



### ***Is It Possible God's Judgment Is Already Upon Us?***

*But they said, "Stand aside." Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway. (Gen. 19:9-11)*

In His Olivet Discourse, Jesus reveals that what happened "in the days of Noah" and "in the days of Lot" are examples of what it will be like in the ultimate, Last Days to come. (Lk. 17:26-33) In the above excerpt of what originally happened in Sodom, notice how they turn against Lot (representing God's people), not just threatening him but considering him to ultimately be "an alien" who "is acting like a judge". In the Last Days, Christians will no longer be tolerated and actively silenced, regardless of how deep their roots in the community. But look at what happens even *after* God strikes the militant unbelievers with blindness: "they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway". This is the kind of behavior we usually only see in the most extreme substance abusers who are so intent on satiating their addiction that they don't care how they live or look or act; they will even ignore their own health needs to get what they want. Such it will be in the Last Days when there is a spiritual blindness in the character of the worst addict; sin and unrighteousness will be blindly and relentlessly pursued regardless of reason and personal cost. The world's behavior will reach such a maddening and irrational point that the spiritually blind will wear themselves out. Is it possible that this judgment of God is already replaying itself in the Western world today?

I keep coming across many articles, Internet forum postings and even books which all warn that if America doesn't change its ways "soon", God's judgment will fall on the country. Most often they seem to describe such judgment to come as America losing its prominent place of influence in the world, some kind of economic/political collapse, loss of religious and personal freedoms, or all of the above. (It's interesting to me how the vast majority of the warnings tend to emphasize material loss over the spiritual.) I

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wouldn't outright discount such possibilities, but the repeated biblical pattern is that the road leading up to ultimately experiencing God's judgment is usually paved with progressively increasing deception. It most often begins in the earliest stages with forsaking God's Word, which leads to no longer living like His people, and as self-deception takes hold individually, the nation is given over to general deception leading to great internal confusion and decay. One might say that it gets darker and darker spiritually leading to a crossroad where the blindness becomes permanent.

Have you noticed how often in Scripture God's judgment literally comes in the *form* of blindness and confusion leading to self-destruction? It not only happened at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:11), but supernatural confusion was experienced by the Egyptian army pursuing Israel into the Red Sea (Ex. 14:24), by the Philistines when they tried to possess the captured Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 5:9), again by the Philistines when they were given over to Saul (1 Sam. 14:20), when God caused Moab and Ammon to destroy each other when threatening Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20:22-23), and the blindness which came upon the Arameans through Elisha (2 Ki. 6:8-19). One of the notable judgments which came upon Egypt in the course of freeing Israel was "*a darkness which can be felt*" (Ex. 10:21). It is not at all uncommon that spiritual blindness and confusion comes as a judgment from God which permeates a nation as it implodes and destroys itself. Internal division and damage is very often the prelude to the external nation-ending events to eventually come, but a repeated biblical judgment from God is blindness and confusion so frenzied that the object of His judgment actually self-destructs from within.

In fact, one of the specific consequences of disobedience to God's Word and ways originally specified through Moses was this accentuated condition of spiritual blindness for God's people. This kind of supernatural blindness and confusion is not reserved exclusively for outright enemies of the cross, but the apostate falling away from their biblical faith.

*"The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you. (Deut. 28:28-29)*

Increasingly over the past several years, events have taken place on a myriad of levels in the Western world—and America in particular, which defy a common sense explanation

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or can be interpreted as merely differences of opinion between opposing groups or ideologies. One of the most startling examples was the “Occupy Movement” when not even the participants could articulate why or what they were protesting and sometimes even rioting over. You may have thought the hippies in the 60’s were crazy because of their lack of conformity to cultural norms, but we were never in doubt as to what they were protesting or advocating regardless of whether you agreed with it. What causes very large numbers of people to come together in protest who cannot explain why?

Increasingly we have large segments of our society in motion who are incapable of precisely conveying why they are taking a particular action or stance, and it’s often not a fringe or demographically obscure element, but from within a fundamental institution. For quite some time now we have been seeing this trend increasing in frequency and strength in the European Union as well, often in even more extreme real-world examples of those operating in the blindness and confusion leading to self-destruction. Like those in Sodom and Gomorrah whose only concern was their own self-pleasure, there is a spirit of self-centeredness which permeates what is taking place.

