

# *The Revelation of Righteous Judgment Series*

## PART 3

### "JUDGMENT AT THE HOUSE"

(CONTINUED)

**I PETER 4:17-18...***"For the time is come that JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD: and if it begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear"?*

As we begin the third portion of this series, we will do so by examining the most common words used in Scripture for "judgment". An overview of the Old Testament shows that there are three basic root words in the Hebrew language: "SHAPHAT" (Strong's #8199), "DUWN" (#1777), and "PALAI" (#6419); all bearing similar definitions. While all three emphasize the act of judgment, the first two words incorporate into their meanings the act of ruling and governing; while the last word includes the idea of prayer, intercession, and supplication. (We shall have more to say about this later in the series). From the root "SHAPHAT" comes a derivative, "MISHPAT" (#4941), which carries a broad definition of the term: "a verdict pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree, including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty".

Turning to the New Testament, we find in Rom. 2:5, Paul used the word "DIKAIOKRISIA" (Strong's #1341) in speaking of "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God". This word is actually the combination of two words, the first being "DIKAIOS" (#1342), which means, "equitable (in character or act); by implying innocent, holy, or just"; and the second word being "KRISIS" (#2920), which simply means, "a decision (for or against)". Together they would be defined as: "a decision or verdict issued in equity from one of innocent, holy, and just character". Quite obviously, the judgment declared reflects the character of the judge. Wouldn't you agree? No doubt, this is what prompted David to write, "THE LORD IS KNOWN BY THE JUDGMENT WHICH HE EXECUTETH" (Psa. 9:16)! He understood that God uses the execution of judgment to IDENTIFY Himself, and to express to the world the holiness of His character. With this in mind, it would be well for us to understand that not only is this true with the Lord, but likewise with all of us. Therefore, we may say that the judgment which one passes, whether by word or in deed, is also a means of revealing their inner condition and state of being. The truth is, we are ALL KNOWN by the judgment which we execute! It is the outward expression of our inward state!

While looking at the subject in general, however, it is the latter word used in the phrase above, "KRISIS", that is most often used for judgment throughout the New Testament

writings. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "MISHPAT". At face value, it speaks simply of the act of judgment, for or against. But as we examine it closer, there is something we would like to consider. It has wisely been pointed out that this Greek word "KRISIS" is where we get our English word "CRISIS". Webster's New International Dictionary primarily defines "crisis" as: THE TURNING POINT FOR BETTER OR WORSE; an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life; the point of time when it is decided whether an affair or course of action shall proceed, be modified, or terminate: A DECISIVE MOMENT". While this word covers judgment in the general sense, does not this definition accurately describe God's special dealings with His people? They are His divinely ordained TURNING POINTS, HIS DECISIVE MOMENTS, when He brings about drastic and often sudden changes to our lives through critical conditions. And God brings them, without exception, into the life of every saint of God! Of course they will come when corrective discipline is needed; we would certainly be amiss to deny that fact; but let the record state that they are not always the result of transgression! Many times God sends judgment our way simply to prove us, to try us, and to see what is in our hearts (Ex. 20:20; Deut. 8:2). And the way we respond usually determines the way the judgment will go! One thing is for sure, in times of crisis (judgment), we cannot be complacent! His judgments will serve either to TERMINATE a course of action we have been following that is detrimental to our spiritual well being; MODIFY our course of action, so that we may be realigned and better equipped to fulfill God's divine will for our lives; or they will clear our pathways of insignificant distractions, trivial pursuits, or things which are no longer profitable for our perfection, that we may PROCEED at a more rapid pace into the plans and purposes of God! Whatever the effect He desires for them to have upon us, it can truly be said that they have a unique way of readjusting our vision! Without fail, as often as we are brought before the judgment seat of Christ, HE WILL GET OUR ATTENTION! Of this we can be certain!

### **A POSITIVE TURN OF EVENTS**

The word judgment should not always carry the negative connotations that are generally associated with it. In fact, we would do well to renew our minds from such a pessimistic attitude! Judgment may come in a very positive way, as an open vindication and award in one's behalf; or it may come as a "time of restitution" in disguise, following an occasion of loss or deprivation. (The process of time will clearly reveal it, in such an event). But when we speak of the judgment of God, we should immediately think of justice, equity, or fairness. Because God is all these things, we should naturally affiliate them together. For this cause, He is eternally justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges (Psa. 51:4). As Gen. 18:25 says, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"?

