart.** Psalm 26:1-2

David began this song of worship by invoking the judgment of God upon himself (what a way to start a worship song). In fact, he doesn't just invoke judgment once, he actually invokes it four times with four different words: judge, examine, prove, and try. This is a wonderful example of, and biblical pattern for, self-judgment:

- Lord, judge me.
- Lord, examine (*scrutinize*) me.
- Lord, prove (*test, assay, put to the proof*) me.
- Lord, try (*smelt, refine*) my emotions and heart.

David continues **Psalm 26** by confidently reminding the Lord that he would, in fact, be found innocently walking in God's truth and fleeing evil. David did not fear the judgment of God. (See also **Psalm 7:8; 35:24; 43:1.**)

- **Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.** Psalm 139:23-24

There were other times when David was not as sure about his integrity. This psalm reveals such an instance. There will also be times when we're unsure of our behavior, motives, or decisions. In those situations, it is wise to ask God to search us and reveal any wicked thing He may find. This is self-judgment and it is also taught in the New Testament.

SELF-JUDGMENT AND COMMUNION

In **1 Corinthians 11**, Paul taught about the significance and sacredness of communion.

- **When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. ²¹For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. ²²What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!**

1 Corinthians 11:20-22 NLT

The reason for Paul's teaching on communion stems from the Corinthian church's disingenuous heart and attitude towards the sacred rite. The first century Church's communion was more like what we would call a potluck dinner, also called a "**feast of charity**" in **Jude 12**. This was a full meal designed to remember the Lord's Last Supper. Unfortunately, the Corinthian believers turned this sacred meal into a (to quote Paul), "gluttonous, drunken, poor-shaming disgrace," something Paul refused to praise. It literally left him speechless.

Paul had to reteach communion to the Corinthian church.

- **For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread ²⁴and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me." ²⁵In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." ²⁶For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.**

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NLT

Paul reintroduced the entire premise and importance to the Corinthian church (and pastor) in this section of his epistle. Simply put, communion is practiced to announce the Lord's death until He returns again. Paul continued his passage with warnings and consequences:

- **So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily [in a hurry, not waiting on the church, or by getting drunk on the wine] is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. ²⁹For if you eat this bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. ³⁰That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.**

1 Corinthians 11:27-30 NLT

Evidently self-judgment is so important it must be practiced even in communion. For the Corinthians, self-judgment before their weekly or monthly Love Feast would have exposed the improper motives of selfishness, gluttony, drunkenness, and pride. Without self-judgment weakness, sickness, and premature death were (and still are) resultant.

- **For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.**

1 Corinthians 11:31

Like the old adage “a stitch in time saves nine,” daily self-judgment works wonders in preventing any greater calamitous judgment from taking place. Paul’s promise to the carnal Corinthian church was, “judge yourself and you can avoid judgment.”

- **But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.**

1 Corinthians 11:32

However, should we fail to judge ourselves and catch any underlying attitude or motive, we can rest assured that God will faithfully step in and chasten us. This too is a form of judgment that saves us from greater levels of divine judgment.

SELF-JUDGMENT AND FAITH

Besides communion, Paul called the Corinthian believers to self-judgment in the matter of their basic faith.

- **Examine (assay) yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove (*found genuine after examination*) your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates (*castaways*)?**

2 Corinthians 13:5

One of the very last things Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church was another exhortation to self-examine or self-judge. This time it was in regard to being in the Christian faith. That kind of statement has many implications: 1) you can know that you’re saved, 2) you can determine this through simple metallurgical self-examination, 3) we can and must prove ourselves.

In review, self-examination allows us to:

1. Improve our own life so we can better help others.
2. Become a man or woman after God’s own heart (like David).
3. Avoid weakness, sickness, and premature death.
4. Avoid worse judgments than No. 3.
5. Prove that we are true Christians indwelt by Jesus Christ!

Let us get to judging . . . ourselves!!

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 4

Correction, Rebuke, And Resistance

We have been studying divine judgment using a spectral model. We have seen that all judgment should begin with self-judgment. When that fails, the Bible teaches us to expect correction and even a rebuke from our loving God. But fear not! Everyone needs correction and everyone gets rebuked from time to time. All of this is designed by God to keep sin out of our life and to prevent us from earning His resistance. Remember, all judgment has the same basic goal—to prevent or remove sin.

CORRECTION

Correction is a form of biblical judgment. Correction implies judgment has taken place, a fault, error, or inaccuracy was found, and a realignment, adjustment, or rectification was delivered. Correction is wonderful and welcomed . . . when you are humble. Humble people don't want to be wrong or inaccurate. Only the arrogant are offended at correction.

- **Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:** **Job 5:17**

One of the Hebrew words for “correction” is *mûwçâr*. With 50 uses, the greatest usage is found in Proverbs. Much wisdom can be obtained through correction.

- **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction (*correction*).** **Proverbs 1:7**
- **My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction. ¹²For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.** **Proverbs 3:11-12**
- **Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.** **Proverbs 15:10**

The further away from God you get, the more grievous you will find correction to be. How grievous do you find correction today? This might be indicative of how far from God you are. Those close to God love His correction.

- **O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return (*repent*).** **Jeremiah 5:3**

Refusing correction results in a hardening of the heart. One of the reasons we often refuse correction (pride aside) is because we don't want to change our ways.

- **But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.**
Jeremiah 7:28

For correction to be effective when given, it must be received. Only we can control whether it is received or not. And the source should be irrelevant. When correction is rejected, truth begins to perish and will eventually be cut off.

Other **correction** (often translated as “**instruction**”) scriptures: **Proverbs 1:2-3, 7; 3:11; 4:1, 13; 5:23; 8:10, 33; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1, 18, 24; 15:5, 10, 32-33; 19:20, 27; 22:15; 23:12-13, 23; 24:32; Jeremiah 2:30; 17:23; Zephaniah 3:2, 7**

GOD USES OTHERS TO CORRECT US

Lest we think we can get off the hook easily, remember, God uses people to correct us, especially authority figures such as parents, bosses, church leaders, etc.

Father

- **My son, hear the instruction (correction) of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother;**
Proverbs 1:8

Dad and Mom were the first people to ever correct us. It kept us alive and made us smart.

Boss

- **Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in every respect.**
Titus 2:9-10 NASB95

Implicit in the admonition to “not argue” is the presence of correction. Most employees only become combative when confronted with correction.

Minister

- **Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcomed or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.**
2 Timothy 4:2 AMPC

One of the pastor’s central roles is to rebuke, correct, warn, urge, and encourage.

REBUKE/REPROOF

For simplicity sake I will lump rebuke and reproof together. They are synonymous for the most part. A rebuke can be viewed as a sharp or strong correction. A reproof is generally a much softer censure. Both are only necessary if normal correction is ignored or rejected. If you won't learn from simple correction, a rebuke may be just what the situation calls for.

- **And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.** John 16:8
- **Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out of my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.** Proverbs 1:23
- **They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. ³¹Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.** Proverbs 1:30-31
- **One who listens to life-giving rebukes will be at home among the wise.** Proverbs 15:31 CSB
- **A rebuke cuts into a perceptive person more than a hundred lashes into a fool.** Proverbs 17:10 CSB
- **The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.** Proverbs 29:15 NASB
- **They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.** Amos 5:10

Public rebuke and upright speech are synonymous. Both are hated by the prideful and the sinful. Both are loved by the humble and the righteous.

Other *rebuke/reprove* scriptures: Proverbs 1:25; 5:12; 9:8; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5, 10; 17:10; 19:25; 29:15; Isaiah 11:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:16

GOD USES OTHERS TO REBUKE AND REPROVE US

Lest we think we can easily get off the hook, God also uses people to rebuke us. Especially authority figures such as parents, bosses, church leaders, etc.

Father

- **Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us (*disciplined*), and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days chastened (*reproved*) us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.** Hebrews 12:9-10 NKJV

We can all testify that our fathers have rebuked and chastened us. Godly fathers do so in line with the Word of God. Even pagan dads will rebuke for lying and stealing.

Boss

- **If your boss is angry at you, don't quit! A quiet spirit can overcome even great mistakes.** **Ecclesiastes 10:4 NLT**

If your boss is angry at you, what did you do? You know a rebuke could be right around the corner. Hold your peace and yield. It will pacify great offenses.

