

# **THE REVELATION OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT SERIES**

## **PART 1**

### **"THE BOOK OF LIFE"**

DANIEL 7:9-10... "I beheld til the thrones were cast down. and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow; and the hair of His head as the pure wool: HIS THRONE WAS LIKE THE FIERY FLAME, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: THE JUDGMENT WAS SET, AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED".

REVELATION 20:11... "And I saw A GREAT WHITE THRONE, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them. And 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".

By taking a literal approach to interpreting these passages of scripture (along with Matt. 25:31-46), and by adding a little evangelistic imagery and fabrication for the purpose of sensation, we have had a picture painted for us over the years of what has been termed, "THE FINAL JUDGMENT DAY". Certain preachers (many of whom are honorable and sincere in their intentions) would have us believe that God has appointed a day, wherein all the vast billions of Adam's descendants who have ever lived will be lined up, single file. These shall stand before a gigantic, glowing white throne, upon which a giant-size Jesus shall sit. As each one's turn shall come, they shall be called forward to receive their just rewards. Perhaps to one side stands a host of clerical angels, ready to open the books, wherein all the deeds of that individual's life are recorded. To another side is a large movie screen, where there is shown an instant replay of various scenes throughout his or her life. Finally, the Book of Life is opened; and a search is made for their name. Those whose names are found written in this great Book are directed to the right side of the throne, where they receive eternal life. And those whose names are conspicuously absent, shall be directed to the left, to be punished throughout eternity. Again and again the process shall be repeated, until every last individual has been sentenced, and court is adjourned.

This story is most frequently told at the end of "revival" meetings, just prior to the altar call. And it is usually told in a way to spark the imagination, to stir the emotions, and to

instill A DREAD FEAR OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS in the minds of the congregation! The more "realistic" the speaker can make it, and the more he can cause folks to visualize this drama, the better the results (this is how many of the extra biblical details have come about)!

Now, we do not want to sound sarcastic; nor do we desire to belittle the thought of judgment. Only one unfamiliar to the record of Scripture would do that. It is sound doctrine to believe that "we shall ALL stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10). And there are plenty of scriptures to show that the act of judgment can either go in favor of the one judged, or against. While it is true that there are rewards reserved for those who abide faithful, there is most certainly a judgment of condemnation to come upon those who sin willfully after they have come to the knowledge of the truth". Of this we should fear, lest being found in this state we should fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:26-31). What we do call into question, however, is this literal interpretation of Scripture, which portrays the scene described above. Consider, if you will, the absurdity of such a view (bear with us a little in our folly). According to the 1992 World Almanac, there are approximately 5.384 billion people alive today. Since it would be difficult to closely estimate the number of human beings who have inhabited this planet (there are varying opinions), let us figure only on those presently alive. Suppose each individual took up only five minutes before the Throne (this should not seem like such an extraordinarily long period, if, as some would have us believe, our whole lives are to be reviewed before our very eyes). It would take over 256,088 years (that's more than TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILLENNIUM!) to get through the last person in this generation alone... not to mention all those who have passed on in previous generations! (Wouldn't you hate to be the last one in line)? Furthermore, if all Scripture is to be taken literally, how could Acts 17:31 be explained in connection with this? According to this, God has appointed "A DAY, in which He shall judge the world in righteousness" by Jesus Christ! Does this mean that God will squeeze the entire judgment of the human race, one person at a time, into a single, twenty four hour day?

Let us further consider the results of such strict liberalization. Were we to consistently interpret all the other scenes found in the books of Daniel and Revelation by this standard, we would be required to believe that every creature described (with all of their strange and freakish abnormalities) were real, literal, physical beasts, destined to appear upon the face of the earth in the last days! Just imagine that! (Although there are a few "sci-fi" enthusiasts among us, who would ignorantly declare such things, most of us would not do so). These arguments may all sound facetious, but the truth is, it is extremely rare to find someone who takes EVERY scripture literally. Why is it, then, that in books which most people would readily admit are filled with symbols, types, and shadows, and, right up to this point, are spiritually understood, we should suddenly accept a literal interpretation for this scene? Is there something in the text that would encourage such a sudden change in perspective?