Again we would say, God's righteous judgments do not always come as forms of punishment. Sometimes they serve as HEAVEN-SENT BRIDGES FOR SPIRITUAL TRANSITION, to take us further into God's itinerary for our lives. And we would dare say that sometimes He uses them to terminate and remove from us what would seem to be GOOD THINGS, things that in times past MAY HAVE POSSIBLY EVEN BEEN ORDAINED OF GOD... things we would never willingly give up on our own (because of

their apparent spiritual value), in order to lead us into the next phase of His plan! "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9)! Because we are prone to seek security in those things with which we have grown most familiar or comfortable, He will certainly use judgments to bring about needed separations, for the sake of our spiritual development. We may not always understand the "whys" behind them at the time, and the losses may seem to be almost more than we can bear; but as we place our total trust in Him, He will always vindicate His righteous judgments in due season. Father knows best! He has our best interests in mind!

As it pertained to the disciples, we see that God brought them to an appointed CRISIS, A TURNING POINT, A DECISIVE MOMENT in their lives, as Christ began to tell them that He would soon depart from them in the flesh. He was about to terminate something that could certainly be labeled as "good", yea, something they dearly loved and had benefitted greatly from: His earthly walk with them! But though He tried to explain to them that this transition was for their good, they were blind to the truth; they just could not see it at the time! They were perfectly satisfied with the present arrangement and order of discipleship they had with Him, and the relationship with which they had grown accustomed! Why should anything change? "But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. NEVERTHELESS I TELL YOU THE TRUTH; IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT I GO AWAY: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove (convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..." (John 16:6-7)! From their line of reasoning, His departure was the worst news they could possibly hear! How then would they learn of God's righteous judgments? Who then would teach them His divine statutes? To them, this was like announcing the end of the world! It is doubtful that they even heard the last part of the conversation (concerning the Comforter and His work), they were so utterly depressed by His initial words!

(Prior to this, you recall in Matt. 16:22-23, after Jesus had told them for the first time of His death and resurrection, Peter actually REBUKED Him; he passed fleshly, human judgment on the matter, based upon his feelings! "BE IT FAR FROM THEE, LORD: this shall NOT be unto thee". But He turned, and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind Me, satan (adversary): thou art an offence unto Me: FOR THOU SAVOUREST NOT THE THINGS THAT BE OF GOD, BUT OF MEN". Now, there is a good distinction between human, and righteous judgment; and a good lesson to be learned. For any time we exercise human judgment in matters pertaining to the plan of God (even well-intentioned ones), not only is it an offense to the Lord; we literally make ourselves His enemy!

It was actually TO THEIR ADVANTAGE that He TURN from them in the flesh, that He might RETURN to them in the Spirit! By doing so, He could open their "eyes", so to speak, and direct them into a higher level of spiritual experience and understanding, unattainable through any other way! Therefore, contrary to their own personal opinions and judgments about it, they really NEEDED this judgment, this crisis time, to set the work of restoration in motion! This "eye-opening" experience was essential for them!

When the whole process came to bear upon them, they underwent a tremendous amount of pressure, to say the least. What intense examinations they endured; what probings and testings! Indeed, what panic and chaos must have overwhelmed their thoughts! Even with the many assurances Jesus had given them, each one of them probably wrestled with the idea that all this trouble came as a result of some sin they had committed! It seemed as if everything they had believed in was being shaken! But as we shared in our last article, after the Lord had performed His whole work of judgment, the entire affair took a drastic turn. On the day of Pentecost, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind", as He poured out the refining fire of His Presence upon the one hundred twenty! Praise God! Truly as we speak, the Lord, who they sought, had **SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE** (Mal. 3:1); "filling", as it were, "all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2)! And beloved, despite all the doubts and fears that they might have felt before, **THEY NOW KNEW THIS WAS A POSITIVE JUDGMENT, JUDGMENT PASSED IN THEIR FAVOR**, a turning point for good! In an awesome display of divine judgment, it could be said that **GOD REALLY LIT THEIR "CANDLES"**, as "tongues of fire" sat upon each one of them! He ignited them as "lamps" in the midst of their darkness, and anointed them with "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"! They were all filled with His Spirit, and quickened with the inspiration of the Almighty! Now they understood as never before the purpose for their **CRISIS**, and the wisdom of God in allowing it; for now the Spirit of Truth had come, to lead them into all truth (Jn. 16:13)! Hallelujah! He would set their records straight!