Minister

- **These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.** **Titus 2:15**

Pastors are authorized to rebuke. It's one of our tools for building the Kingdom of God.

So far, we have seen that God uses correction and rebuke to protect us from sin and error. However, should we ignore the correction, earn a rebuke, and then resist the rebuke, God has no choice but to begin imposing divine resistance.

RESISTANCE

The purpose of divine resistance is to bring us safely back from sin. By resisting us, God deprives us of His grace and help. The resulting frustration, calamity, and chaos is intended to draw us back to the goodness of God.

- **... not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?** **Romans 2:4b**

God's resistance is divine judgment. It is God withholding His goodness (not His mercy) from us. It is cause for much frustration, angst, anxiety, exhaustion, and breakdown. God intends for the believer being resisted to recognize that they have lost the grace and favor of God and that they would say in their heart, like the prodigal, "I will arise and go back to my father's house." Why? Because it is so much better back there.

- **But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.** **James 4:6 (cf. 1 Peter 5:5b)**

Resistance can be likened to standing in the way of someone. When God resists us, He simply stands in our way and things get a lot harder. Pride causes God to stand in our way. This is very similar to Balaam and his donkey being blocked by the angel of the Lord.

- **The angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse (*reckless, rash*) before me:** **Numbers 22:32**

The angel of the Lord admits that his assignment was to go before Balaam and resist him. Why? Because of his rash pride. We can literally see the type of frustration and break-downs that being resisted by God produces:

- Balaam's once-faithful donkey suddenly becomes stubborn. This is symbolic of the resisted life suddenly becoming more difficult than usual.
- He has to whip the donkey to get obedience out of her, something he never had to do before. This is symbolic of things in life beginning to require way more work than usual.
- Balaam's foot gets crushed when the donkey steps to the side. This is symbolic of personal injury and loss.
- Finally, the donkey just plops right down and goes nowhere. This is symbolic of total breakdowns in momentum and favor.
- Blinded by his frustration, Balaam beats the donkey and argues with her—and sees nothing bizarre about it. This is symbolic of the typical situation we find ourselves in when God is implementing resistance-judgment: frustrated, beating on and yelling at things to make them work, rather than simply humbling ourselves and asking God for help.
- The moment Balaam repented, the donkey arose, and God granted him permission to carry on.
- Had Balaam not repented, the angel warned, **“I would [surely] have killed you by now, and let [the donkey] live” (Numbers 22:33 CSB).**

GOD USES OTHERS TO RESIST US

Lest we think we can easily get off the hook, God also uses people to resist us. Especially authority figures such as parents, bosses, church leaders, etc.

- We avoid and turn away divisive believers (**Romans 16:17**).
- Paul resisted and withstood Peter after he had withdrawn from the Gentiles out of fear of the Jews (**Galatians 2:11-13**).
- **And have no fellowship with [resist] the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.** **Ephesians 5:11**
 - We don't just resist dirty believers; we are called to rebuke them for their chosen lifestyle in hopes of restoring them.
- **Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.** **2 Thessalonians 3:6 NASB**
 - Even the brethren are to avoid and keep away from those who refuse to repent.

Other *resist* scriptures: **Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:21; Titus 3:10**

May we judge ourselves, happily seek correction, receive chastisement like a soldier, and never know the resisting power of God. Amen!

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 5

Active Judgment

We previously viewed divine judgment in terms of a spectral concept comparing positive versus negative judgment, with positive judgment resulting in rewards and promotion, and negative judgment ending in abandonment, wrath, and destruction. We also determined that all such adjudication initially begins with self-judgment. Successful self-judgment will result in rewards, while failed self-judgment ends in some form of punishment.

Positive Judgment

(Self) Judgment—Correction—Evaluation—Approval—Promotion—Rewards

Negative Judgment

(Self) Judgment—Correction—Rebuke—Resistance—Opposition—Abandonment—Wrath/Vengeance

Let us now add to our working model of divine judgment the concepts of *active judgment* and *passive judgment*. Passive judgment will be discussed in Lesson 6.

ACTIVE JUDGMENT

Remember, the purpose of all judgment is to eliminate sin and glorify God. There comes a time when sin has grown so great and egregious to God that it must be stomped out. We will define **active judgment** as *the wrath of God being kindled against a person or people in an act of demotion, abandonment, or destruction*.

Active judgment is the manifestation of God as ***Jehovah-Makkâh—I am the Lord Who Smites***. Active judgment is God being proactive against sin in order to silence it. God judges sin to silence it and to remove the stench of it from His nostrils.

- **I will go down now [to Sodom and Gomorrah], and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not I will know.**
Genesis 18:21

The spiritual tumult of Sodom's sin was so loud it was heard in heaven. The Lord came down to inspect and see if it was as bad as He was hearing. It was. That noise was about to be silenced.

- **Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. 'Behold, it is written before Me, I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will even repay into their bosom,'**
Isaiah 65:5-6 NASB

God is referring here to people He calls rebellious, provocative, idolatrous, and lawbreakers. These are the ones who think they are too holy. God described their sin as smoke in His nostrils. He was about to put their fire out.

- **Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these [the four spirits of the heavens—with horse spirits] that go forth toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country. Zechariah 6:8**

Evidently, the four spirits of the heavens, with their divine chariots pulled by spirit horses, patrol the earth. In Zechariah's day, the spirits that went into the north country "**appeased [God's] wrath in that land**" (NASB). Whatever was going on up there stopped!

Active judgment tends to be a one-and-done event like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, or the deaths of King Herod or Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of Acts. This is in contrast to the concept of *passive judgment*, which is not a demonstration of God's aggression against sin, but rather, God's departure from the sinful party. Active judgment has several of the following components:

1. **Forewarning**—It would be unjust of God not to warn before totally destroying a person or people. He is, after all, a God of longsuffering, and He is always mercifully calling mankind to repentance.
2. **Opportunity for Repentance**—Many times a season of repentance will be offered in an effort to find mercy and avoid active judgment ("... **mercy rejoiceth against judgment**" James 2:13b).
3. **As Answer to Righteous Prayer**—There are times when God's divine judgment is poured out upon the wicked in answer to His people's prayers. The Bible presents several such prayers. They are called prayers of imprecation (meaning, *to invoke or call down curses*). The destruction of Egypt was in response to Israel's enslaved cry. David was a master of imprecatory prayer. (See **Psalms 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 28, 31, 35, 40, 41, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 63, 64, 68, 69, 70, 71, 79, 83, 94, 104, 109, 119, 129, 137, 139, 140, and 141.**) Jesus declared very plainly that God would avenge the elect in response to their prayers (**Luke 18:6-8**). Paul invoked the judgment of God upon Alexander the coppersmith for the harm done (**2 Timothy 4:14-15**).
4. **Decisive Action**—After a forewarning and a window for repentance, in order for active judgment to be active, the actual judgment is generally very definitive, that is, there is no room for doubt that God's wrath is at work, e.g. Adam and Eve's expulsion, Noah's flood, Sodom's destruction, etc.
 - Active judgment isn't necessarily fatal, but it is very decisive, definite, and indisputable. In a word, it is life-altering. Examples of non-lethal active judgment include Miriam, King Uzziah, and Gehazi becoming leprous, Elymas the sorcerer being struck blind, or the Ephesian Church having their lamp taken away from them.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVE JUDGMENT

Studying examples of the active judgment of God will help us to know His character and nature much better. It has been suggested by some that God no longer judges nations, cities, people, or even churches. As proof, they suggest that much of the demonstrable judgments of God

recorded in the Bible were in relation to His covenant with Israel, and since we are the Church, those kinds of divine movements are no longer active toward the church or the nations of the earth. This is, of course, false. Studying active judgment and the patterns presented thereby will help us to understand the God who changes not.

