

Prophecy

The Preeminence Of The Lord As The Judge

Readings:

John 5:22, 30; 8:16
Hebrews 12:23

Introduction

In the meditations on the Candlestick it is evident that the central branch is distinct from the six branches in a number of ways. The six branches were to give light over against the candlestick (Ex. 25:29-30; Num. 8:2, 3)

- a) It had three descriptive names, the candlestick (Ex. 25:31); the "Branch" (Ex. 37:7); and the "Shaft" (Ex. 37:17).

By these and other uniquenesses it indicates its preeminence. This meditation concerns the preeminence of Christ as the Judge.

In the reading of the scriptures there are at least twenty-one judges:

Otheniel (Jud. 1:9-21; 3:1-11)

Ehud (Jud. 3:12-30)

Shamgar (Jud. 3:31-5:6)

Barak and Deborah (Jud. 4:1-5:31)

Gideon (Jud. 6:1-8:32)

Tola (Jud. 10:1-2)

Jair (Jud. 10:3-5)

Jephthah (Jud. 10:6-12:7)

Ibzan (Jud. 12:8, 10)

Elon (Jud. 12:11)

Abdon (Jud. 12:13-15)

Samson (Jud. 13:1-16:31)

Solomon (1 Kgs. 3:16-26)

Add to that those who judged the Lord

Annas (Jn. 18:13)

Caiaphas (Matt. 26:57)

Herod (Lk. 23:15)

Pilate (Jn. 18:29)

And those who judged Paul

Festus (Acts 25:1-12)

Felix (Acts 24:24-27)

Agrippa (Acts 25:13-24)

and possibly Nero (Acts 25:11, called Caesar)

- 1) Some were God fearing and others were pagan, i.e. Otheniel and Felix.
- 2) Some of those in the New Testament were hearing the gospel possibly for the first time (Agrippa) and at least one (Herod) was well aware of the voice of God in the past.
 - a) Yet they all faded into contrast with the Lord as Judge for He stands in contrast to all other judges. He judges alone, without jury, without advisors, and is perfect in judgments at all times. He alone has perfect accuracy of knowledge, aware of the standard of God's holiness, capable of making perfect and just assessments for His motives are always for the glory of God. Never will He be swayed by the political, intellectual or wealth of the one being judged. Never will He abuse His authority but at the end of every judgement the attitude of the individual will be have to be, "He was perfectly righteous". It is this truth the scriptures are quite emphatic from three perspectives:
 - i) Prophetically: "And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Psa. 9:8)
 - ii) Preaching: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31)
 - iii) Prophecy: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11)

The Lord Is Preminent In The Positions He Has When Judging

It would seem that the Lord takes three positions when He acts as Judge:

- a) While the church is on earth He is seen as central and walking between the various churches passing His evaluation (Rev. 1:13; 2:1).

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- b) Having taken the book from the Throne Sitter the Lord is seen as “standing” and there is no mention of Him changing from that position when He begins to open the seals (Rev. 5:5, 6; 6:1).
- c) When it is the judgment of the nations, the Lord is seated on the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:3). In Revelation 20:11 He is seated on the “Great White Throne” and for the believer, we shall stand at the “judgment Seat of God” (the KJV says Christ but it ought to be God. The reason I say it ought to be “God” is because the Greek favours that rather than “Christ”) (Rom. 14:10) and “Of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - i) While the word for Judgment Seat is “Bema” that is not restricted to the Lord alone. Pilate sat on a judgment seat (Matt. 27:19) as did Herod (Acts 12:21), Gallio (Acts 18:17), and Agrippa (Acts 25:6).

The Lord Is Preminent In The Authority Of He Who Designated Him As Such?

