

End-Time Litmus Test of Faith: Standing with Israel (Mt. 25:31-46)

I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

- A. A litmus test is a test that uses a single indicator to make a decision. For example, the litmus test for chemical acidity is done by using a litmus paper (white paper with litmus on it used to indicate the acid-base by turning red with increasing acidity and blue with increasing basicity).
- B. ***The necessary paradigm:*** Jesus will rule the earth without suspending natural human processes, rather He will significantly enhance them by the supernatural dimension of the Spirit.
- C. ***This session provides foundations needed to understand the Second Coming procession.*** The Antichrist will establish prison camps across the world. The Scripture emphasizes the camps in Egypt and Assyria. Ancient Assyria included areas in parts of modern day Jordan, Syria and Iraq.
- D. An essential part of the Second Coming procession emphasizes Jesus, after the Rapture marching up from Egypt through Assyria back to Israel killing His enemies, liberating Jewish prisoners in death camps and healing the infirm (blind, lame, etc.; Isa. 35:5-6; 61:1; 42:6-7, 16; Mic. 4:6). Jesus will function as the “greater Moses.” This Biblical message is politically incorrect and unacceptable to all (Jews, Christians, and Muslims).
¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me...He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison... (Isa. 61:1)
- E. The primary two nations in which this happens are Egypt and Ancient Assyria (Isaiah 11:11, 16; 27:12-13; Hos. 11:10-11; Mic. 2:12-13; 5:6; 7:12-15; Zech. 10:10-11). God promises to deliver Israel from captivity (Isa. 42:6-7, 16, 22; 49:9-12, 19-21, 24-25; Jer. 31:1-23; Ezek. 39:25-29; Amos 9:8-15; Zeph. 3:17-20).
- F. Many Jewish people will be deported out of the land of Israel against their will. Some of those in Israel will flee, others will be deported as captives, some will stay in Jerusalem; and of those who stay, some will be supernaturally protected and some will join the evil regime of the Antichrist. Still others will be raised up by God as missionaries, “sent ones” to come and go to the nations. There will be different responses to God in Israel during this time period.
- G. The OT prophecies reveal two extremes. First, Israel is described as being desolate (oppressed, sick, infirm), in prison camps and assaulted by foreign armies. Second, Jesus suddenly brings deliverance that reverses all Israel’s oppression as He kills her enemies, heals their bodies and then restores her to the land with God’s favor and blessing. Jesus will gather a large number of Jewish prisoners together as He marches them to Israel (Mic. 2:12-13).
- H. There are three types of people on earth when Jesus appears in the sky. First, the ***redeemed*** will be raptured. Second, the ***reprobate*** who took the mark of the Beast. Third, the ***resistors*** (unsaved survivors Jews and Gentiles) of the Great Tribulation who refused to worship the Antichrist.

II. WHY DO WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THIS?

- A. First, Jews being in prison camps in the End-Times, is one of the most emphasized prominent features in Second Coming passages (in the OT prophets). This reveals the nature of Satan's rage against Israel as well as the intense measure that God will use to purify Israel and the Church. God requires the Church to stand with Israel in this (Corrie ten Boom, Bonhoeffer, etc.). The Church is brought to maturity and evaluated based on our responses to Jesus' leadership. The litmus test of obedience will be in standing with Israel (Mt. 25:31-46). The Church will be persecuted (Dan. 7:21, 25). The issue of Israel will bring the whole world to full conflict.
- B. Second, it gives us insight into God's heart to reverse judgment to restore His people. God pursues atheistic Israel and acts in this same mercy towards all who call on His name.
- C. Third, many Second Coming passages in the OT cannot be understood without seeing this major part of the End-Time drama. The drama is magnificent in producing fascination in our heart.