1. **Original Sin**—Adam and Eve were forewarned. They rebelled and they, Satan, and the Earth were all cursed in one swift declaration. Adam and Eve were also expelled from the Garden of Eden. Here we see two of our criteria: forewarning and decisive (non-lethal) action against sin.
2. **Noah's Flood**—The sins of man's heart grieved God. Noah was commissioned to build the Ark. The 120-year building project offered plenty of time for repentance as Noah preached righteousness and warned of the coming judgment. Ultimately, the flood took away all the wicked in their sin. Here we see three of our criteria: forewarning (Noah's preaching), a season of repentance (120 years), and decisive action against sin (the flood).
3. **Sodom and Gomorrah**—The king of Sodom was present at the communion service between Abraham and Melchizedek. Why he failed to take that message back to Sodom is a great mystery. Lot was known as a just man, yet his testimony fell upon hard hearts. Even Abraham interceded face to face for mercy from the Lord. Unfortunately, nothing worked so active judgment fell. Here we see three of our criteria: forewarning (Lot's testimony, Melchizedek's communion service and blessing), a window for repentance (opened through intercession), and decisive action (fire and brimstone).
4. **The Ten Plagues of Egypt**—The famous ten plagues of Egypt are perfect examples of active judgment. They served as warnings and catalysts for repentance as there was a delay and escalation between each plague. They began with disgusting inconveniences (frogs and flies) and ramped up to destruction and death (hail, locusts, death of livestock and firstborn). Here we see all four of our criteria at play: forewarning (Moses predicted each one), a window for repentance (let my people go or it will get worse), an answer to prayer ("I have heard their cry"), and decisive action (10 escalating plagues and the Red Sea). There was no doubt that this was the hand of God.
5. **The Death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram**—Little did these men know that their plot to overthrow Moses and Aaron would end in a bizarre death. At first, Moses begged them to repent, but after the Lord declared His severe displeasure, Moses pronounced their death sentence. Here we see all four of our criteria demonstrated: forewarning, opportunity to repent, an answer to prayer (Moses declared their judgment before it happened), and decisive action.
6. **David's Death Sentence**—When God rebuked David for his adultery and the murder of Uriah, He proclaimed many judgments against him that mirrored his atrocities (2 Samuel 12:15):
 - Because you killed Uriah with the sword, the sword will never leave your house.
 - Because you attacked another man's household, your household will rise up against you.
 - Because you slept with your neighbor's wife, your neighbor will sleep with your wives.

- Because you did all of this secretly, I will do all of this openly, before all of Israel, and under the sun.

Although David quickly repented and avoided death (**1 Samuel 12:13**), the son of his adultery did not escape death. Here we see three of our criteria: forewarning (in the Law), opportunity for repentance (every step of the way in his scheme and during Nathan's parable), and decisive action (David completely reaped everything he had sown). This judgment greatly humbled him and caused him to return to the God he had neglected.

7. **Jesus' Crucifixion**—The Lord's crucifixion is the ultimate example of active judgment. Jesus Christ became sin for us (**2 Corinthians 5:21**), was cursed for us because of sin (**Galatians 3:13**), and was stricken, smitten, afflicted, and punished by God for that sin, but all of it was for us (**Isaiah 53:4-6**)!! Jesus was judged for our sin. In Christ's suffering and atonement, we see three of our criteria: forewarning (sin must be punished and the Redeemer would be punished for us), an answer to prayer (all before Christ prayed for His coming), and decisive action (He was crucified, buried, and resurrected again).
8. **The New Testament Cases**—Lest we should think that the Cross of Calvary eliminated active judgment, let us be reminded of the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, the blinding of Elymas the sorcerer, the death of King Herod, the delivering to satan of Hymenaeus, Alexander, and the Corinthians adulterer, and the entire book of Revelation.

This list could easily be much longer. The purpose is to present the concept of the swift, decisive, active judgment of God. Yes, He is longsuffering, but He is not forever suffering. As **Psalm 2:12** (NASB) exhorts:

- **Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!**

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 6

Passive Judgment

Part 1: Hedges Of Protection

In previous lessons, we have studied positive judgment, negative judgment, and active judgment. We defined **active judgment** as *the wrath of God being kindled against a person or people in an act of demotion, abandonment, or destruction*. In this lesson, we will look at the concept of **passive judgment**.

PASSIVE JUDGMENT

We will define **passive judgment** as *the calamity, chaos, frustration, and destruction that befalls a person or people when God's defense is removed from them*. This isn't the active, violent hand of God against a person or people, but rather, a ramping up of the chaos that rushes in to fill the void left when God withdraws His goodness, favor, and defense. If you've ever fallen out of favor and observed life begin to deteriorate on all fronts, it is possible you were experiencing passive judgment.

FOXES AND HEDGES

The Bible presents the concept of passive judgment in terms of "hedges of protection" or "walls of defense." Any calamity able to penetrate those defenses is referred to as a "fox." This is part of the larger allegory of God's people (be they Israel or the Church), being His comely vineyard, planted and protected by God with a wall of protection.

- Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: ²And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with a choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. ³And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. ⁴What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? ⁵And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: ⁶And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns. ⁷For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.
Isaiah 5:1-7
- You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹You cleared the ground before it, And it took deep root and filled the land . . . ¹²Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass that way pick its fruit?
Psalm 80:8-9, 12 NASB

- **Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. ⁴¹All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbors.**
Psalm 89:40-41

These three passages confirm that God's people are represented by a vineyard and that the vineyard's hedge or wall is God's divine protection. Should that wall be removed, what befalls the vineyard is described as being "eaten up," "trodden down," "overgrown with briars and thorns," "picked fruit," and "spoiling." Another sign that God has removed the wall is His refusal to further prune the vine or weed the soil. This is a picture of horticultural neglect.

SATAN CAN SEE HEDGES

Lest anyone want to argue that hedges strictly apply to Israel as God's covenant people, there is an especially interesting reference to God's hedge of protection in Job. Job pre-dates the existence of Israel as a nation by hundreds of years.

- **Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? ¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. ¹¹But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. ¹²And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.**
Job 1:9-12

It is evident from this text that satan can see divine hedges and that they hinder his ability to attack and harass God's people, but should those hedges be compromised, as they were in the case of Job, satan is able to steal, kill, and destroy. Satan noticed that there was a hedge around three things: 1) Job, 2) his household or family, and 3) his substance. Satan only made one wrong observation. He said Job served God only because God had made a hedge for him. The truth is Job had a hedge because he served God. Once this hedge was removed, satan had access to everything behind it. At first, it was access only to Job's family and substance. Then it was Job himself. These hedges had to come down before satan could have access. Satan used people, nature, and sickness against Job, revealing that all three can be harnessed by demonic power.

NATIONAL HEDGES

Lest anyone want to argue that hedges strictly apply to Israel as God's covenant people, there is an interesting reference to Canaan's national protection in **Numbers**. How could it be that Canaan, filled with the premier pagans of the day, had a supernatural defense? Consider the exhortation of Joshua and Caleb when they attempted to encourage Israel:

- **"If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into the land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."**
Numbers 14:8-9 NASB

These fearless men of faith recognized that the inhabitants of Canaan had lost their hedge. This would have permitted anyone to conquer them. Joshua and Caleb recognized that between Canaan's defenses being gone and God being with Israel, there was absolutely nothing to fear and no possible way to lose. They couldn't fail. This observation was a fulfillment of God's declaration to Abraham over 400 years prior:

- **But in the fourth generation they [Israel] shall come hither [Canaan] again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. Genesis 15:16**

We see here the allusion to this same spiritual principle: sin removes protection. Apparently, it was going to take the Amorites (the most prominent people of Canaan; both Amorite and Canaanite are interchangeable terms) a few hundred years of sin to forfeit their national protection. There appears to have been a spiritually legal claim to Canaan that could only be nullified through the "fullness of iniquity."

MAKING UP THE HEDGE—The Purpose of Preaching and Intercessory Prayer

Prophecy from captivity, Ezekiel often looks back at the failures that led to Israel's judgment. More insights concerning spiritual hedges are discussed as Ezekiel reveals that Israel's broken hedges should have been repaired by the prophets preaching against the national sins. Instead, the prophets falsely declared everything was okay when it was clearly not.

- **O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. ⁵Ye have not gone up into the gaps [in the hedges], neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD . . . ¹⁰Because, even they [the corrupt prophets] have seduced (led astray) my people, saying Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a (slight) wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: Ezekiel 13:4-5, 10**

Instead of being likened unto watchmen that protect God's heritage, Israel's prophets are called foxes—the greatest of all vineyard nemeses. Hedges are opened by sin, but they can be repaired by preaching against those sins. Israel's prophets had "**strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life**" (Ezekiel 13:22b). Because the hedge was broken down, Israel could not stand in the day of battle. This was a passive judgment. (Also see **Joshua 7** and the failed battle at Ai.)

