

Judging Ourselves



Facing God's Judgment (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

There's an extraordinary hatred of Christ and the Church today in the United States.

I came here first, as I told you, in 1963. I told people I was a minister. Everybody showed me respect. I wasn't used to it because you don't get that treatment in Europe. But I was impressed. Porters, doctors, everybody. It's not so today. Today it's probably wiser not to tell people what you are if you're a minister in this country, because there's a deep undercurrent of hatred and contempt for everything associated with Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:27:

> "Therefore..."

And I always say to people when you find a "therefore" in the Bible, you want to find out what it's there for. Scott very clearly explained what it's there for. He did a masterly job.

> "Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

I think the better translation "will be answerable" to the body and blood of the Lord. He cannot plead ignorance.

> "But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Verse 30:

> "For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep [many have died]."

Many who? Many Christians. I've been in a lot of healing services, I don't think I've ever heard anybody pinpoint that as a main reason why Christians are sick. They have partaken of the Lord's Table in an unworthy manner.

And if ever a church was Charismatic, it was the church at Corinth. And he said for this reason many of you are weak, sick, and many have died.

If you are seeking healing here this morning, I think you need to check on the cause of your being sick. Is it because you haven't really discerned the Lord's body? You've had a critical, uncharitable, negative attitude towards other Christians. When Scott said examine yourself, I had to confess, "Lord, there's one particular minister that I haven't really respected as I should." And I repented and asked God to forgive me.

Now, what's the remedy? Verse 31–32:

> "For if we would judge ourselves we would not be judged, but when we are judged we are chastened by the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world."

As I see it, there are three possibilities. First of all, the best is we judge ourselves, and repent. If we don't do that, the Lord will chasten us. And a lot of sickness, including some I've experienced, is the Lord's chastening. And I thank God, by His grace, I recognized it for what it was and I repented. And people graciously say to me, "You look so good! Better than we've seen you." Well, one reason is, the Lord chastened me and I repented. That's the second possibility.

The third possibility is the Lord chastens you and you don't repent and then you are judged with the world. But there are only three possibilities: judge yourself and repent; let the Lord judge you and chasten you and repent; but if you don't go those first two routes, then, and you continue in your stubbornness, your disobedience, you'll be judged with the world. That's the way.

So, I want to suggest, as has already been suggested, let me take a little time to judge ourselves. As (I don't really like the word) but the Charismatic movement, because we are a conspicuous group in this nation, and we have quite a lot of publicity and we make a lot of rather high claims, we are identifiable. Some of you may not be Charismatics, well, God bless you. That may be better for you! This is not confined to Charismatics. But I tend to deal about the things that are most obvious to me personally.

Now, in closing I want to go to Amos 6. And I'm going to read the first six verses. Now, much of what Amos says does not literally apply to you. But I think if you make the necessary adjustments for time and culture and situation, a great deal of it does apply to the Christians of America today.

Amos says:

> "Woe to you who are at ease in Zion [in other words, you're claiming to be God's people—Zion is the place of God's dwelling] And trust in Mount Samaria [which at that time was still a very noble city, a large city, adorned with many wonderful buildings] Notable persons in the chief nation [that's Israel] To whom the house of Israel comes! Go over to Calneh and see; And from there go to Hamath the great; Then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory?"

I would say to the United States, look back in history. Think of all the great, powerful empires that have arisen and flouted God's judgment and perished. History is littered with the ruins of empires that didn't recognize God. Is America going the same way?

Verse 3:

> "Woe to you who put far off the day of doom [or judgment], Who cause the seat of violence to come near…"

The theme of judgment is very remote, it doesn't really concern you, it's a long way away. Maybe there will be a time of judgment but it's not right now. That's the attitude.

> "Who lie on beds of ivory, Stretch out [or sprawl] on your couches, Eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall…"

So these people are living in luxury and feeding on the best. And if you compare America with the other nations of the world, most Americans are living in luxury. People don't think that way if you only compare yourself with other Americans. As I said, I think, earlier, listen, you have a bed to sleep on. A high proportion of the world's people don't ever have a bed. You have sheets on your bed and you change the sheets. You can choose what you eat and you have something to eat. Nearly one billion people don't have enough to eat. So, most of us, by the world's standards, including me, we are wealthy, we're privileged. But we have to bear in mind that we're accountable for that.

And then it goes on, it gets worse and worse in a way — or more and more close to Charismatics:

> "Who [chant] to the sound of stringed instruments, And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David..."

So we have all sorts of spiritual music. We have new songs and new choruses and it's quite an industry. Is that right? It's a very wealthy industry.

As an author of books I've learned that there's much more demand for Christian music than there is for Christian books. There's a lot of money to be made in the Christian music industry. And wherever there's money to be made there's danger.

Going on, verse 6:

> "Who drink from bowls, And anoint yourselves with the best ointments..."

Now, you don't drink from bowls, I'm sure of that, but you do really live on the fat of the land. And, you're pretty interested in your food. Why is it that 60% of American people today are overweight? Has that got anything to do with the way we eat? Jesus warned us against surfeiting and drunkenness. Surfeiting is overeating. He said, lest these things keep you from being ready when I return. Of course, that doesn't apply to Charismatics! We all know we're going to be ready, anyhow. We're Charismatics, we speak in tongues, we can quote a number of Scriptures and we attend a church — the kind that tells us what we want to hear. That's not true of many of you but it's a picture. I think I've updated it so that you see it's not out of date.

Now then, this is the punch line, the end of verse 6:

> "But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

Joseph is the title of the northern kingdom which was under God's judgment and perished very shortly afterwards in a total disaster that left nothing. Even the stones of Samaria were rolled down the hill. And you can go there today and see where the stones rolled down the hill. Nothing was left. This was not far away, I think not more than fifty years away. And yet, there they were, living it up, having their chorus singing, inventing new instruments and totally unconcerned for the fate of their nation. Not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

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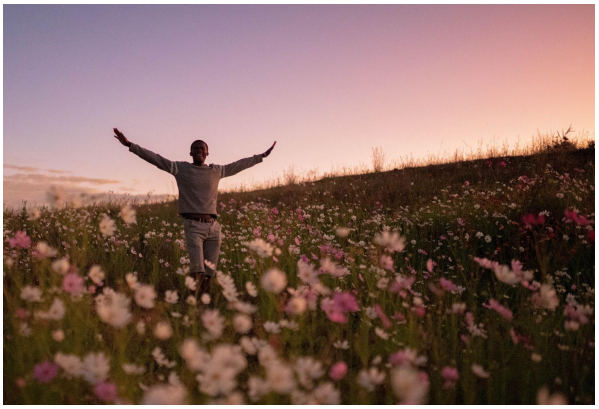

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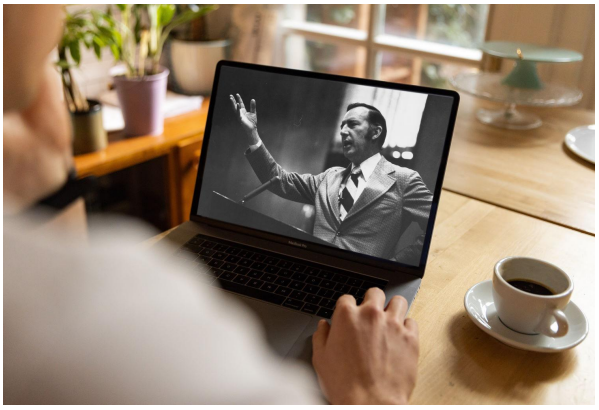

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