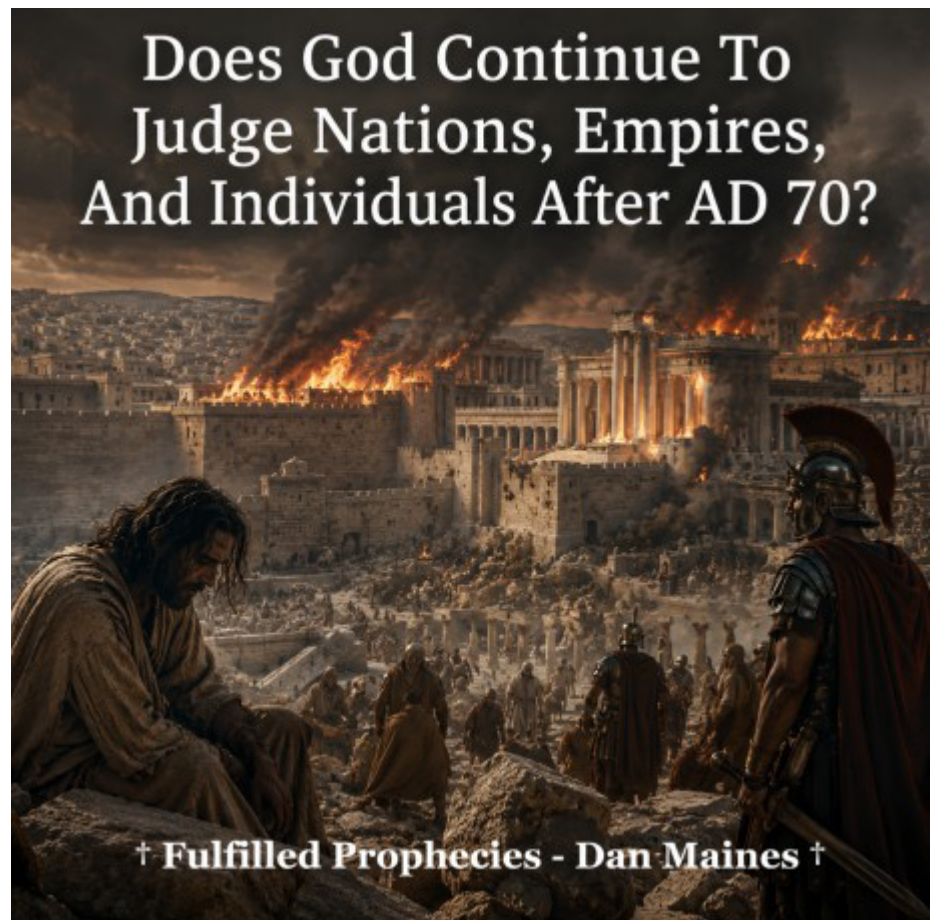


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Judgment - Does God Continue To Judge Nations, Empires, And Individuals After AD 70?



By Dan Maines

Does God Continue To Judge Nations, Empires, And Individuals After AD 70?

Introduction

† The fulfillment of biblical prophecy in AD 70 doesn't mean God stopped ruling the world in AD 70.

† There is an important difference between prophetic covenant judgment and God's continuing providential government over nations and individuals.

† Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 fulfilled the judgment announced by Jesus and the prophets. That judgment belonged

to the closing of the Old Covenant age and isn't still awaiting fulfillment (Luke 21:20-22, 32; Matthew 23:35-36; 24:34).

† But fulfillment doesn't mean God retired from governing His creation. Christ's kingdom is everlasting, and an everlasting kingdom requires an everlasting King who continues to rule.

† Scripture gives us every reason to believe God still rules over nations, restrains evil, holds rulers accountable, disciplines His people, and judges human conduct. What Scripture doesn't give us is authority to declare every war, earthquake, disease, economic collapse, or national disaster a specific prophetic judgment from God.

† We must distinguish God's continuing judgment within history from the fulfilled prophetic judgments that Scripture specifically connected with the end of the Old Covenant age.

Daniel 4:17

This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers, And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And He grants it to whomever He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of people.

† The central truth is that the Most High rules over human kingdoms. God's sovereignty over nations wasn't presented as something that would expire when the Old Covenant ended.

† Nebuchadnezzar learned that earthly rulers govern beneath God's ultimate authority. Empires rise and fall, but God's authority isn't transferred to human governments (Daniel 4:25, 32, 34-35).

† AD 70 established no limitation on God's sovereignty. The kingdom belongs to Christ, therefore every earthly ruler remains under the authority of the King of kings (Psalm 2:10-12; 1 Timothy 6:15).

† Fulfilled prophecy means the things God promised were fulfilled. It doesn't mean God stopped governing history after their fulfillment.

Psalm 22:28

For the kingdom is the Lord's And He rules over the nations.

† God's kingdom and God's rule over the nations belong together. If God is still King, He is still ruler over the nations.

† The establishment of Christ's everlasting kingdom didn't remove the nations from God's authority. It placed the supremacy of Christ's reign beyond dispute (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 28:18).