It is further evinced from Ezekiel's famous passage on intercessory prayer that spiritual hedges 1) keep judgment and destruction at bay, 2) are broken down through sin, and 3) can be closed through prayer and preaching. After a long list of sin that includes conspiracy, theft, murder, dirty prophets, dirty priests, dirty princes, dirty people, profanity, blasphemy, witchcraft, and oppression, God revealed that Israel had a massive gap and destruction was about to march right through it:

- **And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. ³¹Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 22:30-31**

Because the hedge was broken down, God's indignation and wrath came upon Israel by means of Israel's enemies.

ISRAEL'S FINAL HEDGE BROKEN

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus approached Jerusalem and wept over it. He prophesied the great city's demise:

- **Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. ⁴³For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, ⁴⁴And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.**
Luke 19:42-44

It would appear that Jerusalem had forfeited her national and civic hedge. In less than 40 years from this proclamation, Jerusalem would be surrounded by the armies of Rome, not the protection of God. The former is only possible if the latter has been compromised.

REVIEW

Let us review the nature of divine hedges:

- Hedges are divine walls of supernatural protection. They allow for peace, provision, prosperity, and normalcy.
- They are established around nations, tribes, cities, families, and individuals.
- They are maintained through fear, righteousness, and obedience to God Almighty.
- They hinder satanic attacks that manifest as both natural and supernatural events.
- They are broken down because of rebellion and perversion.
- A broken hedge permits:
 - Your life to be eaten up.
 - Your life to be trodden down.
 - Your life to lack pruning and weeding.
 - Your life to be overgrown with briars and thorns.
 - Your fruit to be picked by strangers.
 - Your life to be spoiled.
 - Your substance to be attacked.
 - Your family to be harmed.
- Hedges can only be repaired through intercession and/or repentance.
- Repentance is brought about by means of confrontational preaching and rebuking.

May we be ever mindful of the protective hedges God has built around us and may we be diligent to fearfully serve God and maintain those defenses! Amen.

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 7

Passive Judgment

Part 2: Blessing And Cursing

We have defined **passive judgment** as *the calamity, chaos, frustration, and destruction that befalls a person or people when God's defense is removed from them*. Calamitous passive judgment is only possible when the hedge of divine protection surrounding a person, family, or assembly is compromised allowing for chaos and harm to rush in.

Another term for passive judgment is “the curse.” A curse is any event or object contrary to the provision of God guaranteed by His covenant. A **covenant** is *a solemn agreement between two individuals*. Biblically speaking, God's covenant with man contains many conditional promises. Blessings are promised for those who keep the covenant while curses are promised to those who break the covenant. Technically, both blessings and curses are promises from God. They are part of any covenant because covenants have reward policies and cancellation penalties.

- **Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.** **Deuteronomy 11:26-28**

Under the Old Testament, passive judgment would naturally occur when someone broke God's covenant. When a covenant with God is broken, the associated hedge of protection is also broken, and a curse is permitted to enter. One need never fear the curse as long as they keep their terms of the covenant.

- **The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.** **Proverbs 3:33**

This proverb perfectly summarizes God's covenant with mankind: blessings for the righteous, but curses for the wicked.

- **As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.** **Proverbs 26:2**
- **Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse will not land on its intended victim.** **Proverbs 26:2 NLT**

Proverbs confirms that the curse doesn't just randomly or unjustly fall upon the righteous. As the New Living Translation reveals, curses are deserved. This proverb also seems to confirm the existence of a protective hedge.

EXAMPLES OF PASSIVE JUDGMENT

Leviticus 26 and **Deuteronomy 28** list both the blessings and the curses of the Mosaic Covenant. Israel spent approximately two years at Mt. Sinai, receiving the Law of Moses and learning how to walk in it. The book of Leviticus chronicles the year spent at the base of the mountain and the new laws given. **Leviticus 26** records the blessings of obedience and the curse of disobedience (also recorded in **Deuteronomy 28**). It is in these curses that we can see passive judgment as part of God's covenants.

When God turns His back upon a person or people and no longer favors them, chaos begins to unfold in their life. Consider the promises of **Leviticus 26:14-46** as compared to the expanded list of the same promises in **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**:

LEVITICUS 26 (32 verses)	DEUTERONOMY 28 (53 verses)	America's Testimony
Terror, consumption, sorrow of heart (v.16)	Madness, astonishment of heart (v. 28, 65)	<i>Depression, anxiety, mental illness (30% of pop.)</i>
Fevers that will waste your eyes (v.16)	Blindness (v.28, 65)	<i>Diabetes</i>
Your enemies will consume your agriculture (wealth) (v.16)	He shall eat the fruit of thy cattle and land, leaving you nothing (v. 33, 51)	<i>Trade wars, shrinking GDP, national debt at \$26 Trillion, unemployment, etc.</i>
Your enemies will kill you (v. 17)	Smitten of your enemies (v. 25)	
Those that hate you will rule you (v.17)	Children given to another people (v. 32), you shall serve your enemies (v. 48)	<i>Progressive movements to eliminate parental influence</i>
You will flee for no reason (v.17, 36)	Flee seven ways (v.25)	
The pride of your strength will be broken (v.19)	Only oppressed and crushed always, and mad for the sight of your eyes (v. 33-34)	<i>American exceptionalism has been declining for decades</i>
The heavens will be iron and the earth brass (v.19)	The heavens will be brass and the earth iron (v. 23)	
Your farming will be unproductive (v. 20)	No rain; locust and worms shall consume crops, olives shall fail (v. 24, 38-40, 42)	
Wild beasts will kill your children and cattle (v.22)		
Your highways will be desolate (v.22)		<i>COVID-19 emptied cities for months</i>
The sword (violence) will come upon you (v.25)	Smitten by the sword (v. 22)	<i>Inner-city violence, domestic violence</i>

LEVITICUS 26 (32 verses)	DEUTERONOMY 28 (53 verses)	America's Testimony
You will fall into the hands of your enemies (v.25)	Smitten by your enemies (v. 25, 48-52, 64-67)	<i>Terrorism on domestic soil</i>
Your food supply will be broken (v.26)	Blight, heat, drought, and strange nations will eat your food (v. 22, 33, 51)	<i>COVID-19</i>
Your food will be rationed, always hungry (v.26)	You will be besieged (v. 52)	<i>COVID-19</i>
You will consume your children (v.29)	Parents, even the delicate woman will eat their children (v. 53-57)	<i>America aborts 4,000 babies a day.</i>
	Cursed in the city (v.16)	
	Cursed in the field (v.16)	
	Your basket will be cursed (v.17)	
	Your kneading trough will be cursed (v.17)	
	The fruit of your body will be cursed (v.18)	
	The fruit of your land will be cursed (v.18)	
	Your herds will be cursed (v.18)	
	Your flocks will be cursed (v.18)	
	You'll be cursed coming in (v.19)	
	You'll be cursed going out (v.19)	
	You will experience cursing, confusion, and rebuke in everything (v.20)	
	Pestilence will cleave to you (v.21)	
	Wasting disease, fever, inflammation (v.22)	
	Heat, drought, blight, mildew (v.22)	
	The boils of Egypt, tumors, and incurable sores (v.27)	
	Unsuccessful in everything (v.29)	
	Rape of loved ones (v.30)	

LEVITICUS 26 (32 verses)	DEUTERONOMY 28 (53 verses)	America's Testimony
	Oppressed, robbed, without help (v. 29)	
	Robbery and theft of personal wealth (v.30)	
	Your livestock will be forcibly taken from you (v.31)	
	Your children will be enslaved (v.32, 41)	<i>Porn, video games, obesity, mental illness, etc.</i>
	Boils on your legs and knees (v. 35)	<i>Diabetes</i>
	You will be despised among nations (v.37)	<i>America's reputation isn't as sterling as it once was</i>
	Foreigners will rise above you (v.43)	<i>Immigrants have the highest per capital income</i>
	Foreigners will lend to you (v.44)	
	Fearful plagues, prolonged disasters, lingering illnesses (v.59)	
	The disease you fear most will come upon you (v.60)	<i>Fear is the flavor of our day.</i>
	Every kind of sickness and disease will come upon you (v.61)	<i>Most advanced medicine in the world, one of the sickest populations</i>
Desolation (v.31)	Your population will decrease (v.62)	<i>Birthrate decreasing</i>
Scattered among the heathen (v.33)	You will be uprooted out of your country (v.63)	
Faintness of heart (v.36)	You will find no ease, no rest, just anxiety, broken and despairing hearts (v. 65)	<i>30% mental illness</i>
	You will be given no assurance of life (v.66)	<i>Americans are plagued by hopelessness</i>

These are God-promised events that would rush into Israel once their national hedge was compromised. Leviticus promised an escalation of calamity four times, “**I will punish you seven times more . . .**” (**Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28**). Curse-escalation is further confirmed in **Deuteronomy 28** when the curses culminated with invasion, slavery, and national dispersion. In essence, the larger the hole in the hedge grows, the worse life will get. All of this is designed to move the believer back into right standing with God through repentance.