As a result of their coming to their appointed **TURNING POINT**, they in turn **TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN** (Acts 17:6)! They immediately began to expose the darkness all around them, calling on men everywhere to repent! It was plain to see that they had received "the revelation of righteous judgment"; not in theory only, but in reality! They were, in effect, fulfilling Zephaniah's prophesy, concerning their day: "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" (1:2). Illuminated with heavenly Light, and having their eyes anointed with heavenly "eyesalve" (Rev. 3:18), there was no place for injustice or unrighteousness to hide from their discerning gaze; for it was as if Christ Himself was looking through their eyes, and speaking through their mouths, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the thoughts and intents of men's hearts! They were unctioned with divine authority to judge in Christ's stead! As wise words of eternal life flowed through the lips of these "ignorant and unlearned men", those who heard them were violently smitten in their hearts with conviction, as if stricken with flaming swords! In fact, the disciples received from God such "mouths and wisdom", all of their adversaries were not able to gainsay nor resist them (Lk. 21:15)! Truly, the Lord was making a diligent search throughout the land, judging the hearts and lives of those of their generation by the light of His **CANDLESTICK CHURCH**! And you can rest assured, beloved, they were not passing human, carnal judgment now, carelessly uttering words based on the mere appearance of things; they were quickened by the indwelling Spirit to render righteous verdicts, either for or against those judged (just ask Ananias and Sapphira; or Simon the sorcerer; or Cornelius and his household; or Julius the centurion; etc., etc.)! The accuracy of their judgments caused even kings and potentates to tremble

(Acts 24:25)!

Those who sought truth were drawn to them; for those, there was mercy, grace, and deliverance flowing freely and abundantly from the Throne. But not all who heard them, however, were willing to receive the light, or accept their judgments. As Jesus had warned them, "this is the condemnation (judgment), that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (Jn. 3:19-20). They remembered all too well that it was because of the piercing words that Jesus proclaimed, which exposed the darkness in men's hearts (especially the religious leaders, who wanted so desperately to appear pious and holy), that caused Him to be despised and rejected of men (Jn. 7:7; 15:22). Therefore, keeping in mind that Jesus had said, "the servant is not greater than his lord... if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (Jn. 15:20); they anticipated that, as it was for Jesus, the consequences of being "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" could cost them their lives, as well! At least they were prepared for it when it came; they entered into their time of great tribulation with their eyes wide open!

True to form, multitudes of believers were persecuted for boldly declaring the revelation of God's righteous judgments; but they were nevertheless faithful to do so. They paid the price with their own blood! However, not only were the scribes and Pharisees committed to the extinction of such a group, but so were the Romans. They were all threatened by the penetrating truths they spoke; therefore, they twain were determined to extinguish the flame, in whatever way necessary! It is reported that the Emperor Nero, in stout defiance to the truth, and as a gesture of cruel mockery, used the bodies of the saints burning upon stakes (as the original "Roman Candles"), to light up his perverted garden parties! He figured that this treatment would "cool them off"! But rather than "quenching their wicks", so to speak, and obscuring the light they manifested, the opposite happened; the more they persecuted, the brighter the light shined! It even pierced the darkness of the mighty Roman Empire! Many of them were said to have been converted through the courageous testimonies of God's "illuminators", who were waxen strong in spirit! They were virtually unstoppable in their quest! Hallelujah!

### **LIGHT IN THE HOUSE**

We understand one of the reasons God "lights our candles" is that we might ultimately radiate our light out into the world, allowing men "to see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven". As was the case with the disciples, whenever light is manifested, judgment is the result (because of the direct confrontation men have with truth). Directly related to this, but in the words of a different metaphor, you recall Jesus had said, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, OUT OF HIS BELLY shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn. 7:38). Both examples are basically referring to the same central thought; the one comparing our righteous and benevolent actions resulting from the life of the Spirit to light, while the other likening the out-flowing of divine inspiration, revelation, and anointing to water. (Pardon the pun, but when we receive the impartation of the Spirit, we become an extension of God's "Water & Light Company" in the world)!

