

The Revelation of Righteous Judgment Series

PART 9

"JUDGMENT AT THE HOUSE"

(CONTINUED)

I Peter 4:17...*"For the time is come that JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD..."*

In our last segment, we began developing an abstract, or portrait, of the religious side of the Adamic nature in three dimensions...as was seen in the three main religious groups that were present in the land of Israel during the days when Christ was manifest in the flesh. They were, of course, the Pharisees, the Saducees, and the Essenes. Together, these three sects, along with their various and sundry beliefs, represented the entire collection of natural religious thought, either up to that time, or any time since. And as we pointed out in the course of our message, their fundamental teachings can be found, in one form or another, in the manifold creeds and doctrines of virtually every world religion ever known to man. More importantly, however, we discovered that more specifically, they represented the vast multitudes of religious ideas, concepts, and considerations found within the heart of every man. They personified and characterized the religious mind of the old "man of sin" in general...in other words, they depicted ADAM IN 3-D...the "split-personality" of the Adamic nature!

We will not take the time again to reiterate the peculiarities of each group (since we did so in our last message); but suffice us to say that they exemplify all the ways natural men think concerning the moral or ethical issues of life; the ways men perceive good and evil (by using the term, "moral", we simply mean that which pertains to moral issues, not that these thoughts are morally correct themselves). They bespeak the numerous religious attitudes and opinions formed in the carnal mind, which are often mistaken to be the way of the Spirit. These ideologies are the proud "fathers" of every self-righteous work of the flesh! While it is not difficult to recognize these traits in various religious groups in the world today; the fact that each one of us still has an Adamic nature places the proud and prejudicial voices of the Pharisee, the Saducee, and the Essene within us, as well. They readily express themselves on every subject that is brought to our attention; hastily passing their judgments, and making their determinations known; conveying their twisted, warped, and distorted biases to us, as if they were actually the voice of God. They insist on being recognized!

THE MOLDING OF OUR MENTALITY

We read in Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he". This is a simple way of saying that the thoughts we entertain in the secret chambers of our hearts, and the impressions we receive in the soft "clay" of our minds, have a direct bearing on the type of character we develop. To a great extent, it really is true that we are what we think! It stands to reason that if we give place to a certain line of reasoning long enough, it will eventually effect our personality. It will mold our make-up, and it will change the constitution of our character. For instance, a person who entertains a spirit of fear over an extended period of time will eventually become a fearful person. One who allows thoughts of covetousness and greed to dominate his mind will eventually become a selfish, greedy person. The same goes for someone who permits sensual images to linger in his imagination...or thoughts of hatred and bitterness. If an individual dwells on them over a prolonged duration, he will most likely find himself conforming to their image, naturally manifesting those spirits out of his inner nature. Now, all these examples belong to the negative side, the side which we readily acknowledge as being evil. But it is also spiritually logical to see that one who listens to the soulish suggestions of the Pharisee, the Saducee, or the Essene long enough, will inevitably take on the characteristics of at least one of these seemingly "good" religious thought patterns, as well! They will fasten themselves to his persona, and adapt him to their likeness...in other words, they will make him what they are!

Allow us to say that the religious voices of the flesh are seldom ever dangerous in appearance...in fact, they generally exhibit an air of righteousness. Usually they leave the impression of goodness and godliness, and seem to have a quality of piety about them. But we should never let their appearances deceive us! The inclinations of these religious spirits are always the same! Their motives may seem right, their reasonings may sound logical. They may even encourage good deeds and humanitarian efforts. But in the end, they will always lead us away from Christ, rather than to Him! They will interfere with our Spirit- led relationship, and distract us from placing absolute dependence on the Spirit for direction! They cannot be trusted, not even for a moment!

While it is true that most of us possess a vast collection of rivaling religious opinions in our psyche, taken from a cross-section of these three perspectives; and while it is true that these ideas often vary widely from subject to subject, being contradictory in nature; it is likewise true that in the end, we generally have a tendency to lean more favorably toward one particular ideology over the rest. We are usually persuaded toward a singular school of thought on most issues; and this becomes our life philosophy, our overall mindset, the constitution by which we live. (This double-minded policy of decision-making is very much like what took place within the Sanhedrin of old, the "supreme court" of Jesus' day. It's membership was comprised of both Pharisees and Saducees...but was primarily governed by the one which held the most seats. And we have every reason to believe that their debates were just as fierce as any we have ever witnessed between Democrats and Republicans on the floor of the U.S. House or Senate, usually ending in compromise. How very typical this is of the "Sanhedrin" of our souls! Unlike the leading of the Spirit, it is only after much internal arguing and wrangling, much ranting and raving, much debate and presentation, that conclusions are reached! What a nerve-racking experience this is)!