- **When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.** Psalm 78:34
- **When he sent death on them, then they made search for him; turning to him and looking for him with care;** Psalm 78:34 BBE

And as confirmation that part of passive judgment is God's abandonment of sinful man Hosea declared:

- **They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them . . . ¹⁵I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.** Hosea 5:6, 15
- **They will go, with their flocks and their herds, in search of the Lord, but they will not see him; he has taken himself out of their view . . . ¹⁵I will go back to my place till they are made waste; in their trouble they will go after me early and will make search for me.** Hosea 5:6, 15 BBE

When God withdraws His presence, things in our lives will begin to fall apart. Walking with God ensures that His presence and favor keeps our lives whole. Choose blessing, not cursing! Amen!

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 8

Jehovah el Neqâmâh: The God Of Vengeance

God is not just the God of love. He is also the Righteous Judge. Love demands judgment, and holiness demands righteous judgment. Sometimes righteous judgment demands vengeance. As it turns out, God is also the God of Vengeance. He is the Lord God; He changes not. He has forever been and will forever be the God of Vengeance. Thank God that is not all He is, but it is one of His many traits.

- **O LORD, God of vengeance (*Jehovah el Neqamah*), God of vengeance, shine forth! ²Rise up, O Judge of the earth, Render recompense to the proud.**
Psalm 94:1-2 NASB

One of the divine names of God is *Jehovah el Neqâmâh*—the Lord God of Vengeance. The Hebrew understanding of vengeance is identical to ours: *infliction of injury, harm, humiliation, or similar on a person by another who has been harmed*. However, the Hebrew word possesses legal connotations, thus indicating that biblical vengeance is used to preserve justice. Though vengeance has a negative connotation today, the biblical usage implies lawfulness, justice, and salvation.

In this psalm, the psalmist requests that the God of Vengeance “**shine forth**” or as the Hebrew also says, “**send out beams of light**.” God’s light doesn’t just shine forth with blessings. He also emanates vengeance. Remember, on the last day, the glory of God’s countenance is so fierce and holy it will melt heaven and earth. God’s divine light brings justice and some justice requires vengeance.

VENGEANCE BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

It is of utmost importance that we recognize that vengeance does not belong to us. We are not holy or just enough (especially when we’ve been wronged and our emotions are in overdrive) to accurately exact vengeance. (See **James 1:19-20**.) We must leave vengeance in the hands of God and His ministers of vengeance.

- **To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence (*retaliation*); their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity (*disaster*) is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.** **Deuteronomy 32:35**

Here, we see that vengeance and retaliation belong to God, but this doesn’t always happen suddenly with lightning bolts or hailstones from heaven. Many times, the Lord’s vengeance may look like protection being removed and “things” being permitted to come upon the guilty. Either way, vengeance brings an appointed day of calamity. We do not seek vengeance at our own hands.

- **Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.**
Leviticus 19:18

The antithesis to vengeance is biblical love. In this context, “loving your neighbor” means that you forgive them, drop your grudge, and commend them to God. Biblical love does not negate vengeance. It just excludes us from meting it out. God promises to justly retaliate for us—one way or another.

- **And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? ⁸I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh shall he findeth faith on the earth?**
Luke 18:7-8

In the context of the parable about the widow demanding justice from a wicked judge that he would “avenge” her of her adversary, Jesus promised that the vengeance of God for His elect will happen “speedily.” Once again, we see vengeance in terms of judicial action.

- **For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴for it [he] is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it [he] does not bear the sword for nothing; for it [he] is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.**
Romans 13:3-4 NASB

Natural authority figures are ordained of God to keep the peace and execute vengeance upon the wicked. If you’ve suffered wickedness, one way to seek vengeance is to notify the proper authorities and allow the due process of law to punish the perpetrator. Jesus added that we are to love our enemies and pray for them (**Matthew 5:44**), but this still doesn’t negate vengeance. It simply takes vengeance out of our hands and gives it back to God.

- **And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. ¹⁷For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.**
¹⁸According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.
Isaiah 59:16-18

This is an Old Testament reference to the armor of God. Here, when God sees wickedness and injustice against His people, He is described as wearing a righteous breastplate, a helmet of salvation, a garment of vengeance, and a cloak of divine passion (zeal). Paul’s teaching on the armor of God (it literally belongs to God; He wore it first) doesn’t allow us to wear a garment of vengeance. That garment belongs to God alone. Vengeance belongs to God (see **Deuteronomy 32:35** above and **Psalms 94:1**).

- **Never take your own revenge, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.**
Romans 12:19 NASB95

- **For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.**
Hebrews 10:30

These New Testament verses quote Deuteronomy's law, indicating that God is still a God of vengeance. This also means it is still not ours to exact, but His to demonstrate, and He promises to still do so—even in the New Testament. We leave room for wrath by loving our enemies and praying for them.

WRATH AND VENGEANCE

Notice in **Romans 12:19** that vengeance is manifested through the wrath of God. This is demonstrated numerous times in the Bible.

- **God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.**
Nahum 1:2

Wrath and vengeance go hand in hand. Vengeance is the legal and just manifestation of God's retributive wrath. And it still happens in the New Testament.

- The wrath of God abides upon those who reject Christ (**John 3:36**).
- The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (**Romans 1:18**).
- The wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience (**Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:6**).
- The Lord promises to avenge any Christian defrauded by their brother or sister in Christ (**1 Thessalonians 4:6**).
- The Second Coming of Christ will include vengeance upon the ignorant and the disobedient (**2 Thessalonians 1:8**).
- The Battle of Armageddon is called "**the winepress of the wrath of God**" (**Revelation 14:19; 19:15**).
- God has vials full of His wrath in heaven, ready to be poured out on mankind on the final day (**Revelation 15:7**).

The following verses further reveal that vengeance is an act of divine justice.

- **Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.**
Isaiah 35:3-4
- **O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I suffered rebuke.**
Jeremiah 15:15

- **But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.** **Jeremiah 20:12**
- **Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.** **Isaiah 47:3**

This reference to uncovered nakedness means that God's vengeance would manifest as God exposing all of Israel's sinful lifestyle. Sometimes the vengeance of God is simply His public exposure of everything we have been doing in private, resulting in great public shame. Vengeance is connected with deliverance, justice, and salvation. This is done in hopes of turning the guilty to repentance. God's vengeance can range from "furious rebukes" (**Ezekiel 25:17; Micah 5:15**) all the way up to eternal fire (**Jude 7**).

****REMEMBER: All judgment, except for eternal judgment, has the purpose of driving the guilty to repentance.****

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD

The final judgment is called the day of vengeance of God. Isaiah prophesies about it extensively. It is worth noting that the Bible begins with judgment and vengeance in the Garden of Eden and it concludes with judgment and vengeance in the **Revelation**. It is only in understanding God's nature of judgment and vengeance that we can begin to appreciate His mercy and forgiveness. The modern progressive Christian movement to minimize and erase God's judgment and wrath only works to cheapen the unmerited salvation of God offered to mankind.

- **For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences (*retaliation*) for the controversy of Zion.** **Isaiah 34:8**
- **To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;** **Isaiah 61:2**
- **I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. ⁴For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.** **Isaiah 63:3-4**
- **For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.** **Jeremiah 46:10**
- **For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.** **Luke 21:22**

The Lord Jesus revealed that the times of the Tribulation are days of vengeance. The Tribulation is the ultimate demonstration of God's wrath. It is the climax of His vengeance and it will be

just! May we humbly submit to our God and His daily corrections lest we become partakers of His divine vengeance. Amen!!!