It is an accepted fact that the degree of importance of a judge is determined by the scope he authoritatively administers over and the authority which designated him as a judge. For instance, the Supreme Court of Canada, USA, Australia, etc., is the highest in the land. They are not in that position to make laws but to make decisions based on the law of the country. The Supreme Court of Canada has no authority in the USA or the UK, it is limited by the borders of that country. Furthermore, the solemnity and finality of a judge’s decision will be determined by his experience, the sort of cases he is a specialist in, and the place where he is in the vastness of the country’s judicial system. That is, a judge in a tiny hamlet is very important but does not carry the same weight as a judge on the Supreme Court. Having said this, the questions become:

- 1) Who designated Christ as Judge? It was God and the Father.
 - a) “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn. 5:22)
 - b) “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (Jn. 5:27)
 - c) Peter was giving His answer to the fact that he had gone among the Gentiles to preach the gospel (Acts 10:34-40) as had Philip (Acts 8:26-39), and in Peter’s defence he states, “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:42).
 - d) “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).
- 2) What is the extent of His judgeship?
 - (a) The judgeship of the Lord is universal, for all judgment is committed unto Him (Jn. 5:22); He will be the judge of the quick and the dead, that is the dead and the living (Acts 10:42); He will judge the world (Acts 17:31).
 - (b) I know of no book which better manifests the extent of His judgeship than Revelation for in it we read how He judges the churches (chs. 2:1-3:22); judges the world (chs. 6:1-19:21); judges the unsaved (ch. 20:11-15); judges the Beast and False Prophet (ch. 19:19-21).
 - (c) In the epistles He judges believers (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 4:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:9-11; Col. 3:23-25); and in His discourse He tells how and by what criteria He will judge the nations (Matt. 25:31-46).
- 3) What is His speciality?
 - a) At times one may hear of a judge whose speciality is some aspect of law. He or she is curtailed by their knowledge and understanding of that aspect of the law whither it is international, matrimonial, etc. However, the Lord has no speciality for He is perfectly competent in every aspect of assessment, having a fulness of knowledge in every aspect of perfection. Being God, the ultimate standard by which He judges is “Holiness” and this is considered under at least seven avenues as outlined in Romans. There we learn that he will judge:
 - i) According to truth (Rom. 2:2)
 - ii) According to righteousness (Rom. 2:5)

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- iii) According to the individual's work (Rom. 2:6). In Revelation He judges the unsaved according to their works (Rev. 20:12, 13) and the believers are judged according to their works (1 Cor. 3:13, 14, 15).
- iv) According to privilege (Rom. 2:9)
- v) Without bias or respect of persons (Rom. 2:11)
- vi) According to the light (knowledge and understanding) the individual had (Rom. 2:12)
- vii) According to the gospel (Rom. 2:16)

The Lord Is Preeminent In His Qualifications

In April 2017 a new Judge had been appointed to the Supreme Court and of course one of the major matters for consideration was, "Does he have the correct qualifications?". Since such is a major national factor on earth, is it not in order to seek the qualifications the Lord has, qualifications which not only qualifies Him but qualifies Him preeminently? One of the factors which God brings to our attention which qualify Him beyond all others is "Truth".

- a) He is the Truth. In a strongly worded statement He told the religious leaders not to judge by appearance but righteously (Jn. 7:24). This was a command of the Old Testament (Deut. 1:16) and an admonition (Prov. 31:9). What a travesty of justice it would be if He failed in this very thing. Therefore, did He judge righteously? He did because:
 - i) He is the omniscient God and knows everything about everyone (Psa. 139:2-4; Jn. 2:24). He is fully fitted to determine the degree of punishment suitable to the crimes committed, the environment in which the individual lived, what action they would have taken had they had more light, and the knowledge such a one had.
 - ii) The ancient patriarch Abraham declared, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25), and David, when the Lord punished him for His sin, acknowledged it and declared that God was fully justified when he spoke the condemnation (Psa. 51:4).

Concluding Thoughts

When Stephen was preaching, he referred to the Lord as the "Just One" (Acts 7:52-53). This was not the first time the Lord was spoken of as such, for the ancient prophets wrote:

- a) "The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity" (Zeph. 3:5).
- b) "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation" (Zech. 9:9).
- c) "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour" (Isa. 45:21).

The negatives of the sacrifices, no blemish, no spot (Num. 19:1-2) and the expressions of the holy apostles, "He did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22); "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21); "In Him is no sin" (1 Jn. 3:5); and He was ever "without sin" (Heb. 4:15), all bear witness to a man who was unblemished in character and not a blight on His life. There can be no hesitation in declaring that when considering the candlestick, it does teach the preeminence of the Lord as the Judge.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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