

WHAT WILL CHRIST JUDGE?

August 21, 2016

Malachi 2:17-3:15

“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 3:5

Malachi preached to a generation whose forefathers had received God’s favor more abundantly and powerfully than any other people. Yet they had forgotten God’s favors, settling into a pattern of careless, heartless religious practice, even accusing God of inattention to their circumstances. Malachi responded with strong rebuke.

They observed wicked men prospering and grumbled, “Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them.” They whined, “Where is the God of judgment?” (2:17). Malachi answered that the God they pretended to seek would come to His temple unexpectedly, and that His appearance would not be what they anticipated. He would not come to commend them, but to judge their religious actions, their sacrilege and their sin.

Herein Malachi foretold Christ’s coming, which was marked by Jesus’ rebuke of Israel’s religious leaders (John 2:13-22; Matthew 21:12-21; 23:13-36). Malachi 3:5 names some of the sins He would also judge. We know from the New Testament that Christ will come again, and that His second coming will be unto judgment (II Peter 3). Our text names actions that God condemns, and cites groups of people upon whom judgment will come. The first in that list is sorcerers.

This condemns all forms of divination. Malachi reveals that divination was present in his day, and would be practiced in the days when Christ would be upon the earth. We know it to be practiced in many forms in our day: crystal ball visionaries, palm and tarot card readers, fortune tellers, the horoscope, séances, etc., etc. In every age and culture, shamans, witch doctors, mediums, magicians and those who practice these “arts” have had followings.

Their objective is to provide information that cannot be known by natural means, information regarding things to come, gained from the spirit world. But here a major problem arises. God’s angelic spirits convey only divine truth, and only when God sends them with that message (Matthew 1:20; 2:13; 28:5; Luke 1:13, 26). All other spirits are under Satan’s dominion. Whereas spirits inspired by Satan may at times exhibit supernatural powers (Exodus 7:10-12, 22; 8:7, 18-19), they are never to be trusted, nor their services sought. In all his ways and dealings, Satan is the adversary of Christ and of man (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 22:31, I Peter 5:8).

To seek information by divination, one must violate clear teaching of Scripture. He exhibits veneration of another spiritual authority, violating the first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Israel was warned against this practice (Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:9-19; I Samuel 15:23; Micah 5:12). “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah

8:19, 20).

Seeking spiritual knowledge from anti-Christ spirits, one rejects God's Word, both the written Word of God, and Christ the Living Word. This, Christ will judge. God's Word, living and written, are our only source of spiritual knowledge.