During the most recent election cycle I was fascinated by the repeated findings of pollster Frank Luntz, who showed that facts and figures no longer matter to most people regardless of their affiliation or political leaning. Even when presented with independently verified numbers describing an issue contrary to one’s perception, the overwhelming response was, “I don’t care. I don’t believe it.” Just as an addict could care less when informed of the statistical surety of the inevitable outcome of their continued substance abuse and are absorbed with nothing but getting the next, temporary fix, so this behavior is taking hold when it comes to religion, politics and social convention. It no longer seems to be exclusively infecting just the lunatic fringe, but is being adopted wholesale by the constituents of mainstream institutions. It’s taking hold with the average “man in the street”.

American political journalist Chris Hedges has quite possibly articulated this condition of blindness and confusion best:

“We live in a nation where doctors destroy health, lawyers destroy justice, universities destroy knowledge, governments destroy freedom, the press destroys information, religions destroy morals, and our banks destroy the economy.”

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I would agree that nearly every institution has not just become a shadow of their former selves, but now acting in direct opposition to their original core ideals and principles. When a country founded by mostly Christians on unanimously supported Judeo-Christian ideals at every level turns to work against itself, perhaps it is a blindness in and of itself to warn of “impending” judgment when, in actuality, it has already come upon us. There may be visibly harsher and inevitable milestones of judgment yet to come in the foreseeable future, but a case can certainly be made that we are *already* on that path of self-deception; we are already and inevitably in the darkest shadows of its imminent arrival as in the biblical example of all those God has likewise dealt with in similar fashion before us.

Although it has been preached many times and by many figures throughout Church history even up to and including the present, we still don't seem to appreciate the full import of how often in Scripture the Last Days and the imminent arrival of Christ is described in relation to darkness. Jesus Himself states, “Behold, I am coming like a thief in the night” (Rev. 16:15), but it is worth noting how often the time leading up to His return is characterized as *physical* darkness to reflect the *spiritual* condition of the Last Days.

*“We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. (John 9:4)*

In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), given as part of the Olivet Discourse to teach about the Last Days, the darkness of the times is a major feature.

*“Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ (Matthew 25:5-6)*

It is noteworthy that the problem with Laodicea, the church which characterizes the time period immediately leading into the Last Days and what it will be like, is that they are so blind they don't even *realize* they're blind!

*‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and **you do not know that you are** wretched and miserable and poor and **blind** and naked, I advise you to **buy from Me** gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and **eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.** (Revelation 3:17-18)*

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In fact, the condition of this last church age, which I believe speaks directly to what we are experiencing today, deteriorates to the point that Christ is no longer *inside* but found on the *outside*, knocking to be received back in.

*'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20)*

I know this verse is most popularly used evangelistically, but its first and foremost context given within the overall passage is describing a time when God's people become so self-absorbed with themselves, lukewarm in their faith and blind to their own spiritual poverty, that Christ is not actually among them in the same way as with previous generations as represented by the other churches in Revelation 2-3. Even more so, the last generation is so blind it doesn't even *know* it is blind!

Why don't Democrats and Republicans act like the Democrats and Republicans of not-so-distant memory? Why has a university education not only become useless, but actually burdening graduates with a lifelong financial debt? Why have things turned so upside down that one can make more money on welfare or unemployment than by taking a job? Why do teachers unions strike against the best interests of their students? Why are so many groups, institutions and movements working completely contrary to their founding principles? Why can we no longer find any denomination holding to the doctrinal standards and practices on which they were originally founded? God's judgment, conferring blindness and confusion as we are given over to the deception we have so fervently been running headlong after, is not a distant possibility, but appears to have already arrived.

In either case, whether I am correct in the assertion that judgment has already arrived, or that warnings from many sources are sounding a timely alarm that such judgment is imminent, the common solution is nothing short of sincere repentance of sin followed by living a daily, crucified life and a wholesale return to the Word. But how can we deny that so much of the institutional church has *not* become Laodicea when it refuses to any longer even talk about sin, much less preach repentance from same? That in itself may testify to the blindness currently taking place, a spiritual blindness where, in the character of Laodicea, the blind don't even know they're blind.

In Him,

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[Servant@WalkWithTheWord.org](mailto:Servant@WalkWithTheWord.org)

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