It is our considered persuasion that there is more to this scene than just "a day in court" for the masses of humanity. We are convinced that there is contained in these passages a condensed revelation of God's divine system of justice; the means by which lie shall

judge the world in righteousness. And beloved, we can rest assured that He will! Again, we would stress our belief that ALL, without exception, shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account for the deeds done in their bodies. But just how that will happen is our point of difference).

UNDERSTANDING THE  
BOOK OF  
LIFE

As we consider this heavenly vision, let us begin by presenting a very sobering and earnest question: Why, in the first place, would God even NEED some literal book by which to judge men, and in which to record the names of His elect? Dare we accuse "the Ancient of days" of senility? What saith the Scriptures? "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS" (II Tim. 2:19); and, "I am the Good Shepherd, AND KNOW MY SHEEP, and am known by Mine" (John 10:14) I Do we believe this? Beloved, if God had to rely on some natural filing system to keep up with the names of His Own, if He had to depend on some ledger to help Him remember, He would be less than omniscient! Isn't this true?

How, then, should we understand what this "Book of Life" represents? By "comparing spiritual things with spiritual", of course Cor. 2:13)! There is a very clear and graphic description of this wondrous "Book found within the pages of Holy Writ, hidden from the eyes of the so-called "wise and prudent", but freely revealed unto those with spiritual discernment! May the eyes of our understanding be enlightened to this unmistakable truth!

The first chapter of the Gospel of John opens by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and THE WORD WAS GOD. The same was in the beginning with God... IN HIM WAS LIFE; and the LIFE was the LIGHT of men. And the light shineth into darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG MEN" (John 1:1-2, 4-5, 14). By the revelation of the Spirit, John declared that THE WORD OF GOD, "that which was from the beginning", was made manifest for all the world to read. Within this glorious WORD was LIFE; Life, with the potential of illuminating and enlightening the darkened, death-filled realm of men. This WORD, Holy Record of the Life of God, was not written upon stone, or papyrus, or golden parchment; but the WORD was MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG MEN! Unlike any other book in the world, THIS "BOOK" WAS ALIVE... and the name of this "book" was JESUS! (Some would contend that the Bible, the natural record of God's Word, is the "Book of Life". Yet there is obviously more to it than that. For Paul said, "THE LETTER KILLETH; but THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE")!

We read in Heb. 10:7, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offerings Thou wouldest not, BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME... Then said I, Lo, I come (IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME,) to do Thy will, O God". How true this was! He came as the visible expression of the invisible

God, the living testimony of the will of the Father! He was the Autobiography of Divinity, the life-story of the Eternal I AM! Hallelujah!

For thirty long years, this glorious Book was being written. During this time, He was virtually unrecognized for what He was! "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (Jn. 1:10). Though He was "prepared before the face of all people" (Lk. 2:31), no one could "open the Book", so to speak, and "read" into His life. Contrary to the old adage, "You can tell a book by its cover", He was a different story altogether! Even those closest to Him had absolutely no idea what was going on inside of Him! He remained in obscurity, from the curious gaze of men, until the appointed time of the Father. He was God's great enigma to mankind!

Line upon line, and precept upon precept, He increased in wisdom and stature, "waxing strong in Spirit" and filled with wisdom" (Lk. 2:40, 52). Through the common, day-to-day experiences of life, he was steadily learning obedience, and was being made perfect through the things which He suffered (Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9). There was not a single temptation faced by man with which He in some way was not tested; not an area that went untouched. He was "IN ALL POINTS tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was challenged and confronted, in one form or another, with every issue that would ever face mankind. Every trial, every test, and every temptation He faced simply served to complete another chapter in the "Book"; for as He overcame them through the application of the Scriptures, the lesson was then recorded in His Spirit, and sealed. Unbeknown to the world around Him, He was being prepared for the Throne!