† Nations aren't independent of God because biblical prophecy has been fulfilled. Every government and every ruler remains beneath divine sovereignty.

† This doesn't give us permission to identify every national tragedy as a direct judgment from God. It does tell us that nations haven't escaped His government.

Isaiah 9:7

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of armies will accomplish this.

† Christ's kingdom isn't only everlasting, His government is forever upheld with justice and righteousness.

† If His government continues forever, His righteous rule didn't stop in AD 70. AD 70 established the fulfilled kingdom, it didn't end the King's active government (Luke 1:32-33; Hebrews 12:28).

† Continuing divine justice doesn't require continuing prophecy. It belongs to the continuing government of an everlasting King.

Psalm 9:7-8

But the Lord sits as King forever; He has established His throne for judgment, And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples fairly.

† Notice the connection between God's eternal kingship and judgment. He sits as King forever, and He judges in righteousness.

† Judgment isn't contrary to God's kingdom. Righteous judgment is part of righteous government.

† The kingdom established through Christ isn't a kingdom in which God becomes indifferent to oppression, violence, corruption, injustice, or rebellion.

† We shouldn't confuse this continuing righteous government with unfulfilled eschatology. God can govern and judge within history without creating another prophetic "end time."

Romans 13:1-4

Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a servant of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

† Paul shows that civil authority operates under God's sovereignty. Government can function as an instrument for restraining and punishing evil.

† This principle isn't dependent upon the Jerusalem temple, the Levitical priesthood, or the Old Covenant. Paul grounds governmental authority in God Himself.

† God's providential government can therefore operate through ordinary historical means, rulers, courts, governments, consequences, and the collapse of corrupt systems.

† This doesn't mean every action taken by a government represents God's moral approval. Scripture repeatedly shows that rulers themselves can become corrupt and accountable before God (Psalm 82:1-4; Proverbs 29:2).

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a person

sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

† Fulfilled eschatology doesn't erase moral consequences. Paul states a continuing principle, what a person sows has consequences.

† Individuals don't become morally immune because AD 70 occurred. God's kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness, not a declaration that human behavior no longer matters.

† Sin carries consequences personally, relationally, socially, and sometimes physically. God can permit people to experience the consequences of the path they've chosen (Romans 1:24-28).

† We should be careful, however, about looking at another person's suffering and announcing that God is punishing that individual for a particular sin. Jesus warned against making that kind of automatic connection (Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3).

Romans 8:1

Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.

† God's continuing righteous government must not be confused with condemnation for those who are in Christ.

† Believers can experience God's correction and discipline without being placed back under condemnation (Hebrews 12:5-6).

† God's judgment, His fatherly discipline, and condemnation aren't the same thing. Those who are in Christ aren't under condemnation.

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

† The kingdom that can't be shaken doesn't eliminate God's holiness. The writer connects receiving the kingdom with reverence toward God.

† God didn't change His character when the Old Covenant age ended. The same God who is loving, merciful, and gracious is righteous and holy.

† The kingdom is permanent precisely because its King is righteous. God's grace doesn't mean indifference toward evil.

† Fulfillment changed the covenantal age, it didn't change God's character.

Hebrews 12:5-6

and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are punished by Him; For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts."

† God's continuing judgment shouldn't always be understood as destruction or wrath. Scripture also presents God's discipline as the loving correction of His children.

† This shows that God's continuing involvement includes correction and discipline, not another eschatological judgment (1 Corinthians 11:31-32; Revelation 3:19).

1 Corinthians 15:25

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

† Christ's reign is active rule, not passive kingship. The New Covenant kingdom isn't an abandoned kingdom after AD 70.

† The first-century fulfillment established what the prophets promised, Christ's victorious kingdom. It didn't leave subsequent history outside His sovereignty (Daniel 7:14; Luke 1:32-33).

† Nations can rise, nations can fall, rulers can prosper, rulers can be removed, and civilizations can experience the consequences of righteousness or wickedness while Christ remains King.

† None of this requires another Second Coming, another last days, another Great Tribulation, or another fulfillment of

Revelation. Providence isn't the same thing as prophecy.

Acts 17:26-27

and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

† Paul describes God as sovereign over the historical existence of nations. Their times and boundaries aren't outside His government.

† God's control of history isn't limited to Israel's covenant story. Paul was speaking about every nation of humanity.

† Therefore, the fulfilled judgment of Old Covenant Israel doesn't require us to believe that every nation after AD 70 operates independently from God.

† History remains under God's sovereignty even though biblical eschatological prophecy has reached its fulfillment.

The Important Distinction

† Before AD 70, inspired prophets could identify particular events as God's judgment because God had revealed those judgments beforehand (Isaiah 10:5-6; Jeremiah 25:8-11; Luke 19:41-44).

† We don't have inspired prophets today giving new revelation that a particular hurricane, earthquake, war, pandemic, assassination, recession, or national collapse is God's direct punishment for a particular sin.

† That means we should never pretend to know what God hasn't revealed.