However, we must not think that just because the Spirit has taken His abode in us, and opened our eyes to exercise righteous discernment in the world around us, that we ourselves are exempt from judgment, or no longer in need of it. Quite the contrary! His indwelling Presence does not suggest perfection in us as individuals, or approval of all our ways. The truth is, in order for there to be a continual out-flowing of "water and light" from our "bellies" (that is, our innermost beings), there must also be a continual in-working of His Spirit within us. As we read previously in our series, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, SEARCHING ALL THE INWARD PARTS OF THE BELLY" (Prov. 20:27). Ah, with this comes understanding! For as the Lord quickens our spirits, and awakens them from the sleep of death, He does so not only for the purpose of making a diligent search without... but to make a thorough examination of our inward parts, as well! He enlightens the eyes of our understanding, and impresses His godly convictions upon our consciences, that we might be able to examine and cross-examine every thought, intent, and motive within ourselves! You see, until we have thoroughly judged ourselves, and become THE OBJECTS of His judgments, we are not really qualified to be THE INSTRUMENTS of His judgments (Matt. 7:1-5)! It's just that simple!

We hope you will not mistake what we mean when we say that God's foremost purpose during this dispensation has not been so much to bring judgment upon the world at large (although there is certainly plenty of historical evidence of this happening anyway, both to groups of people and to whole nations); but mainly (and most importantly), to JUDGE HIS HOUSE. "For the time is come that JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD"... Whose house are we! By saying this, we are not ignoring Jesus' words in Jn. 12:31 ("NOW IS the judgment of this world"); nor are we suggesting that He is unconcerned with the affairs of mankind in general, as some do. Rather, we are stating that the EMPHASIS of the Spirit has primarily been on SETTING HIS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER; on restoring the proper succession of authority within His people, His "living" temple... both corporately and individually! He enters in, He lights the candle... that we might begin to straighten up the house! He wants us to set all things in their right and proper relationship with each other!

### **THE ORDER OF THE HOUSE**

What exactly is implied when we speak of "setting the house in order"? Why is this necessary? To answer this, we must first understand what God's original order for the "house" was, and how disorder came about.

As we pointed out in our last message, when God fashioned the first man, He did so by creating three essential components for his being: SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY. Within this unique creation, God appointed specific roles for each of these elements, along with specific responsibilities for them to fulfill. The spirit was to take the leading role, since it came from God, and was designed to have direct fellowship with the Spirit of God. Whenever God communicated with Adam, He spake to his spirit. Next in line was the soul. The function of the soul (intellect, emotion, and will) was to work in cooperation with the spirit, to receive the inward impressions from the spirit, and reproduce them as outward expressions. The body, with its five senses, was designed to be the submissive

servant to the soul, obediently carrying out its will in the earth. The soul was not designed to usurp authority over the spirit in matters of judgment; but rather, to work in concert with the spirit, in the performance of God's will. The body served merely as the organ of expression in the world. Before the fall of man, the spirit controlled the whole being through the soul. The two were ordained to rule together, executing their God-given authority over the body, to reproduce the image of God in the earth.

Although there was a definite order established, with varying levels of authority, all three were equally important in their respective fields; all three were necessary to function in the capacity for which God had formed them. The spirit could not do what the soul was designed for; the soul could not do what the body was for; and the body could not do what the spirit was ordained for. God established the order, and set it in motion, that all would work in harmony and unison with each other. Their purpose was to collectively manifest the will of the Creator to His creation.

An interesting observation may be made when we see that the Greek word for spirit ("PNEUMA") is in the masculine tense, while the soul ("PSUCHE") is feminine. In light of this, we can readily make a parallel between the facts stated above, and the whole Eden scenario. Here we have three items in focus: THE MAN, THE WOMAN, AND THE GARDEN; which could easily be viewed from the perspective of SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY.

When God originally brought forth the man, it was immediately apparent that he needed "an help meet for him". Therefore, by the wise design of the Creator, Eve came into being. She was brought forth by the skillful hand of God, perfectly endowed with qualities that would complement the man. They twain were the beginning of THE HOUSE OF GOD.

God's intention for the founding couple was for them, separate and unique as they were by this time, to work together as one. And understandably so, for they were designed to be a perfect match! They were to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). Quite obviously, this mandate required the active participation of both parties, in order for it to be fulfilled. Therefore, they must needs perform their designated roles, that God's will might be accomplished, and that He might be glorified. Since the garden was their home, it would be the first place to exhibit the fruit of their bodies, and the fruit of their labors. From there, they would spread around the world!