In the process of time, after He had been proven IN ALL POINTS, and after He had diligently judged Himself IN ALL THINGS, the day arrived for Christ to stand, and make His appearance before the Throne. As He, in His humanity, presented Himself wholly and acceptably unto God at the River Jordan, there came a heavenly proclamation of approval, a sort of "Forward" from the Father: "THOU ART MY BELOVED SON; IN THEE I AM WELL PLEASED" (Lk. 3:22)<sup>1</sup> At that very moment, the "Word made flesh" received the final "seal" ("for Him hath God the Father SEALED"; John 6:27), signifying that the "Book" was complete. And immediately, the heavens were opened unto Him! He had the full endorsement and authority of the Throne placed upon Him!

To give unwavering evidence of Father's wise judgment in sealing the Christ, and to prove that the "writing" was unquestionably finished, that nothing could be added to, and nothing had been left out, He immediately and intentionally placed His "Book of Life" into the hands of His greatest critic, to be "proof-read" for the next forty days and nights! Praise God! You can bet that the ancient accuser did everything in his power to find fault with this "Holy Scroll"... to find perhaps a "sentence" that expressed the will of flesh; maybe a thought that was inconsistent with the general theme of divine purpose; or at least a "punctuation mark" that was "out of place" with the mind of God; but the final analysis was GOD THROUGH AND THROUGH! He was, in the truest sense, "A WALKING BIBLE"... right down to the last "jot and tittle"! Every answer Christ gave in response to the tempter's tests began with "IT IS WRITTEN...", and ended with THE RIGHTLY-DIVIDED WORD! (Mind you, this was not just some vain religious exercise

of quoting Scripture, simply for the sake of coming up with an answer. He had the appropriate answer, yea, "a word fitly spoken", to meet every challenge with which He was presented. His replies left the old cynical "side-winder" speechless! There was no denying that God was both the Author and the Finisher of this blessed Volume! It could well be said that from cover to cover, "In Him (Jesus, "the Word made flesh") dwelleth ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY" (Col. 2:9)!

Following this examination in the wilderness, the "Book of Life" was offered to the public. We read where He went forth "in the power of the Spirit" (Lk. 4:14); and soon thereafter, returned to His hometown of Nazareth. As was His custom, He entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. But something very significant happened that day, which was directly connected with our story. As He stood up to read, there was delivered unto Him the book (scroll) of Isaiah. Luke 4:17 says, "...AND WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE BOOK, He found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord'... and He began to say unto them, 'THIS DAY IS THIS SCRIPTURE FULFILLED IN YOUR EARS'"! What a timely event this was! For even as HE OPENED THE BOOK of Isaiah in the sight of the people, THE "BOOK OF LIFE" WAS BEING OPENED BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES! He was the living fulfillment of everything He had just declared!

From that day forward, the "seals" were "loosed"; and there was a manifestation of life which freely flowed from this "OPEN BOOK". This living outflow brought restoration and deliverance to the groaning creation around Him. Every problem, every trouble, and every crisis known to man was covered in this heavenly Record. Whatever type of need was presented, there was a "chapter" devoted to it! HE HAD (AND WAS, AND IS) THE ANSWER! (We would point out, with much scriptural backing, and without fear of contradiction, that *only by Christ may we receive spiritual life*. Any word or phrase used by the Spirit with the expression "*of life*" affixed to it, such as "the TREE of Life", "the RIVER of Life", "the CROWN of Life", "the BOOK of Life", etc. is merely descriptive of Him, or of spiritual qualities belonging to Him. It is vain, even blasphemous, to think that life can be obtained from inanimate objects, such as rivers, or books, or trees, etc. He alone is "the Way, the Truth, and the life"!)