It is apparent that some people are basically more compatible with the Pharisaical world view in their thinking; others lean more to that of the Saducee. Still others that we meet seem to generally conform to the Essenic mentality; the Gnostic point of view. But why is this so? We are sure that the reasons vary with different individuals (since there are probably no two people who think exactly alike on every issue). Perhaps for some, they were raised up in homes where certain religious and philosophical attitudes were deeply instilled within them. This can certainly have a great bearing on the way a person views things. Or perhaps others may have been influenced later in life, by folks whom they revered and admired (or feared, or were intimidated by, for that matter). This is also quite common. Still others may have picked up certain concepts, convictions, or assumed freedoms from various ministries and fellowships they have associated with over the years. All these (as well as other reasons not mentioned), have the power to mold one's mentality into conformity to a particular outlook, and effects how he judges even the least of matters. However, the reason why we accepted them in the first place, the time when we acquired them, or even the place where they came from, should not be of major importance to us; nay, rather, the thing that should interest us most is how to recognize these thoughts for what they truly are, as often as they crop up, and how to recognize their spiritual source. This, dear friends, should be the real issue to us! Not why, when, or where; but HOW!

Because these things have been so ingrained into our thinking processes, so buried in the depths of these earthen vessels of ours, so much a part of the activities of the temple (which we are), we have, for the most part, failed to identify them properly, as to their true nature. The reason for this is because, for so long, we have mistakenly associated them with the voice of the Spirit; and therefore, have allowed them to escape self-judgment. As a result, they have, to a great extent, taken the place of God in our minds, and replaced the knowledge of the Holy in our understanding. But as we become more and more sensitive to the genuine, that is, to the inspiration and illumination of the Spirit of Truth, Christ is progressively exposing the true source of these "religious leaders" in the temple. He is rending the veil, so to speak, and uncovering their spiritual origins! Hallelujah!

THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST

As we mentioned before, when Jesus entered this world in the days of His flesh, His greatest source of contention came not from the publicans and harlots, and not from the sinners and unconverted masses... but from the religious hierarchy. They were the ones who opposed Him, who despised and rejected Him with a passion. From the moment that He first appeared publicly, declaring the gospel of the Kingdom, they hated Him fiercely. He was a marked man to them! They sought to find fault with His words, to catch Him in violation of the law. And though the priests and rabbis often contended with one another, they were willing, at least for a season, to unite their efforts against Him, in hopes that they might overpower Him. They incessantly attempted to place stumblingblocks before Him; to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. They schemed and plotted, they devised and conspired. They sought every opportunity to seize Him, without revealing their devious intentions before the multitudes. You see, while it was true that they wanted to

do away with Him, to remove Him from the scene, the fact remains that they wanted to do it without appearing hostile to the ways and works of God. They carefully guarded their image, and sought to defend the pious impression they left on men. Therefore, they did what they did secretly, covertly, under the guise of righteous indignation, as if their opposition against Him was actually for the honor of God. They wanted to make out like He was responsible for all the disruption in their midst! They dearly loved their religious system, and the place of prominence they had attained to among the populace; and they were not about to let some little lone voice from Galilee take that away from them! He had to be removed!

But why was it that they were so threatened by Him? And why did they hate Him so vehemently? Because while they had traditionally been recognized as the chosen oracles of God, He dared to challenge their authority, and bring into question their leadership abilities. He defied their decisions, and rejected their judgments. He openly resisted their form of rulership, and offered the people a more excellent way! Ah, now this is what infuriated them most! Not only did He renounce them for their blind guidance, but He went on to exemplify the qualities of true leadership. He showed the people what a good shepherd should be like, by simultaneously manifesting the submissive life of a lamb! You see, unlike the scribes and Pharisees, who "said, but did not", He did much more than just give them laws to live by; He demonstrated a life to them that was totally led by the Spirit! In this way, He confirmed that what He said was true, and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that what He commanded of them worked! This the religious spokesmen would not, and could not do!