Other *vengeance* scriptures: **Jeremiah 50:15, 28; 51:6, 11, 36; Ezekiel 25:17**

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 9

New Testament Judgment

Let us review what we have learned so far:

- **Divine Judgment** is the authority, right, and requirement of God's holy character and love to investigate all actions, persons, and assemblies; rewarding what is determined to be righteous but correcting and warning before punishing that which is deemed wicked.
- Divine judgment can be categorized as either:
 - **Positive judgment**, resulting in promotion and blessings; or
 - **Negative judgment**, resulting in punishment, calamity, demotions, or ultimately damnation.
 - **Negative judgment** can be further subdivided into:
 - » **Lethal judgment** that results in physical death
 - » **Non-lethal judgment** that results in sickness, demotion, resistance, opposition, etc.
- Divine judgment can be further viewed as either:
 - **Aggressive judgment**, defined as *the wrath of God being kindled against a person or people in an act of demotion, abandonment, or destruction*, or
 - **Passive judgment**, defined as *the calamity, chaos, frustration, and destruction that befalls a person or people when God's defense is removed from them*.
- It should therefore be obvious that these four descriptors can be combined to produce a judgment chart:

Positive Aggressive	Negative Aggressive	Lethal
		Non-Lethal
Positive Passive	Negative Passive	Lethal
		Non-Lethal

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT JUDGMENT

We should begin our evaluation of New Testament judgment with the words of the Righteous Judge Himself.

- We are to shake the dust off our feet at those who don't receive our Gospel ministry (**Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Acts 13:51**).
- Some cities will be judged more harshly than others in the day of judgment (**Matthew 10:15; 11:22-24; Luke 10:14**).
- We will be judged for every idle word spoken (**Matthew 12:36**).
- The men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment against the generation that rejects Christ, as will the queen of the south (**Matthew 12:41-42**).
- Judgment is more important than tithing. It was one of the three weightier matters of the law, including mercy and faith (**Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42**).

- All judgment has been committed unto the Son (**John 5:22**).
- Jesus judges according to what He hears, and His judgment is just (**John 5:30**).
- We are to judge righteous judgment, not according to appearance (**John 7:24**).
- The Lord's judgment is true (**John 8:16**).
- Judgment is why Christ came into the world (**John 9:39**).
- **"I have somewhat against thee . . ." (Revelation 2:4, 14, 20; 3:2, 14-22).**

Jesus is a very "judgy" savior.

JUDGMENT BEGINS IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

- **For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?**
1 Peter 4:17-18

Even in the New Testament Church Age, God is still the Righteous Judge. It should come as no surprise He will judge the Church first. As Peter pointed out, **"judgment must begin at the House of God."** What does that judgment look like?

CORRECTION, REBUKE, AND CONVICTION

One of the key New Testament ministries of the Holy Spirit is the work of conviction. He convicts us of our sins. He also anoints us at times to do the same thing. Correction, rebuke, and conviction are acts of judgment. The Greek word for conviction is *elégchō*. It is translated as *to convict, to refute, to expose, to bring to light, to find fault with, to correct*. All of these actions are also coupled with an element of shame and often accompanied with a required explanation. *Elégchō* is used in the following verses:

- **"if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault (*elégchō*) . . ."**
Matthew 18:15a
- **And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin . . ."**
John 16:8a
- **But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:** 1 Corinthians 14:24
- **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.**
Ephesians 5:11
- **Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.**
1 Timothy 5:20
- **This witness [of corruption] is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;**
Titus 1:13

- **These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.** Titus 2:15
- **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.** Revelation 3:19

Jesus promised to both begin and complete a work in us. That work requires that we be corrected and rebuked.

- **I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ²Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth (*prunes*) it, that it may bring forth more fruit.** John 15:1-2

Here, Jesus tactfully calls His style of correction “pruning.” There are many things that must be cut from our lives.

- **And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: ⁶For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** Hebrews 12:5-6

Correction, rebuke, and chastisement are proof that God claims us as His own children. Rejoice, and embrace it!

PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Don't forget that part of divine of judgment is promotions and rewards. In order to be justly promoted, one must be judged *worthy* of promotion.

- **And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;** 1 Timothy 1:12

Paul had to be judged faithful and trustworthy before he could be ordained into ministry.

- **Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.** 1 Timothy 5:17

Teaching elders must be judged worthy before they can receive double honor.

- **The labourer is worthy of his reward.** 1 Timothy 5:18b

All labor earns a just wage (**Proverbs 14:23**). If you don't work, you don't eat (**1 Thessalonians 3:10b**).

- **For this man [Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.** Hebrews 3:3

Jesus was judged to be worthy of more glory than Moses.

- **But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**
Hebrews 11:6

There is a special reward reserved only for those that diligently seek God. These all require judgment.

EXCOMMUNICATION/SHUNNING

The New Testament wholeheartedly commands excommunication. Excommunication has two components: 1) put the offender out of the Church, and 2) shun them publicly. This is an example of *negative-active-non-lethal* judgment. It is designed to bring the believer to a place of self-judgment and repentance. There are six scenarios that require excommunication:

1. Unrepentant personal trespass (**Matthew 18:15-17**)
2. Sowing discord (**Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10**)
3. Lazy unemployment (**1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6**)
4. Disobedient to doctrine (**2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Timothy 6:3-5**)
5. Apostasy (**1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17-18; Titus 3:10**)
6. Unrepentant sexual sin (**1 Corinthians 5:1-13**)

It is quite clear that excommunication and shunning are forms of New Testament judgment that are to be practiced by the Church, its leadership, and its members in order to keep the purity of the faith and unity of the assembly. Excommunication is an echo of the Mosaic Law of “putting lepers out of the camp” (**Numbers 5:2-4**).

Abandonment, shunning, or withdrawing from a believer (as commanded in **Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6**; and **Titus 3:10**) is likened to Moses commanding everyone to move away from Korah and his followers, lest the innocent become partakers of Korah’s judgment (**Numbers 16:26**). This means that sometimes, the judgment of God causes everyone to turn away from you until you repent. If the Holy Spirit is resisting and shunning someone, we should, too! (See **Psalms 15:4 CSB**.)

DEATH AND DISEASE

There are numerous examples of *lethal-negative-aggressive* judgment in the New Testament. These recorded examples serve to debunk the notion that God no longer manifests wrath. Consider the following cases of divine retribution:

- Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead in a church service (**Acts 5:1-11**).
- King Herod was struck dead by the angel of the Lord (**Acts 12:20-23**).
- Elymas the sorcerer was struck with blindness at the word of Paul (**Acts 13:8-12**).
- The Corinthian fornicator was delivered to satan for the destruction of his flesh by the entire Corinthian church (**1 Corinthians 5:1-5**). Thankfully, he repented (**2 Corinthians 2:5-10**).
- Hymenaeus and Alexander were delivered to satan by Paul so that they would learn not to blaspheme (**1 Timothy 1:20**). We don’t know the effects of this



judgment, but we can assume they were terrifying, yet this judgment was meant to work repentance.

- The judgments upon mankind in the **Revelation** can be described as nothing but lethal, negative, and aggressive. Yet for all of those escalating judgments and wrath, many alive in that day will still refuse to repent.

FINALLY

- **But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.**
1 Corinthians 2:15

Spiritually mature believers are commanded to judge (*investigate, inspect, critique, divide, make a distinction*) in all things. This is one of our main mandates in Christ. Use the Word of God to rightly judge all things. Amen!

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 10

The Final Judgments

The Bible begins in the aftermath of angelic judgment (if you hold the doctrine of the *Gap Theory* concerning the events between **Genesis 1:1** and **1:2**), soon follows with the judgment upon all of mankind, the earth, and satan in the Garden of Eden, and concludes with divine eternal judgment. We cannot forget that eternal judgment is one of the six principles of Christ's doctrine (**Hebrews 6:2**). All of time and creation is headed toward a final judgment day. The Bible teaches that every human being will answer to God; yet, all judgment has been given to Jesus Christ and He will judge without respect of persons.