#### JUDGMENT PROCEEDS FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE

As we read of the days which followed this announcement, it was very obvious that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. Isa. 11:2-5 describes His state of being perfectly: "And THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL REST UPON HIM, the spirit of WISDOM, and UNDERSTANDING, the spirit of COUNSEL and MIGHT, the spirit of KNOWLEDGE and of THE FEAR OF THE LORD; and He shall make Him of QUICK UNDERSTANDING in the fear of the Lord: and HE SHALL NOT JUDGE BY THE SIGHT OF THE EYES, NEITHER REPROVE AFTER THE HEARING OF HIS EARS: but WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS shall He judge the poor, and REPROVE WITH EQUITY

for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth WITH THE ROD OF HIS MOUTH, and WITH THE BREATH OF HIS LIPS shall He slay the wicked. And RIGHTEOUSNESS shall be the girdle of His loins, and FAITHFULNESS the girdle of His reins"! Praise God! There can be no doubt that all these things were attributed to Christ in the days of His flesh! He came to bring justice and judgment, to bring equity and fairness, to bring balance and truth to the inhabitants of the earth! HE CAME TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT!

Beloved, because He was so totally yielded to the Father, and so totally void of fleshly judgment (which judges according to "the sight of the eyes, and the hearing of the ears"), He was deemed worthy to "open the Book". Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, BUT WHAT HE SEETH THE FATHER DO: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise... For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. FOR THE FATHER JUDGETH NO MAN, BUT HATH COMMITETH ALL JUDGMENT TO THE SON: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father... He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, AND NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall LIVE. For as the Father hath life in Himself, SO HATH HE GIVEN TO THE SON TO HAVE LIFE IN HIMSELF; AND HATH GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT ALSO, BECAUSE HE IS THE SON OF MAN... I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and MY JUDGMENT IS JUST; BECAUSE I SEEK NOT MINE OWN WILL, BUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER WHICH HATH SENT ME" (John 5:19-30)! (Note carefully that it was NOT because of His status as "the Son of God" that qualified Him to "receive authority to execute judgment", but because He was "the Son of Man". It was because He had first been "tempted in all points, yet without sin"; and therefore, could identify with humanity, that He was found worthy. He could never be accused of rendering an unfair verdict because of a lack of perspective, or because of an inequality of position! He had come down to the level of mankind)!

When "the Word made flesh" opened upon a person's life, He could read them like a book! There was not a secret sin, or hidden motive that escaped His sight. As Heb. 4:13 says, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but ALL THINGS ARE NAKED AND OPENED UNTO THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DO"! He took them all into account, and weighed them in the scales of divine justice! This is why He could look into the heart of a despised little publican by the name of Zacchaeus, and into the life of a spurned Samaritan woman who had been married five times, and into the life of a common harlot by the name of Mary, and grant forgiveness to them; and yet, speak words of anathema and condemnation upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, who, as Jesus said, were like unto "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23: 27)! His judgment was not based on how men SEEMED to be, but by the true intents of their hearts! His was the determination of "just weights and balances" (Prov. 16:11), the result of acknowledging the Spirit in all things! Therefore, when men stood before

this "Book of Life", righteous judgment proceeded from the throne! He caused "the dead", that is, those who were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), to hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who heard and believed on Him LIVED. They passed "from death unto life"! This judgment was not just reserved for the future... but was A PRESENT REALITY! As Jesus told Martha, after she had placed the resurrection away off into some dim and distant time, "I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this"? What He was saying was that He was the personification, yea, the present embodiment of this blessed event; and He is "the same, yesterday, today, and forever"! Jesus said, "The hour is coming... AND NOW IS"!

In harmony with these thoughts, we entreat our readers to contemplate the inspired words of J. Preston Eby. "Let us with pure minds and understanding quickened by the Spirit of revelation from God consider these meaningful words, "And I saw THE DEAD... stand before God". I saw the DEAD --- S-T-A-N-D! And immediately the "books" were opened.

"Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged' still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O Man! O Woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that has ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by it's true name.