III. JESUS RAISING A STANDARD: THE CONTEXT OF ISRAEL IN THE END-TIMES

- A. Jesus will raise a standard or publish His decrees about Israel. He will allow the individuals in the nations to obey or disobey this during a transitional season. Jesus will require that Israel's children be taken home from the nations (v. 22–23).
²² I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples (Gentiles); they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; 23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth...Then you will know I am the LORD ...25 Even the captives of the mighty (evil leaders) shall be taken away, and the prey (Israel) of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children. 26 I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their blood...all flesh shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior. (Isa. 49:17-26)
- B. Jesus made an oath that He will set up a standard (banner) that the nations will recognize as a call to bring the Jewish survivors back to Israel (Isa. 11:12; Isa. 62:10). The leaders of the nations who attacked Israel will be killed and replaced by kings who will serve and honor her. This will include providing the means for her children to relocate to Israel.
- C. This oath includes Jesus personally leading captives to Israel from Egypt and Assyria. He will also send Jews from Israel to lead Jewish survivors back to the land (Isa. 66:19-21) and will command Gentile kings to serve Him in this (Isa. 11:11-16; 49:22-23; 60:3-4, 9).
- D. In these decrees, Jesus' sovereignty will be on display as well as His covenant keeping faithfulness to Israel in this great sudden reversal that begins with winning the Battle of Jerusalem, then expanding with international decrees to reverse the way the Jews are treated in all the nations. Israel's restoration process will occur over many stages just as the global restoration process will. It will take years to complete the process.

- E. The great reversal: God promises that Gentiles will serve Israel. God gives details of His promises to restore Israel after her destruction during the Tribulation (Isa. 49:19–21). Jesus will fully reverse the crisis. Isaiah described End-Time Israel as the “land of destruction” that is wasted and made desolate as her children are lost (killed) while she becomes a wandering captive nation (Isa. 49:18–21).
- F. The evaluation for doing these six activities (Mt. 25:35-36) will be related to doing them continually. All will have more than just one chance to obey this. Those who disobey will do so continually. Those who refuse to stand with Israel in that hour will have already said no to God in many other ways. It will be an issue of obeying Jesus’ sovereign kingship. Jesus pointed to only one aspect of His will. This will be the litmus test for a heart of obedience.
- 11 Your gates shall be open continually...that men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, and their kings in procession. 12 For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined... (Isa. 60:11-12)***
- G. In Isa. 60, Isaiah describes a dramatic and radical reversal of attitude and actions by the kings of the earth. God promised that He would raise up a Jewish Messiah who would cause this to happen as a show of His sovereignty over the nations and His tender affections for Israel. The kings will act in such extravagance in paying the Jews way back to Israel, rebuilding the cities of Israel and the Jerusalem Temple (in place of Antichrist’s temple) as a statement of their repentance towards Jesus.
- H. Many kings will help the Jews get back to Israel (Isa. 49:17-26; 60:1-22), even paying all the expenses for Jews to return to Israel. Some kings will bring them back personally. Nations will be responsible to obey Jesus in this issue of helping Jews return to Israel. This will be the top priority of all nations worldwide in the time immediately after the devastation of the Great Tribulation and Armageddon. The most natural thing would be to attend to national needs only. Think of the people of New Orleans after Katrina being fully preoccupied with their recovery and survival. Yet, a Jewish King in Jerusalem will demand that they all participate in the recovery of the Jewish refugees.
- I. Jesus will evaluate the nations to determine which ones will survive because they repented after the Second Coming. They will not fully understand all that will happen, but they will repent and begin a re-education process. Many kings will function in the role that Cyrus did. They will fund the re-gathering of the Jews to Israel and the rebuilding of the cities of Israel.
- 16 It shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 It shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King...on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up...they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zech. 14:16-18)***

- J. Jesus will command the top leadership of the Gentile nations to provide for Jewish survivors to get home to Israel (Isa. 11:11-16; 49:22-23; 60:3-4, 9). Gentile kings will personally bring some Jews to Israel. Kings will extravagantly serve Israel's children that are in their nation. They shall "bow down," as they are conscious of their guilt. They will humble themselves to Israel as part of their humbling before God for personal and national restoration.
- K. Israel's condition just before Jesus' Coming is as prey and captives of nations who are mighty and terrible and who contend with and oppress Israel (Isa. 49:24-26). Jesus will reverse this. Israel's children will come from all the nations in which they were held captive.

