

The Kingdom Divided

by C.I. Scofield

God holds nations to a moral accountability based on righteousness, and they will face judgment for their actions.

Scripture: Jeremiah 23:5

Topics: "Moral Accountability", "Gods Judgment"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the story of 1 Kings 12:12-20, highlighting the folly of the King and the unfailing purpose of God amidst the division of the kingdom. He emphasizes that God holds nations and individuals to moral accountability based on righteousness, with eternal consequences for personal responsibility and judgment in this present world. The sermon explores how nations, like individuals, will face judgment for their actions, drawing parallels from Scripture such as Nebuchadnezzar's lesson and the future judgment at the second coming of Christ.

Transcript

(1 Kings xii:12-20).

I. The Analysis.

1. The folly of the King (verses 12-14). When will the people of God learn that they need divine wisdom as well as divine righteousness? Not all the calamities of life come from wickedness, for folly, too, brings in its train manifold evil.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;

Men crown the knave, and scourge the fool

That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,

Be merciful to me, a fool."

2. The unfailing purpose of God (verse 15; see below).

3. The kingdom divided (verses 16-20). It should be remembered that this division, which still continues though all the tribes are in dispersion, is but the disciplinary and not the ultimate purpose of God. The whole nation is to be restored to Palestine and reunited as one nation under the millennial reign of Christ

(Jer. xxiii:5-8; Ezk. xxxvii:15-28; Hosea iii:4, 5; Luke 1:30-33; Acts xv:14-17).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The heart of this lesson is the truth, too little regarded and too often forgotten, that God holds nations equally with individuals to a moral accountability the basis of which is righteousness. The only distinction is that personal responsibility has eternal consequences because man is an immortal being, while nations, which are creatures of time, are judged and punished in this present world.

The general truth that God holds nations and their rulers to a moral accountability based on righteousness has both general and particular illustrations in Scripture. Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of the first universal Gentile world power (Dan. ii:37, 38), was taught that his authority was due to the permissive will of a God whom he had neither known nor worshipped (Dan. iv:34, 35); and well indeed would it have been for his successors in the Gentile world dominion, which began with him and still continues, had they remembered Nebuchadnezzar's lesson. Forgetting it, they have unconsciously submitted to the usurpation of Satan, who is now the unseen prince of this world (John xiv:30; Matt, iv:8, 9; Eph. vi:12, R. V.).

For this, and the misgovernment, bloodshed and cruelty that have resulted from it, the nations of the earth are to be judged at the second coming of Christ (Matt, xxv:31-45).

It is interesting to note that the nations as such (the judgment of Matt, xxv is not to be confounded with the last judgment of Rev. xx:ii-i5, which is 1,000 years later) are subjected to a great final test just before the return of the Lord in glory, and by that test they are judged. A Jewish remnant will turn to Christ after the departure of the church (1 Thess. iv:14-17) and will herald the kingdom among all nations for a (final) "witness". These are the "brethren" of Matt, xxv:40-45. A last illustration of the principle that God judges the Gentile nations according to their treatment of the Jew (Gen. xii:3; xv:13, 14; Deut. Xx:6, 7, Micah iv:11-13; Joel iii:6, 8).

But Israel, as a nation, stands upon different promises and is held to a different responsibility. Chosen to be a witness to the unity of God in the midst of polytheism, and of the personality of God in the midst of pantheism, the point of Israelitish failure is not misgovernment, but idolatry. Traced back through the secondary causes of Hadad's rebellion and Jeroboam's capacity, and Rehoboam's folly and vanity, the primary cause of the rending of the Hebrew commonwealth is distinctly stated to be the introduction of idolatry by Solomon (1 Kings xi:6-13).

But whether in the ancient divisions and captivities of Israel, or in the swift coming crash and divine judgment of the great Gentile nations, the principle holds--God judges and punishes nations equally with persons.

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