Beloved, there is one thing we can be certain of, and that is that anything the Lord speaks to our hearts has first been demonstrated in the life of the Lamb...either by scriptural example, or by spiritual principle. He will never lead us in ways that are contrary to His nature, or that cannot be found in the Word. Furthermore, His commandments and convictions are "quick (living) and powerful"; that is, they have within them the life-giving power to change us into His image. They will not encourage useless exercise, or aimless service. And they will not draw attention to ourselves. They will glorify the Father, by conforming us to His likeness. Now, we admit that the entrance of His words may initially be troubling to the inner "city" of our souls; but they will eventually produce within us a humility, a compassion, and a peace that cannot be obtained any other way. His peace passes all understanding!

Try as they may, the religious "leaders" of the Adamic nature cannot provide any true and lasting peace; for once their advice has been followed, they may at first create a superficial satisfaction in the soul, but it is always accompanied with a deep inner sense of unrest and lack of fulfillment in the spirit. Isa. 59:8 says, The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings. They have made them crooked paths. Whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace". The reason for this is because they cannot give what they do not have; and they cannot provide what they have never manifested! How true we have found it to be that "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). The way

presented by religious Adam may seem right at first, but it is devoid of the life of the Spirit!

THE DIFFICULTY IN DISCERNMENT

Despite the fact that during the days of His flesh, Christ was so convincing in His presentation, so persuasive in His message, have you ever considered how difficult it must have been for folks, who had been taught all their lives to reverence and respect their elders, to suddenly turn from the counsel they had received from them, and live by the words of Jesus only? What an awesome challenge this must have been! Just think about it for a moment...these people, who had been instructed, not only by their parents from their youth up, but also by their entire nation, to hold their religious representatives in the highest esteem...these people, who were accustomed to receiving instruction through them, and for so long had unquestionably accepted them as God's sacred "mouthpieces"...these people were challenged to forsake their leaders utterly, to abandon their sayings, to entirely walk away from them, and never consult with them again for direction! Wow! Talk about a state of shock! What fear; what uncertainty they were suddenly faced with! Admire Christ's words? Yes...Marvel at His miracles? Of course! But to totally disregard the counsel of the chief priests and rabbis was expecting quite a lot!

Can you understand their confusion? Surely there were times when they could clearly see the truth in what Jesus said about the Pharisees and Saducees---that they were full of extortion and excess (Matt. 23:25); of hypocrisy and iniquity (v. 28); of ravening and wickedness (Lk. 11:39); and that they had omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith. At times, it was plain to see that they had passed over judgment and the love of God (Lk. 11:42). Yet there were just as surely other times, when all they could see was their good...the good words, their tokens of generosity, and the good deeds they performed. Surely they couldn't have been all bad, could they? No doubt, many could not understand why they had to choose between the teachings of Christ, and those of their time-honored elders. In their eyes, it seemed they were both working toward the same goal. If this were so, then why couldn't the two somehow be incorporated?

In like manner, it can be very difficult at times for us to be settled on our opinion of these inward impressionists. We often vacillate back and forth, halting between two opinions. Sometimes we can see them as the mental enemies of the Cross that they are, as Jesus shouts their true nature from the housetops. At other times, they seem to have the appearance of righteousness...that they possess some redeeming quality about them that makes them worth holding on to. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that there are many moral ideas and opinions we harbor within us, that are like extra baggage; things that are not necessarily there by the direct dealing of God, that is, as a result of His having dealt with us personally about them (i.e. "borrowed" convictions, gotten from others). And there are other things that dwell there, that perhaps are from an earlier dealing, but are not necessarily the result of a current conviction. These, too, fit into the same category (for once the Breath of inspiration has departed from a specific dealing,

spiritual "rigor mortis" sets in; the law of sin and death takes over, and it is drawn into the realm of the flesh). Be it known, however, that whatever we believe, whatever we say, or whatever we do, that is not the result of a fresh and personal revelation of the Spirit acts as anti-christ to us! This goes for anything we allow without the constant and careful consideration of the Spirit; anything that we automatically assume to be the mind and will of God, without first acknowledging Him; anything that makes seeking God obsolete! It becomes a substitute for the anointing, an obstacle for the truth, and a replacement for the real Spirit of inspiration! Under no circumstances can it co-exist with the Spirit of Christ!

We would also like to point out the fact that at no time did Jesus seek the advice of the Pharisees, the Saducees, or the Essenes in His presentation of the Kingdom; nor did He solicit their help in any way. He didn't need to! He was quite capable of accomplishing His agenda, the plan He was sent to fulfill, without going through the established channels of religion to do it. He was not interested in their thoughts, strategies, or opinions on the promulgation of the Gospel. In fact, they were an abomination to Him! Furthermore, He was not restricted to using their religious jargon, their traditional theological terminology in His dialogue. He thought along completely different lines than they, and employed an entirely different language to convey Kingdom truths! He had the mind of the Spirit for direction! He did not pursue opportunities provided by them, borrow from their familiar teachings, quote from their words of wisdom, or use their influence to gain favour with the people. He understood that their wisdom came not from above, but was "earthly, sensual, and devilish"! Besides, He was perfectly able to lead His followers into a state of perfection without leaning at all on the arm and aid of the flesh!