- **And hath given him [Jesus] authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.**
John 5:27
- **And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he [Jesus] which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.**
Acts 10:42
- **And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:**
Hebrews 9:27

Every human will be subject to eternal judgment. Jesus will judge both the quick (saved) and the dead (unsaved) after they die (see also **2 Timothy 4:1**; **1 Peter 4:5**). Because being born-again makes an individual a new creature and being lost makes one a lost creature, each will be judged differently. Believers will be judged at the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, while the lost will be judged at the *Great White Throne of Judgment*. One thousand years separates these two eternal judgments.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

The Judgment Seat of Christ is the place of judgment for all believers. This will happen right before the Millennial Reign of Christ. It is a place where we will be judged for the quality of our Christian service on the earth, rewards will be meted out, and assignments for the Millennial Reign of Christ will be distributed.

- **But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought (*despise, make of no account*) thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . . ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**
Romans 14:10, 12
- **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**
2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB

Every born-again believer will stand before this judgment seat. The good news is this judgment does not decide eternal salvation. The bad news is it does decide our eternal rewards and

thousand-year assignments. These rewards are based upon the works we do for Jesus *after* we have obtained salvation through faith.

- **Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble [straw]; ¹³Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**
1 Corinthians 3:12-15
- **And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:**
1 Peter 1:17

These verses should encourage us to maintain good works with a right attitude and never tire of well doing. Every Christian's work will be tried by the fire of God to see "**what sort it is**." Not all of our works will be rewarded. Some of our works will be found to be wood, hay, and straw. One reason for day-to-day judgment and correction is to keep our works qualified for eternal rewards and promotion. If we reject day-to-day judgment, we will only shortchange our divine promotion.

- **His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good (*joyful*) and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**
Matthew 25:21
See Matthew 25:14-30.
- **And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.** **Luke 19:17**
See Luke 19:11-17.
- **And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power (*authority*) over the nations: ²⁷And he shall rule (*pastor*) them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.**
Revelation 2:26-27

In His address to the Church of Thyatira, Jesus quotes from the stewardship parables (*The Parable of the Talents* and *The Ten Pieces of Money*) He taught in the Gospels but directly applies them as promises to the overcoming believers. Part of divine judgment will include promoting some believers to headship over the nations.

NEW TESTAMENT REWARDS

Our rewards are meted out in terms of authority and glory. Not only will authority over cities be distributed, but crowns will also be given. Crowns also indicate authority, power, and glory. The two may be correlated. The New Testament speaks of five crowns:

1. **Incorruptible crowns** (1 Corinthians 9:25)—given to those who strive to serve God.
2. **Crown of rejoicing** (1 Thessalonians 2:19)—given to those who win the lost.
3. **Crown of righteousness** (2 Timothy 4:8)—given to those who finish their race and keep the faith, looking joyfully for the Lord's return.
4. **Crown of glory** (1 Peter 5:4)—given to those who live as examples to the flock.
5. **Crown of life** (Revelation 2:10)—given to those who are faithful unto death.

THE TRIBULATION—Israel's Final Judgment

We have previously covered the Tribulation as the judgment of the Jews. (For a more thorough discussion on the Tribulation, see the PodSchool lesson: *The Revelation, Lesson 3—The Purpose of the Tribulation*.) The horrific events of the Tribulation will both judge Israel for her rejection of God and bring about her true repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ. Israel has rejected the Godhead:

- In Samuel's day, she rejected the Father (1 Samuel 8:7).
- During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, she rejected the Son (Luke 23:18).
- During the early church, she rejected the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51, 54-60).

As promised and evidenced so many times prior, God will judge Israel by a wicked ruler. During the judgment of the Tribulation, it will be the Antichrist judging Israel. Israel will repent and look to the one they pierced (Zechariah 12:10). God will deliver them, and, in that day, Israel shall become a nation again—in one day (Isaiah 66:8).

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

God's divine judgment continues after the battle of Armageddon. The Lord will judge the nations. The Jews and the Saints will be excluded from this because they just passed through their judgment. (Furthermore, the Jews are not reckoned among the nations. See Numbers 23:9.)

- **I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Jehovah has Judged*), 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

It is possible that the Valley of Jehoshaphat will be a valley formed by the supernatural return of the Lord.

- **In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.**
Zechariah 14:4 NASB

Here, the remnant of the nations will gather to be judged by the King of kings:

- **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: ³²And before him shall**

be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then 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: ³⁵For 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: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰And 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. **Matthew 25:31-40**

It appears that the Church will help the Lord in this judgment. This is very likely since the saints will have returned with the Lord for the Battle of Armageddon. (See **1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 14-15; Deuteronomy 33:2.**)

- **Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world (*Gr. kosmos, the inhabitants of the earth*)?** **1 Corinthians 6:2a NASB**

The nations will be judged based on how they helped and treated the Lord's brethren. This appears to be in regard to who helped the Jews in the last half of the Tribulation as they fled from the wrath of the Antichrist. The help provided is very similar to the needs of refugees: hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment (internment camps?). The goats are those who never cared for the Lord's brethren. Evidently, there are even saved nations after the Millennial Reign of Christ, dwelling in the new earth (**Revelation 21:24; 22:2**).

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

With His enemies destroyed, the Lord will be free to establish His 1,000-year reign. He will rule from Jerusalem, and His leadership is described as:

- Peace (**Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:2, 5-9**).
- Universal, covering the whole world (**Daniel 2:35**).
- Authoritative (**Psalms 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15**).
- Justice (**Psalms 2:10-12; Isaiah 9:7**).
- Merciful toward the poor (**Isaiah 11:4**).
- Righteous (**Isaiah 32:1**).
- Joyful (**Isaiah 9:3-4**).
- Glorious (**Isaiah 24:23**).
- Removal of the curse (**Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25**).
- One pure language (**Zephaniah 3:9**).

This will be a unique season in man's history. There will be two kinds of people on the planet: born-again saints with glorified bodies governing the world's cities, states, and nations, and mortals living life as we currently experience it. Humans will continue to procreate and

repopulate the earth. Because there will be no curse, the population of man will increase tremendously under Christ's righteous rule. The millennia will end with satan being unloosed to tempt mankind and fight against God one last time (**Revelation 20:7-15**). He will lose. This will be followed by the last judgment spoken of in the Bible: *The Great White Throne of Judgment*.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE OF JUDGMENT

This throne of judgment is the final place of reckoning for the wicked unbeliever. This judgment will take place after the Millennial Reign of Christ, and after the final battle with satan.

- **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it [Jesus], from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

Revelation 20:11-15

The sea, death, and hell all give up their dead to be judged by Jesus. Remember, Jesus is appointed as judge over the quick and the dead, or the saved and the damned. The un-saved dead are judged according to two books: the book that records their works and the book that records whether or not they received salvation through Jesus Christ. This is the final judgment, and it results in the second death. The first death is dying spiritually unto God. The second death is being cast into the Lake of Fire for eternal separation from God (**Revelation 20:14**). This is the final and eternal resting place of the damned, forever separated from God and tormented in perpetuity. This is where satan, his angels, the fallen angels, and all the wicked will burn forever. Those who have received salvation through Jesus Christ will enjoy eternity in His presence. This is the just and righteous judgment of God! Amen!

DIVINE JUDGMENT

Lesson 11

Instruments Of Wrath

****Disclaimer: This concept will require further research and development. This lesson is meant as an introduction to biblical patterns of judgment and wrath.****

In our previous lessons we have discussed the four categories of divine judgment:

1. Positive passive
2. Positive aggressive
3. Negative passive
4. Negative aggressive

Because only authority can judge with the intent to punish or reward, and because God delegates authority to humans, He generally uses people to accomplish such judgments, be they positive or negative. These individuals can be viewed as *God's instruments of judgment*.