²⁴ *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty (Antichrist's system), or the captives of the righteous (awe-inspiring) be delivered? 25 But thus says the LORD: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, I will save your children. 26 I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood..." (Isa. 49:24-26)*

IV. PRINCIPLE: HONOR GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY BY BLESSING ISRAEL

³ *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you (Gen. 12:3)*

²⁹ *(Isaac to Jacob) Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you...cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you! (Gen. 27:29)*

⁶ *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you." (Ps. 122:6)*

A. This principle has been operating throughout all of history. It will have great significance during the Great Tribulation then during the transitional period. Since the time of Abraham

B. Balaam prophesied over Israel before Moabite King Balak.

⁹ *Blessed is he who blesses you (Israel), and cursed is he who curses you." (Num. 24:9)*

V. JESUS JUDGING THE GENTILE NATIONS

³¹ *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the Throne of His Glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (Mt. 25:31-33)*

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ (Mt. 25:34-40)

- A. This is not a comprehensive categorizing of every type of judgment of every action, but it is the primary criteria highlighted after the Lord returns.
- B. People will express their relationship to Jesus by obeying Him in His sovereign plan to bless Israel. This will be a very big issue in the generation that the Lord returns. It will be the litmus test of faith at that time. To neglect to stand with the Jews means that one has made many other wrong decisions before that.
- C. Jesus emphasized six criteria that will determine obedience to His leadership in the End-Times. They all concern how we relate to His brethren when they are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick and in prison. All six are issues related to being refugees or in prison camps. In Mt. 25, Jesus does not mention the context of Israel’s plight as refugees and prisoners in the End-Times. This theme is prominent in the OT prophets. We must compare Scripture with Scripture to understand this passage.
- D. These are six requirements that will show forth one’s faith and obedience. They will all be well known because they will be preached for years before and during the Tribulation. Jesus will make them clear after His appearing. This is an important criteria of how God evaluates obedience to His will throughout all history, but particularly during the Great Tribulation and immediately after.

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ 44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ 45 He will answer them, saying, “Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.” 46 These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Mt. 25:41-46)

- E. The penalty for neglecting these six activities is Hell. Feeding the poor in the inner city is an important Biblical principle, but it is not the criteria as to whether people go to eternal hell.

VI. THE PROCESS OF JUDGMENT IN THE TRANSITIONAL TIME

⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people... (Isa. 2:4)

³ He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off... (Mic. 4:3)

⁵ The Lord...shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. (Ps. 110:5-6)

⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, 7 to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; 8 to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; 9 to execute on them the written judgment-- This honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD! (Ps. 149:6-9)

⁴ With righteousness He shall judge the poor...He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. (Isa. 11:4)

⁸ The lawless one (Antichrist)...whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thes. 2:8)

¹⁵ Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. (Rev. 19:15)

⁸ I will give You the nations for Your inheritance...⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. (Ps. 2:8-9)

A. All kings established in the Millennium will worship Jesus (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 60:10-11, 62:2; Rev. 12:5; 15:4; 21:24). All nations worship Jesus in the Millennium: Ps. 66:4; 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 60:10-11, 62:2; Rev. 12:5; 15:4; 21:24)

B. The following is totally hypothetical so as to grasp the different categories of kings and their various responses in the Great Tribulation and immediately after it. Today there are approximately 210 kings (Prime Minister, or Presidents) in the earth. The 10 nation confederation will be led by reprobate kings at the beginning of the Tribulation, leaving 200 kings. Let's say that 100 of these join the Antichrist system during the Great Tribulation leaving 100 kings who have not taken the mark of the Beast. Let's imagine that 25 of these are saved (thus raptured before Mt. 25), leaving us with 75 kings who neither take the mark of the Beast nor get saved. When Jesus returns, these 75 will still be in office. Let's say that all these resisters get converted and then begin to help bring the Jews back to Israel, thus becoming the sheep in this passage. Thus, 125-150 new kings would need to be appointed over the surviving nations.