Because the man was ordained to have the leading role in the relationship, when God wanted to impart revelation to them, He would speak directly to Adam. It was then Adam's responsibility to correctly inform the woman. (As a result, they would implement the revelation together in the form of manifestation). Please allow us to say that this did not make Eve inferior to Adam; it merely suggested that God chose a different role for her to perform. Both would share in the blessed reward, when once God's household guidelines for government were followed. They would enjoy their inheritance together! Now let us get right to the point. We know that sin resulted when Eve acted independently of Adam, her designated head. Being the weaker vessel that she was, she

was deceived by the adversary! Yet she was not wholly to blame; for Adam willfully and knowingly consented, not only by permitting this to happen, but also by his submission to her choice of rebellion (in doing so, he also acted in insubordination to his Head). Therefore, he was totally without excuse! It was because of this disorder in "the house" that the garden was cursed... bearing thorns, briars, and thistles for the man to contend with! This improper relationship between the man and the woman caused the entire creation to suffer!

It is not difficult to see the connection here. In God's original plan, "the order of the house" was SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY. All was in perfect harmony and balance with one another, accomplishing the purposes of God. (This Spirit-led condition constitutes what Scripture refers to as a "spiritual man"). In the fall, however, the order was changed; the soul took preeminence over the spirit, and brought it into submission to the desires of the flesh and mind. As a result, man's judgment was perverted, his vision impaired; and he was plunged into a state of utter despair! (This unregenerate, soul-controlled, sense-ruled state is what is referred to in Scripture as "the flesh", or being "carnally minded").

### **SET THINE HOUSE IN ORDER**

We read in Isa. 38:1 where God sent a message through Isaiah unto King Hezekiah: "Thus saith the Lord, SET THINE HOUSE IN ORDER: FOR THOU SHALT DIE, AND NOT LIVE". While it is not necessary for us to elaborate on the plot of this story, we will borrow from the principle. Anytime there is disorder in the house, DEATH WILL INEVITABLY FOLLOW. It was true in the garden; it has been true ever since! Death results from disorder!

Now we can better understand why God "lights our candle". He imparts "the light of life" to our spirits, so we might clearly see to properly "set our house in order"; to reestablish and maintain the correct succession of spirit, soul, and body! Unless this occurs in us, no matter how many "good works" we may do, or how "anointed" we may seem, we are invariably bound in the realm of DEATH!

We reiterate the purpose: it is to reestablish AND maintain the correct order of the house. We say it this way because while regeneration initially illuminates our understanding to reestablish the order (that the spirit might be placed back into it's rightful position of authority, with the soul working in support), unless we constantly maintain the order, we will revert back into the old pattern. And how is it that we maintain the order? By properly judging ourselves in the light, according to righteous judgment, of course! There are obviously many things hidden in our hearts, things which tend to escape human judgment, that would pose a threat to the divine order (even AFTER our conversion experience). These require the revelation of righteous judgment to bring them to our attention. We must ever keep in mind that conversion is just the beginning. Salvation is a process! And this process requires light in the house! It cannot happen in the dark!

We say this is the purpose and work of the lighted candle; yet there is more to it than that. Actually, there is a DUAL PURPOSE involved. This fact emerges as we look further into

the word "candle" itself. In Hebrew, it is pronounced, "NAY-RAW"; a primary root meaning, "TO GLISTEN; a lamp, light, or candle" (#5216). Rather obvious, wouldn't you say? However, this root word has an "identical twin" in the Hebrew language, which expands greatly upon this definition, and adds dimension to the overall meaning. It is the word "NIYR" (#5214), a primary root which Strong's Concordance says is "probably identical with that of #5416, through the idea of THE GLEAM OF A FRESH FURROW; TO TILL THE SOIL: ---BREAK UP". How very interesting! Even the word "candlestick" confirms what we now declare. It is the Hebrew word "MENORAH" (#4501), defined simply as, "a chandelier, or candlestick". It is the feminine tense of #4500, which has for it's meaning, "A YOKE (FOR PLOUGHING)"! To put all this into perspective, we would say that not only are our candles lit for the sake of REVELATION, but once this work is accomplished, they perform the service of EXCAVATION! It is the same word used in Jer. 4:3, when the Lord said, "BREAK UP ("NIYR") YOUR FALLOW GROUND, AND SOW NOT AMONG THORNS"! It speaks of A TURNING POINT, A BREAKING UP; a time for examination (of one's spiritual condition), and elimination (of all that is obstructive or non-productive in the growing process). And it speaks of the glistening gleam of a fresh, new furrow, that is, A NEW BEGINNING! Hallelujah! This is all incorporated into the meaning! Beloved, we can rest assured that the Christ in us will not leave one area of our lives unexposed... or unturned! As long as we "in all our ways acknowledge Him", He will quicken our consciences to discern right and wrong, convicting our hearts as often as necessary, until all that is in us proclaims, "holiness unto the Lord"! "For God shall bring EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. 12:14)! He will cover every inch of our "earthen vessels", shining the light of truth within every crack and crevice of our inward beings, until all has been clearly brought to our attention. We know that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13); therefore, He will not stop, until He reveals to us the "bare" facts of our condition!