POSITIVE JUDGMENTS REVIEW

1. **Positive passive**—The subtle increases that come with God's Presence and favor, e.g., health, peace, increase (crop yield), longevity, blessings, etc. Positive passive judgment won't necessarily involve an instrument of judgment. It is best described as the hand of God upon your life making things run smoothly.
2. **Positive aggressive**—These are blessings that have a definitive hand upon them, such as:
 - Promotions or raises from **bosses**
 - Promotions or praises from **professors**
 - Promotions or accolades from **rulers**
 - Medals and ribbons from **sports judges**
 - Scholarships from **committees**
 - Permission to use the car from a **parent**
 - Promotion or ordination from a **minister/ministerial board**
 - Praise and commendation by **law enforcement**
 - Praise, accolades, and gathering of **people to you**

NEGATIVE JUDGMENTS REVIEW

3. **Negative passive**—This often manifests as the subtle increase of frustration, irritation, loss of favor, a general increase in the difficulty of life, etc. Negative passive judgment won't necessarily involve an instrument of judgment. It is best described as the hand of God resisting your life, causing things to constantly struggle.
4. **Negative aggressive**—These are curses that have a definitive hand upon them, such as:
 - Punishments and demotions from **bosses**
 - Punishments and demotions from **professors**

- Punishments and demotions from **rulers**
- Stripping of medals and ribbons, and penalties by **sports judges**
- Loss of scholarships by **committees**
- Loss of car use by a **parent**
- Demotion or defrocking by a **minister/ministerial board**
- Arrests/incarceration by **law enforcement**
- Criticism, attacks, and abandonment of **people away from you**

INSTRUMENTS OF WRATHFUL JUDGMENT

While a boss may fire you, a professor fail you, or a ministry association defrock you, there is still a more extreme form of negative aggressive judgment. This type of judgment is best described as wrathful judgment, or simply the wrath of God. The wrath of God takes many forms in the Bible, as **Jeremiah 15:3 NLT** states: **“I send four kinds of destroyers against them,” says the LORD. “I will send the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, the vultures to devour, and the wild animals to finish up what is left.”** In addition to this verse, the Bible shows a pattern of other forms of wrath.

- **Angels**—Angels are seen many times smiting the wicked: Smiting Jerusalem (**2 Samuel 24:17**); smiting Assyrians (**2 Kings 19:35**); killing Herod (**Acts 12:23**).
- **Plagues**—The 10 plagues of Egypt, leprosy (**Leviticus 13**), the plague against Israel for lusting for meat (**Numbers 11**), the plague at the spies’ evil report (**Numbers 14**), the plague at the gainsaying of Korah (**Numbers 16**), the plague at the matter of Peor (**Numbers 25**), the plague against the House of King Jehoram (**2 Chronicles 21**).
- **Animals**—She bears (**2 Kings 2:24**), lions (**1 Kings 13**; **2 Kings 17:25-26**), dogs (**2 Kings 9:10**; **Jeremiah 15:3**), snakes (**Numbers 21:6**).
- **People**—Kings Pul and Tilgathpilneser (**1 Chronicles 5:26**), Hadad the Edomite (**1 Kings 11:14**), Rezon (**1 Kings 11:23**). Collectively these can be called **“pricks in your eyes.”** (See **Numbers 33:55**.)
- **Nations**—Philistines and Arabians (**2 Chronicles 21:16**), Assyria, Babylon, Egypt.
 - **Enslavement**—Babylonian Captivity and Assyrian Captivity.
 - **If they sin against you—and who has never sinned?—you might become angry with them and let their enemies conquer them and take them captive to a foreign land far away or near. ³⁷But in that land of exile, they might turn to you in repentance and pray, ‘We have sinned, done evil, and acted wickedly.’**
2 Chronicles 6:36-37 NLT

In the arena of active-negative judgment, there are many instances in the Bible of God using plagues, animals, individuals, tribes, armies, and even national enslavement as agents of judgment against even His own people. This type of judgment can be considered “wrathful judgment” because they are accomplishing God’s wrath against mankind. Contrary to logic, God often used pagan peoples as His instruments of wrath. We cannot forget that the purpose of wrathful judgment is to silence sin. (See **Zechariah 6:8**.)

In most cases, the Lord forewarned He would do as much. The curious point of interest is the fact that after God used a person or people to execute His judgment against His own people,

He then usually judged and destroyed the instrument of judgment itself. The lesson to be learned is this: Don't pride yourself on being an instrument of judgment. Even if you are in an officially sanctioned role of authority, don't take joy in negative aggressive judgment. Strive to be an instrument of restoration.

ELI AND THE PHILISTINES

- **Biblical Setting**—The time of Eli the High Priest (See **1 Samuel 1-6**.)
- **Prophecy**—Eli's priest sons were dirty and corrupt, and Eli refused to judge them and do what was right. Therefore, God was going to destroy the house of Eli.
 - **Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine [Eli's] arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house (1 Samuel 2:31).**
- **Instrument**—The Philistines
- **Judgment**—Israel lost 34,000 soldiers, the Ark was stolen, Phineas and Hophni are slain in battle. When Eli hears the horrible news, he fell backwards off his chair and died from a broken neck.
- **Counter-judgment against Instrument**—God then judged the Philistines, destroying their Dagon idol. He destroyed them and smote them with emerods.

ABSALOM AND DAVID

- **Biblical Setting**—David committed adultery and covered it up with murder. Also, David refused to judge Amnon for raping his own sister, Tamar. (See **2 Samuel 11:24; 13:21**.)
- **Prophecy**—**Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife (2 Samuel 12:10).**
- **Instrument**—Absalom, David's son by Maacah the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.
- **Judgment**—Absalom killed Amnon (which was a lawful act), then about seven years later, moved to usurp David's throne from him so that the kingdom might have righteous justice (**2 Samuel 15:3-4**).
- **Counter-judgment against Instrument**—Absalom was killed by the David's military general Joab and his ten young armorbearers.

ASSYRIAN ARMY AND SAMARIA

- **Biblical Setting**—Shalmaneser, king of Assyria besieged Samaria (See **2 Kings 18-19**.)
- **Prophecy**—**As for Israel [the Northern Kingdom], within sixty-five years it will be crushed and completely destroyed (Isaiah 7:8b NLT).**
 - Also, **Isaiah 8:4—For before the child [Isaiah's son, Mahershalalhashbaz] shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.**
- **Instrument**—The Assyrian Army, viz. Shalmaneser
- **Judgment**—Assyria besieged Samaria (the northern capital) for three years. They conquered Israel and dispersed the Jews throughout the Assyrian Empire.
- **Counter-judgment against Instrument**—**Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land (2 Kings 19:7 NASB95).**

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, BABYLON, AND ISRAEL

- **Biblical Setting**—The final days of the Southern Kingdom when Jehoiakim was king. (See **2 Kings 24-25; Daniel 4**).
- **Prophecy**—Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. ¹⁸And of thy sons . . . they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (**2 Kings 20:17-18**).
- **Instrument**—Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire
- **Judgment**—The Babylonians came in three waves of conquering enslavement and ransacked Jerusalem, pillaging the Temple.
- **Counter-judgment against Instrument**—Nebuchadnezzar got into pride, lost his mind, and ate grass like an ox for seven years. He repented and was restored. The last Babylonian king, his grandson Belshazzar was killed, and the Babylonian empire fell to the Medo-Persian Empire.

ROMAN EMPIRE AND ISRAEL

- **Biblical Setting**—After hundreds of years of oppression and occupation by the Babylonians, then the Medo-Persians, then the Macedonians, Israel was finally occupied by the Romans. It was the Romans who controlled Israel during the life of Christ. This was all foretold in the book of Daniel.
- **Prophecy**—For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. ⁴⁴And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (**Luke 19:43-44**).
 - Also, **Luke 21:6**—As for these things which ye behold [the Temple], the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
- **Instrument**—The Roman Empire, specifically, General Titus and his army.
- **Judgment**—In 70 AD, Jerusalem was besieged by the Roman Army. The city was systematically destroyed, and the Temple was looted then utterly razed to the ground.
- **Counter-judgment against Instrument**—The Roman Empire eventually fell to the Visigoths.

CONCLUSIONS

The Lord is the Righteous Judge. His holiness demands eventual judgment, the results of which can range from plagues and supernatural calamities to the use of animal or human vessels. In short, when the presence of God is removed from an individual or a group of people, all of creation is at God's disposal to bring about swift judgment. However, just because God uses an instrument of judgment to accomplish His will doesn't mean He favors it. He may in turn destroy it next.

What are we to make of this?

1. Do not seek to be an instrument of wrath or judgment unless authorized through official channels such as law enforcement, military, legal institutions, etc.

2. As the general Body of Christ, we should all aim to be instruments of prayer, intercession, and reconciliation unless otherwise directed by God. **“Mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:13c).**
3. If you find yourself authorized as an instrument of judgment, seek God for His wisdom to do so without partiality and with righteous insight.

May God help us to walk humbly before Him. Amen!