Beloved, that was true then; and it is still true today. He does not want, nor does He need any help from the flesh, regardless of the form that it takes, or what it has to offer! Many think that while God hates the evil works of the flesh, He desires to utilize it's positive potential...to use it's good words, it's witty thoughts and suggestions, or it's religious works of good will; but alas, He does not. There is absolutely no place in the Kingdom for the mind and will of the flesh! The sooner this truth sinks down into our ears, the closer we will be to apprehending the revelation of righteous judgment!

TWO WAYS OF REVELATION

As we have been wont to tell you, we believe that at various intervals of our Christian experience, the entire scenario of the Gospel account is enacted and fulfilled within every one of us. Every story, every event, and every encounter Jesus had with different individuals, whether they ended in encouragement or in rebuke, is depictive of personal confrontations we have all experienced with Christ in the inner regions of our being, at one time or another. Though they may not have necessarily occurred in chronological order, they all can be applied to us in different stages of our spiritual sojourn.

With that in mind, we read throughout the Gospels where different ones sent from the religious community attempted to verbally entrap our Lord. These masters of debate presented their arguments, they made their case. They craftily worded things in ways that

would cause Him to incriminate Himself, were He to answer them incorrectly. They tried every approach they could think of. They even tried to use flattery to catch Him offguard. But alas, they could not! With His divinely-inspired words of eternal life, He made short work of them. He put them to silence, and sent them on their way! As a result, He was then able to instruct the people in the ways of the Kingdom without distraction.

The parallel that exists between the ways the religious leaders reacted to Christ then, and how the carnal mind within us reacts to His indwelling Presence now is quite amazing. It is invariably the same! Regardless of the setting, the reaction remains unchanged! It is extremely hostile to the wisdom and knowledge of Christ; and will go to any extreme to have Him silenced!

We have all experienced times when Adam's "ambassadors" have attempted to debate the inner Christ. They have raised their voices, and challenged His instructions, in order to convince us that their ways were superior! However, as He proved then, even so does He now... when we are sincerely desirous of truth, He is able to take charge of the conversation with few words! He can quickly end the vain babble of Adam's religious voices in our heads, and impart a revelation of His righteous judgment to our hearts! He can keep the confusion to a minimum, and speak a word with clarity to us, when we have "an ear to hear what the Spirit has to say"!

However, experience teaches us that He does not always override the internal voices. There are occasions when He intentionally keeps silence, when He "answers us not a word". Usually this happens during times when we are already inclined toward a particular opinion, when we have already passed our own personal judgment on a matter, and have basically made up our minds concerning what is good or evil. We may claim to be listening for His voice, but in reality, we are only seeking agreement from Him. We have already decided what we should do, and how we should do it. If what He spake did not line up with our preconceived ideas, or if it did not serve to confirm our choice of conduct, we would attribute it to the devil, anyway! We may not want to believe it, but in such instances, we become like those who stopped their ears at the hearing of His words, and cried in unison with the religious leaders, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him"! We then proceed to have Him put to death in "Golgotha", that is, "the place of the skull". By listening to the wrong voices, and leaning to our own understanding, we crucify Him afresh, and silence Him in our minds!

We are persuaded that if we will remain attentive to the directives of the inner Witness, He will clearly reveal what is from the old "man of sin" in the temple...no matter how good or righteous it may appear. His disguises cannot fool the Spirit of Truth, and cannot avoid His penetrating gaze! However, when we refuse to recognize the thoughts and expressions of the flesh by direct revelation of the Spirit, when we fail to see it as it appears through the eyes of the Spirit, and when we take sides with the carnal nature, God then leads us down another path. This way has the potential of accomplishing the very same purpose, but goes about it in a different manner. In Scripture, it is called "A FALLING AWAY"!