"Where is the record? And what are these 'books' where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are nought but THE BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE, THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR OWN BEING! In the sight of God, you, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind and character is everything that YOU ARE. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page of your book --- the book which you are --- known and read by all men. And think not, O man, that should your body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought or deed. NO! All is accurately recorded in the law of your own life, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual and soulish condition and state of being, and to deal with you in judgment God has but to 'stand you up' and prompt you to speak or act --- and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life. At once your 'book' will 'open', each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book which YOU ARE" ---end quote.

How true this is! The life which Christ manifested, and the words which He spoke, "stood men up", so to speak, and brought them face to face with their own true characters. And because His ways were so radically different, they demanded a response. No one could come in contact with the Christ, and walk away the same! They would either be drawn to the Light, to become quickened and raised up in the newness of life; or else they would be "drawn back into perdition", being tormented "in the presence of the Lamb". But he would not, yea, COULD NOT be indifferent! A perfect example of this is found in John, chapter 8. Here, we read that the scribes and Pharisees had brought before Jesus a woman taken in the act of adultery. They were seeking, no doubt, an opportunity to find fault with His judgments. "Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou"? After they had repeatedly challenged Him on the matter, Jesus wisely turned the finger of accusation toward the accusers: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her". Verse 9 says, "And they which heard it, BEING CONVICTED BY THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE, went out one by one, beginning with the eldest, even unto the last"! Praise God! Their "day in court" could not have been made more real to them, had they been brought before the council of the Sanhedren, the "Supreme Court", of their day! They had just stood before "the Great White Throne", "the Judgment Seat of Christ"; and the verdict was not favorable! Being left alone with the woman, Jesus spoke, saying, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee"? She said, "No man, Lord". And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: GO AND SIN NO MORE". Hallelu to the Lamb! Immediately following this scene, Jesus declared, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". You see, when men came before Christ, the whole situation was elevated into judgment; and as a result, He "brought to light the hidden things of darkness, and made manifest the counsels of the hearts" (II Cor. 4:5)1 He simply "opened the books", so to speak, and they were automatically condemned by what was written therein!

Again, hear Jesus' own familiar words from John 3:17-21, as they appear in the Amplified Version. 'For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge--- to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on --- the world; but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him. He who believes on Him ---who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him- -- is not judged (he who trusts in Him NEVER COMES UP FOR JUDGMENT; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation; he incurs no damnation). But HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE IS JUDGED ALREADY; (he has already been convicted; has already received his sentence) because he has not believed on and trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name. THE BASIS OF THE JUDGMENT (indictment, the test by which all men are judged, the ground for the sentence) IS THIS: THAT LIGHT IS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND PEOPLE HAVE LOVED THE DARKNESS RATHER THAN AND MORE THAN THE LIGHT, FOR THEIR WORKS (deeds) WERE EVIL. For every wrongdoer hates (loathes, detests) the Light and will not come out into the Light, but shrinks from it, lest his works --- his deeds, his activities, his conduct --- be exposed and reprov'd. But he that practices truth --- who does what is right- -- comes out into the Light; so that his works might be plainly shown to be what they are, wrought with God --- divinely prompted, done with God's help, in dependence

upon Him". Can anything be made clearer than the fact that JUDGMENT CAME WITH THE ENTRANCE OF LIGHT? Or that EVERY MAN'S VERDICT WAS DETERMINED BY HIS RESPONSE TO THE LIGHT? "FOR JUDGMENT I AM COME INTO THE WORLD, that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind" (John 9:39). At the manifestation of His Life, which was "the Light of men", came THE INITIATING POINT OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION, whereby every man would be confronted.

The passages quoted above strongly confirm the truth which we now share. But perhaps none is plain as John 12:31. Without contradiction, Jesus declared, "NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD: NOW SHALL THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD BE CAST OUT. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me". What tremendous implications are found in these words: "NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD... NOW SHALL THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD BE CAST OUT"! Dare we question them? In His Own indisputable words, Jesus said that THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD BEGAN DURING THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH; and the results of this judgment would be evidenced by the progressive work of casting out the prince of this world! It was an event which occurred at a fixed and definite point in time... yet with on-going results! "NOW IS the Judgment; NOW SHALL the prince of this world be cast out"! Praise God for it!