- C. How these resisters treat the Jews in the first years immediately following the Tribulation will be the litmus test of their faith. The issues are the necessities of life (food, water, clothing, shelter, etc.). Do not limit this passage to prison camps, but include desperate situations. For example, in New Orleans they were in a crisis in the necessities of life. After Jesus' return, prison camps will be progressively shut down and many will be wandering around aimlessly without transportation or the necessities of life.
- D. The Nazi death camps were liberated over a 6 month period not just on one day. The prisoners had to walk back home, some as far as Russia. Many did not know their way home. There were not adequate transportation systems in Europe for years. In the months following the war, many died of starvation and diseases and some were shot to steal their food. Some innocent Germans were shot by Russians out of bitter vengeance because there was no police force to stop this. There was chaos and lawlessness for several years after the war.
- E. In the final generation, many will be judged by Jesus' new Millennial worldwide court system. Jesus will capture the wicked kings then He will execute them. Mt. 25, could have some parallels to the Nuremberg war trials, in the sense that it took 6 months to gather 24 war criminals and another 12 months to try them in a way that the evidence was documented for the sake of history.
- F. The Throne of Glory judgment (Mt. 25) will include all the surviving kings plus the others in their nation. The numbers will be vast. If there are approximately 8 billion people (?) at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, about one half will die (add the ¼ in Rev. 6:8 plus another 1/3 in Rev. 9:15) totaling 4 billion deaths. Probably one billion will be raptured. That will leave 2-3 billion left (most will have the mark of the Beast). Think of 2-3 billion reprobate people with the mark of the Beast plus several hundred million resisters who will be judged at the Throne of Glory. Some will be sheep and others goats. All will be evaluated in the Lord's judicial system.
- G. The millions killed in the Armageddon Campaign will not be a large percentage of the approximate 2-3 billion people on earth. Three billion people will not stand in trial in Jerusalem, but they will be standing in trial under the Throne of Glory worldwide court system. The infrastructure will be global, yet under His authority as the Chief Justice of Supreme Court in Jerusalem. Local courts have all the authority of Washington DC behind them. The people in North and South America and Africa etc., will be evaluated in their home country, yet within the judicial infrastructure that is under Jesus' authority. Probably only the worst crimes of the kings and their senior cabinet will be shipped over to Jerusalem. Remember the transportation systems will be inadequate for several years.
- ² ***Do you not know the saints will judge the world?... 3 We shall judge angels? (1 Cor 6:2-3)***
- H. The judgment will be a process. First, they are captured, second tried in the courts, third, given a guilty verdict, fourth they are sentenced to be executed, then sent to eternal punishment.

VII. WHO IS JESUS SPEAKING ABOUT

- A. The theme is Jesus evaluating the Gentile nations. The challenge is to understand the specific context of this part of His judgment.
- B. **When?** Is it a judgment of all people from history being sent to hell based how they related to refugees? No, this is only a judgment of the people living on earth as survivors of the Great Tribulation. The saints are separated from the unrighteous at the Rapture not when Jesus sits on His Throne of Glory in Jerusalem. The saints will already be evaluated by this time.
- C. **Where?** Is this a judgment in heaven or on earth? The people being judged will stand before Jesus' Throne of Glory in Millennial Jerusalem. This is after the Rapture.
- D. **How long?** How much time does the process take? This judgment occurs over a process of time in the beginning days and months of the Millennium. It does not all occur on the first day of the Millennium. The Mt. 25 judgment does not occur on the first day after Jesus' Second Coming. This could be months or years after Jesus returns. How did they become righteous so soon and why did they miss the Rapture? If this is a progressive judgment that occurs over months and years, then they have opportunity to show forth their righteousness.
- E. **Who?** There are 3 distinct groups. The righteous and the cursed will be evaluated by how they respond to Jesus' brethren.
- F. **The sheep** (v. 32-33), the blessed of the Father (v. 34), the righteous (v. 37, 46) are Gentiles after the Rapture who get converted. These are not saints from history (they are rewarded at the Rapture; Rev. 11:15-18; 19:7-8, 14). If Mt. 25 is Jesus' judgment of all the people through history, then the righteous refers to the Church who took care of the Jewish refugees. Some see Jesus' brethren as the Church. However, then the Church is both the righteous and Jesus' brethren, cared for by the Church. Then all who did not help poor Christians, go to hell.
- G. **The goats** (v. 32-33), the cursed (v. 41) are the reprobate having taken the mark of the Beast.
- H. **My brethren** (v. 40), the least of these (v. 45). "My brethren" are Jews with natural bodies on earth after the Rapture. The righteous are not the same group as His brethren. Jesus evaluates the survivors of the Great Tribulation based on how they treated His brethren Israel in the transitional period. Paul refers to unsaved Jews as His brethren (Rom. 9:1-3; Acts 28:17).
- I. After the Second Coming, the sheep and goats are judged according to how they treated Israel. Why would any be goats? They have a reprobate mind filled with bitterness to God and Israel.