



November 12, 2006

The Visitation Of Consequence

One of the strongest uses of the word visit in the scriptures is the manifestation of a judgment of God for sins that have been committed. The commands of the Lord include both blessings and warnings. Throughout the scriptures we find God bringing these about. The children of Israel sinned against God in spite of the wonders that he had performed to liberate them from the slavery of Egypt. At Mount Sinai they had demanded and worshipped an idol while Moses was on the mountain receiving the laws that were to govern their lives. God intended for them to be a special people, a treasure among the nations to keep his name alive and become a nation of priests (Ex 19.5-6). Although the people had repented when confronted with this God pronounced a judgment against them. God instructed Moses, ***“Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.”*** (Ex 32.34). The Hebrews were often rebellious against God and many times their sins were met with the consequences for transgression. The patriarch Job knew that God acted in this manner and concluding that he was being punished for sins he asked, ***“What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?”*** (Job 7.17-18). David speaks of the judgment of God against those who would not obey when he wrote, ***“If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.”*** (Psm 89.31-32). Warnings had been clearly stated in the Law and later, when the nations of Israel and Judah departed from God, He sent prophets to call them to remember the things that God had done for them and to repent before they were destroyed. Notable are the writings of Jeremiah who lived to see the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, and who warned the people of what lay in store for them if they did not heed the word of the Lord that had been given to him. ***“Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.”*** (Jer 23.2). False prophets and idolatry had become so entrenched in the land that the way of God had been violated to the point that God allowed them to be swallowed by their enemies and carried away in captivity for their sin. God also demonstrates His power and right to render judgment against the wickedness of other nations as well. Speaking of His judgment against Babylon, Jeremiah writes, ***“The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. ... Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.”*** (Jer 50.25,27). The Babylonians, or specifically the Chaldeans, were overtaken by the Medes and Persians as Jeremiah refers to in this passage. God has always hated false doctrine and the introduction of idols that took people away from true worship. Amos states, ***“That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground.”*** (Amos 3.14). Jereboam had been the first to introduce idol worship into the land out of fear that he might lose the kingdom that God had given him (1 Kng 12.26-30). The departure from God eventually cost them their nation because of their rebellion against God. We can learn much from these events and the actions of individuals and nations. We learn that God has sent blessings on us and we should strive to remember Him in all that we say and do. We must strive to worship God in the way that He has commanded and turn from any and all doctrines that are not consistent with His word. One might think that these warnings and their fulfillment only pertain to those who lived under the Law. The judgments of God against other nations tells us that God will actively work against evil regardless of the time or people involved. This principle can be found in the New Testament as well. Paul writes, ***“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*** (Gal 6.7-8). As those who have gone before found out, there will be no escape from the judgment of God.

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