#### "JUDGMENT DAY"--- AN ONGOING, AND YET DISPENSATIONAL WORK

While it is true that judgment was initiated when God was manifest in the flesh, there is a passage found in John 12:46-49, which clearly indicates that God has also reserved a special dispensation for judgment at the end of the age. Jesus said, "I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not. FOR I CAME NOT TO JUDGE THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM IN THE LAST DAY". As you recall, we had previously read where He said, "FOR JUDGMENT I AM COME INTO THE WORLD"; and yet here He says, "FOR I CAME NOT TO JUDGE THE WORLD"! The meaning of this seeming contradiction becomes apparent when we understand that though He DID come into the world to judge the world, and though He DID give examples of executing righteous judgment in the days of His flesh, His main purpose at that time was to atone for the sins of the world, and to bring "life and immortality to light through the Gospel". However, that there was an appointed time reserved for the judgment and restitution of all things is undoubtedly inferred when He said, "the Word that I have spoken, the same SHALL judge him IN THE LAST DAY". (While Scripture does indicate that "THE LAST DAYS" began with the Incarnation of the Word (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; II Tim. 3:1; II Peter 3:3), yet this reference to "THE LAST DAY" speaks of a specific time at the end of the age; "the dispensation of the fullness of times", if you please).

While we were contemplating these thoughts, we received a beautiful confirmation through the mail from Ray Prinzing. Looking back to our observation of Luke, chapter 4,

we had emphasized the fact that when Jesus opened the book of Isaiah in the synagogue that day, those present were privileged to witness the opening of "the Book of Life" in their midst. It was here that He proclaimed where "in the volume of the Book" it was written of Him. And we know that everything He read in their hearing, He went on to fulfill in His flesh. What was significant about this, however, was the place from which He read, and the place where He stopped. When Jesus stood up to read, He did so from Isa. 61. Brother Prinzinger points out that after Jesus read where He had come to "proclaim THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD", HE CLOSED THE BOOK, saying, "this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Lk. 4:21). Interestingly, our Lord's quote stopped right in the middle of Isa. 61, verse 2, in the midst of a very important prophetic passage (if you will turn to this in your Bibles, you will see that this is so). The balance of this scripture reads: "...and THE DAY OF VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD; to comfort all that mourn". What was the reason for this? Because He knew that while He had come to proclaim "the acceptable year of the Lord", "the day of vengeance of God" pertained to a different dispensation, to be fulfilled at a different time! It was to be fully consummated "IN THE LAST DAY" (and, as we shall see, He would not fulfill it alone)!

#### GOD'S "REPRINTS"--- INSTRUMENTS OF JUDGMENT

In light of all that we have considered thus far, we should have no trouble identifying "the Book of Life". Seeing that He was "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead", Jesus fits the description perfectly (Acts 10:42). He gave us the prime example of One who overcame all things, and who has now ascended to the Throne, to the right hand of Power. But there is another aspect to this which must be considered. Is it not true that just as Jesus was the Word made flesh", we, who have received His Spirit, have been "BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23)? And is it not true that we have been "predestinated to be CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, that He might be the firstborn of MANY BRETHREN" (Rom. 8:29)? Beloved, if "of His own will BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH" (James 1:18), then this means that WE ARE PART AND PARCEL OF THE INCARNATE WORD OF GOD, AS WELL! Seeing then that we are the offspring of the Eternal Word of God, WE ARE AS MUCH A PART OF THE WORD AS THE FIRST-BORN SON HIMSELF! Do we fully comprehend the magnitude of this? This means whatever destiny the original "Word made flesh" had, we share a part in too, because we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son! You see, He is our Head, and we are His Body; and all that He is, we are included! If He was "the Light of the world", we are to be likewise (Matt. 5:14); if He took upon Himself the image and personification of "the Book of Life", then this is our calling, also! If He was ordained and authorized to execute judgment, we are called to do the same! "AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD" (I John 4:17)!