† We can say God rules nations. We can say God judges righteously. We can say individuals and societies reap consequences from their actions. We can say rulers remain accountable to God.

† But we should be very cautious about saying, "This disaster happened because God judged them for this specific sin." Without divine revelation, that goes beyond what we know.

† This distinction allows us to affirm God's continuing sovereignty without creating new prophecy after AD 70.

Does This Create Prophecy Beyond AD 70?

† No. God's providence isn't new biblical prophecy.

† If God removes a ruler, permits an empire to collapse, restrains evil through government, disciplines someone, or allows people to reap the consequences of their actions, none of that requires an unfulfilled prophecy.

† We shouldn't confuse God's continuing activity with a continuing prophetic calendar.

† AD 70 completed the prophetic covenant transition. It didn't end God's involvement with His creation.

† Christ didn't establish His kingdom so He could stop reigning. He established an everlasting kingdom precisely because His reign continues without end (Daniel 7:14; Luke 1:33).

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the catastrophic judgment that came upon Jerusalem in AD 70 and repeatedly connected the nation's destruction with its wickedness and internal corruption. His account provides historical background for the first-century judgment Jesus had already announced (Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 5, chapters 10-13; Book 6, chapters 3-9).

† Eusebius later described Jerusalem's destruction in connection with the judgment that came upon that generation following its rejection of Christ. His account reflects the early Christian recognition that Jesus' warnings concerning Jerusalem had historically occurred (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, chapters 5-7).

† Augustine, writing centuries after AD 70, continued to describe God's providence as governing earthly kingdoms, including their rise, duration, and fall. Whatever conclusions we draw about individual historical events, Christians didn't understand AD 70 to mean that God's sovereignty over nations had ended (Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 5, chapters 1, 21, 24-26).

† These historical writers aren't our authority for doctrine.

Scripture is our authority. Their writings are useful because they show how ancient Jewish and Christian writers understood divine judgment, historical events, and God's continuing government of human affairs.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We live in the everlasting kingdom of Christ, not in another waiting period for a future kingdom (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28).

† Because Christ reigns, we shouldn't look at the world as though nations, governments, and rulers operate outside God's sovereignty.

† We should also resist the temptation to turn every catastrophe into prophecy. A war isn't automatically Armageddon. An earthquake isn't automatically a sign of the end. A political leader isn't automatically the Antichrist. A national crisis doesn't restart Matthew 24 or Revelation.

† Fulfilled prophecy frees us from interpreting every newspaper headline as another biblical prediction coming true.

† At the same time, fulfilled prophecy doesn't require a powerless God who stopped governing the world in AD 70.

† God is still God. Christ is still King. Nations are still accountable. Individuals are still accountable. Actions still have consequences. Righteousness still matters.

† We can confidently affirm God's sovereignty while humbly admitting when Scripture hasn't told us why a particular event happened.

† AD 70 wasn't the end of God's government. It was the fulfillment of the promised covenant judgment and the full arrival of the unshakable kingdom in which Christ reigns.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does God still judge nations after AD 70?

A: God still rules over nations and judges righteously. Scripture presents His government as continuing, not ending with AD 70 (Psalm 22:28; Psalm 9:7-8). What ended was the unfulfilled prophetic program concerning the Old Covenant age, not God's

sovereignty.

Q: Can we say a modern disaster was God's judgment?

A: We should be very careful. God can judge within history, but without inspired revelation we can't confidently declare that a particular disaster happened as punishment for a particular sin. Jesus Himself warned against assuming that tragedy proves greater personal guilt (Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3).

Q: Does continuing judgment mean prophecy continues after AD 70?

A: No. Providence and prophecy aren't the same thing. God can govern nations, restrain evil, remove rulers, and allow consequences without creating another prophetic fulfillment (Romans 13:1-4; Galatians 6:7-8).

Q: If all prophecy was fulfilled, what is Christ doing now?

A: He reigns. Fulfillment didn't end Christ's kingdom, it established the everlasting kingdom promised in Scripture. His authority doesn't expire, and His kingdom can't be shaken (Hebrews 12:28-29; Daniel 7:14).

Q: Did God stop judging individuals after AD 70?

A: No. People remain morally accountable before God, and the principle of sowing and reaping remains true. Fulfillment didn't abolish righteousness, responsibility, or consequences (Galatians 6:7-8).

Q: Then what exactly changed in AD 70?

A: The Old Covenant age reached its complete end, Jerusalem and the temple received the judgment Jesus foretold, and the covenant transition was completed. God's character, sovereignty, righteousness, and kingship didn't end. His kingdom remains forever (Luke 21:20-22, 32; Hebrews 12:28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Daniel 4:17; Psalm 22:28; Psalm 9:7-8; Romans 13:1-4; Isaiah 9:7; Romans 8:1; Galatians 6:7-8; Hebrews 12:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Acts 17:26-27

† Historical writers: Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 5, chapters 10-13; Book 6, chapters 3-9; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, chapters 5-7; Augustine, The City of God, Book 5, chapters 1, 21, 24-26

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