Not only will He reveal this knowledge to our hearts, but He will also teach us how to actually "unearth" those things which are obstructive in nature to our spiritual well-being... through the impartation of divine wisdom. He teaches us how to properly "work the plow", so to speak; to "break up our fallow ground", and to thoroughly dissolve the "clods" of corruption; to know just the right depth to drive the plow into the soil (so as not to bury it). Furthermore, He shows us how to "clear the land"; that is, to rid ourselves of the stones of sin, the stumblingblocks of selfishness, and the encumbrances of carnality once they have surfaced, that we might "sow to ourselves in righteousness, and reap in mercy" (Hosea 10:12)! Only He possesses this knowledge; only He can provide it! Praise God!

### **A JOINT-EFFORT IN JUDGMENT**

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11:31-32). Wuest's Expanded Translation renders this, "Now, if we properly evaluated and formed a right estimate of ourselves, in that case we would not be judged. But when

we are being judged by the Lord, we are the subjects of a disciplinary judgment in order that we may not be condemned with the world". That there is a judgment-appointment for the world, a breaking point for the masses of humanity, should be clear to anyone who has made even a casual survey of the Scriptures. "Because He has appointed a day, in the which He shall judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). Knowing our Father's uncompromising attitude toward iniquity, it is certain that He will not allow man's rebellion to continue indefinitely. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15). Therefore, rather than despising the chastening (loving correction) of the Lord, we should consider it a special expression of His grace that He would now personally deal with us in judgment. "For God hath NOT APPOINTED US TO WRATH, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:9)! We are the objects of mercy!

This is why the inward search is necessary--- to rid us of all that would offend our Lord in that day. Without doubt, it is He, the Righteous Judge, who searches the heart (Psa. 139:1, 23; Jer. 17:9-10; I Chron. 28:9; among other places). He is responsible for the inward illumination. And yet, as we have already pointed out from Prov. 20:27, our own spirits have a direct involvement in the process. It is A JOINT-EFFORT: His Spirit and ours. As we submit to the leading of the Spirit, together "searching all the inward parts of the belly", WE ARE PRESENTLY LEARNING WHAT IT IS TO RULE AND REIGN WITH CHRIST; to be seated with Him in His Throne! "He that ruleth his spirit (is better) than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32b)! Beloved, this is no small matter with the Lord!

In closing, we are compelled to add one more thought. Because this is a joint-participation, we understand that the progress of this search depends largely upon the cooperation of our spirits, to walk in the light. We are all quite aware of the fact, however, that it is entirely possible to quench the Spirit; to ignore His convictions, and override His Voice. And there is a real danger of having our consciences "seared with a hot iron" (that is, rendered insensitive to the Lord; I Tim. 4:2), through repeated violations. Of this we should sincerely beware.

Quite possibly, there may be some who read these lines, who feel they have resisted His will for so long (either consciously or unconsciously), that the light has gone out in their temple. Perhaps they have gone through a dry season, or a period where they have not had sufficient time to spend with the Lord; and now they fear that God's Spirit has ceased to strive with them, that He no longer desires to speak to them by revelation, that they have been given over to reprobation. (You would be amazed how many people are tormented with these types of feelings)! To these we offer the following words of hope: "A bruised reed shall He not break, AND A SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH: HE SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGMENT UNTO TRUTH. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, til He have set judgment in the earth..." (Isa. 42:3-4)! Praise God! Allow us the privilege of saying that THE DEVIL IS A LIAR! As long as your "flax" (wick) is still smoking (and it obviously is, or else you would not even be concerned in the first place), there is evidence that you are not too far gone! Encourage yourself in the

Lord, friend, for He will not fail, nor will He be discouraged, until He has established judgment in your "earth"!

Whether we are aware of it or not, He is preparing us for great things! What we are experiencing now is but a foretaste of things to come! He has ordained for us to be His "ruling class" in the age to come! Therefore, REJOICE, O ye saints of the Most High! "He shall send forth JUDGMENT UNTO VICTORY" (Matt. 12:20)!

to be continued...

***GOOD SEED PUBLICATIONS***

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