If all this "judgment business" sounds a little "far-out" to you, then consider the oft-ignored words of I Cor.6:2-3... "Do ye not know that THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD? And if the world shall be judged of you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? KNOW YE NOT THAT WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS? How much

more things that pertain to this life"? And how about Daniel 7:22? "...and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; AND THE TIME CAME FOR THE SAINTS TO POSSESS THE KINGDOM"! Jude 14-15 is very enlightening: "Behold, the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS, TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT UPON ALL, and to convince all that are ungodly among them..."! And how does II Thess. 1:10 describe His coming to bring recompense?"... When He shall come TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN all them that believe"! You see, we have a very important role to fulfill in the judgment of this world, when Christ initiates "the day of vengeance of our God"! He has appointed us to the "Bench", so to speak, to judge the nations with righteous judgment! "TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, even as I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne" (Rev. 3:21)! And again, "He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, TO HIM WILL I GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON" (Rev. 2:26-27)!

We know that when Jesus died and rose again, He did so to ratify the New Covenant in the hearts of His elect. And what exactly is this "New" Covenant? "I will put My law into their inward parts, and WRITE IT IN THEIR HEARTS; and will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer.31:33)! This New Covenant is actually THE INDWELLING OF THE JUDGE HIMSELF inscribing His law, not upon tables of stone, as He did for Moses so long ago, but upon the fleshly tables of our hearts! And just as the commandments were written by "the finger of God", He is doing the same in us... by "putting His finger" on different areas of our lives, and "re-writing" the inward constitution of our characters! Understandably so, "JUDGMENT MUST FIRST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD" (Peter 4:17); Whose "house" we are! Chapter after chapter, page after page, paragraph after paragraph, and word after word, He is recording the principles of His Word within us; erasing, as it were, the negative verses of Adam's "life story", which once were so plainly stated in our natures. He is making of us "LIVING EPISTLES", to use Paul's terminology, who are "known and read of ALL MEN"! "Forasmuch as YE ARE MANIFESTLY DECLARED TO BE THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, WRITTEN NOT WITH INK, BUT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD: NOT IN TABLES OF STONE, BUT IN THE FLESHLY TABLES OF THE HEART" (11 Cor. 3:2-3)! Praise God for it!

Ever since Christ returned in Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, He has had a living record of the "Book of Life" in the earth. Those who were united in one accord" in the upper room that day became the first authorized "reprinting", manifestly declared in ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY VOLUMES! They were His own hand-picked representatives; "LIVELY SCROLLS", containing within them the mind of Christ. They were His source of Life and Light in the midst of gross darkness! Since that time, there have been other "reprintings", and every generation has had it's own living account of "the Book of the life of the Lamb" manifest in the flesh, as a witness and standard by which men in their day were judged (God is a very prolific Author)! Time would fail us to mention the many mighty men and women of faith, who have gladly laid down their lives, that they might exhibit His. These, as "Lights in the world, holding forth the Word

of Life", have served Christ's purpose well throughout history. We acknowledge the fact that there have been times when the "inscription" was more legible than at others, and the fact that there may have been limitations to their influence on the whole of world-wide society. Yet, by their very presence, they maintained a certain degree of balance and equity in the world. They were "Living Epistles", not constituting the fullness of the divine Record, but by adding their part to it's writing in history. However, God has reserved a day, and He is presently preparing a people, in which He shall reveal Himself in all the fullness of His glory! Down through the ages, He has progressively unveiled "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God" in the hearts of His elect. He has been intensifying His dealings within them, and educating them in the use of "just weights and balances". And in due season, He shall "judge the world in righteousness" by this many-membered Man (of whom He is the Head); this corporate "Book of the Life of the Lamb"! Hallelujah!

While this is but a brief overview of so vast a subject, it will serve to prepare us for future writings. Maranatha!

to be continued...

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