There is portion of Watchman Nee's writings that is so descriptive of what we are now saying, we feel compelled to share it here. He says, "As human beings we distinguish between good works and evil works; God on the other hand goes behind and makes a distinction as to the source of every work. The most excellent deed of the flesh brings down upon it the same displeasure of God as would the most defiled and wicked work, for they are all of the flesh. Just as God hates unrighteousness, so He abhors self-righteousness. The good acts done naturally without the necessity of regeneration or union with Christ or dependence upon the Holy Spirit are no less carnal before God than are immorality, impurity, licentiousness, etc. However beautiful man's activities may be, if they do not spring from a complete trust in the Holy Spirit they are carnal and are therefore rejected by God. God opposes, rejects, and hates everything belonging to the flesh---regardless of outward appearances and regardless whether done by a sinner or a saint. His verdict is: THE FLESH MUST DIE.

"But how can a believer know what God has seen? God is so adamant against the flesh and its every activity; yet the believer appears to reject only its bad features while clinging affectionately to the flesh itself. He does not reject categorically the whole thing: he instead continues to do many things in the flesh: he even assumes a self-confident and proud attitude about it as though he were now rich with God's grace and qualified to perform righteously. The believer is literally making use of his flesh. Because of such self-deceit, the Spirit of God must lead him over the most shameful path in order to make him know his flesh and attain God's view. God allows that soul to fall, even to sin, that he may understand whether or not any good resides in the flesh. This usually happens to one who thinks he is progressing spiritually. The Lord tries him that he may know himself. Often the Lord so reveals His holiness to such a one that the believer cannot but judge his flesh as defiled. Sometimes He permits satan to attack him so that out of his suffering, he may perceive himself. It is altogether a most difficult lesson, and is not learned within a day or night. Only after many years does one gradually come to realize how untrustworthy is his flesh. There is uncleanness even in his best effort. God consequently lets him experience Romans 7 deeply until he is ready to acknowledge with Paul: "I know nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh" (v.18). How hard to learn to say this genuinely! If it were not for countless experiences of painful defeat the believer would continue to trust himself and consider himself able. Those hundreds and thousands of defeats bring him to concede that all self-righteousness is totally undependable, that no good abides in his flesh. Such dealing, however, does not terminate here. Self-judgment must continue. For whenever a Christian ceases to judge himself by failing to treat the flesh as useless and utterly detestable but assuming instead even a slightly self-flattering and vainglorious attitude, then God is compelled to run him again through fire in order to consume the dregs. How few are they who humble themselves and acknowledge their uncleanness! Unless such a state is realized, God will not withdraw His dealings. Since a believer cannot be freed from the influence of the flesh for a moment, he should never cease exercising the heart to judge himself; otherwise he will step once more into the boastings of the flesh" ---end quote (italics ours).

How vitally important it is to maintain this attitude of self-examination on a regular basis. (When we speak of self-examination here, we are not talking about random, independent

searches, without the direction of the Lord. More on that, later.) Unless we carefully guard ourselves, periodically acknowledging the Lord as He searches our hearts for the slightest deviation from His ways, the old "man of sin" will take away "the daily sacrifice" of absolute surrender and abandonment to Christ, and will once again cause us to trust in ourselves. This is "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 11:31; 12:11), when the presence of Christ is caused to withdraw, and flesh is allowed to reign! It is then that we are left to the mercy of the flesh, to suffer the consequences of it's judgments and determinations!

We will have more to say in the months to come on this "falling away" process, and some of the principles God employs during these times in exposing and consuming the "man of sin". But suffice us to say that though it may seem at times that the voices of the flesh have succeeded in silencing the voice of the Son of God in us; and though it may seem for a season that they have placed their "seal" over the "tomb" of our minds; we are consoled by the fact that by the power of resurrection, Christ always has the last word! Hallelujah! His voice always prevails in the end! Yea, He is able to make "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose". We know and are persuaded that while God prefers to impart the knowledge of His will by direct revelation to us; if need be, He will lead us down the path of absolute failure, in order to reveal the man of sin in our midst. Though He takes no pleasure in these painful experiences, He can take the greatest mistakes of our lives, and make even them serve His purpose! Thank God! He will speak to our hearts one way or another!

Again we will let the anointed words of Bro. Nee speak for us. "May we more and more experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit so that our flesh can be put under judgment unceasingly and never be able to reign. May we not lose, even for a moment, the true picture of our flesh and God's estimation of it. Let us never believe in ourselves and never trust our flesh again, as though it could ever please God. Let us always trust the Holy Spirit and at no time yield the slightest place to self" ---end quote.. Praise God for His infinite wisdom! And may the words articulated above become the daily prayer of our hearts! Maranatha!

to be continued...

GOOD SEED PUBLICATIONS
c/o Terry & Tykie Crisp
672 Goodman Rd.
Dawson, GA USA 31742