

Does God Commit Genocide?

God's judgments in Scripture—like the Flood (Genesis 6), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), and the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 6)—are never capricious or racially motivated. They are solemn acts of justice in response to deep-rooted, persistent wickedness. God told Israel, “It is not because of your righteousness... but because of the wickedness of these nations” (Deuteronomy 9:4). The Canaanites, for instance, practiced child sacrifice—“they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods” (Deuteronomy 12:31).

God is “slow to anger” and “abundant in mercy” (Exodus 34:6), giving generations time to repent (Genesis 15:16). But when evil ripens and threatens to destroy others, divine justice intervenes—not out of cruelty, but out of love for what is right. Ultimately, God's judgments are not genocide; they are rescue missions to preserve life and uphold moral order.

From Disappointment to Hope

In the early 1800s, a powerful revival known as the Second Advent Movement swept through North America and beyond. At its center was William Miller, a Baptist farmer and dedicated Bible student. In his study, Miller came to the prophecy of Daniel 8:14: *“Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”*

Using the day-for-a-year principle (cf. Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), Miller concluded the 2,300 days symbolized 2,300 years. But from what starting point? In Daniel 9, the angel explains that 70 weeks are “*cut off*” from a longer time period and begin “*from the command to restore and build Jerusalem*” (Daniel 9:25). That decree, issued in 457 BC by Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7), starts the prophetic clock—leading to the year 1844.

Miller and his followers believed this prophecy pointed to the Second Coming of Christ and initially expected His return in 1843, later refined to October 22, 1844. But when Jesus did not come, the movement faced what became known as the Great Disappointment.

While many abandoned hope, a faithful few returned to Scripture. They reexamined the sanctuary imagery of Leviticus 16, which described the annual Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to cleanse the sanctuary—not from physical defilement, but from the record of sin.

This led to a key insight: the “sanctuary” in Daniel 8:14 referred not to the earth, but to the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:1–2). The “cleansing” was not Christ's return, but the start of His final work in the Most Holy Place—the investigative judgment pictured in Daniel 7. Christ receives His kingdom only after this phase of judgment concludes.

What began in misunderstanding became a beautiful picture of God's plan. Since 1844, Christ has been interceding in the heavenly judgment—vindicating the faithful and preparing to return with His reward (Revelation 22:12).

ANCIENT WORLDS *of the* BIBLE

Study Guide 12

by Pastor Daniel McFeeters

Pathway to Peace in the Middle East

In the ancient ruins of Hazor—once one of the largest and most powerful Canaanite cities in the land of Israel—the stones still speak. Layered in its soil are testimonies to the city's turbulent history: a black burn layer marking the fiery destruction under Joshua (Joshua 11:11–13); grand gates and casemate walls from the reign of Solomon, matching those in Megiddo and Gezer (1 Kings 9:15); and a deep shaft carved in a desperate attempt to reach water, perhaps during the devastating drought of Elijah's day (1 Kings 17:1). Each is a testimony of God's divine justice, even amid human rebellion.

Hazor's remains mirror the broader story of the Middle East: cycles of conflict, judgment, and fleeting peace. Even today, the land groans under unresolved tensions, ancient grievances, and fresh violence. But can there be any lasting peace in the Middle East—or anywhere—without a judgment that is not only executed, but universally recognized as righteous?

The Bible's answer is unambiguous. True peace cannot come without justice—and only God's justice can satisfy both the demands of holiness and the cries of the oppressed. *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne,”* writes the psalmist, *“mercy and truth go before His face”* (Psalm 89:14). From the conquest of Canaan to the cross of Christ, and finally to the hour of God's final judgment, Scripture testifies that God is not indifferent—He judges in righteousness (Acts 17:31).

Could it be that we are already witnessing this last judgment hour of Revelation 14:7: *“The hour of His judgment has come”*? In light of this solemn reality, Peter's piercing question echoes across time and culture: *“What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?”* (2 Peter 3:11). The pathway to peace begins not with political treaties or military victories, but with lives surrendered to the justice, mercy, and transforming power of God.

Heaven's Courtroom

Judgment in Scripture is not an abstract idea—it is a real, appointed event. Paul declared, *“He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained”* (Acts 17:31). This judgment reflects God's perfect balance of justice and mercy.

Throughout the Bible, judgment is seen not only as punitive, but protective. Cities of refuge in Numbers 35:12 safeguarded the innocent while ensuring the guilty were judged justly. Jeremiah 23:5 foretells a King who will *“execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.”* In Psalm 76:9, God arises *“to save all the humble of the earth.”*

Daniel 7 reveals a cosmic courtroom where thrones are set, the Ancient of Days is seated, and *“the books were opened”* (v. 10). This judgment begins not after earth's history concludes, but while a persecuting power—the little horn—is still active. This points to a pre-Advent, heavenly phase of judgment, often called the investigative judgment. God Himself presides, surrounded by countless angels. The imagery is deliberate: fire, purity, and open books emphasize a judgment that is public, holy, and just (cf. Psalm 50:4; Job 1:6). The *“books”* symbolize heavenly records, as seen in Malachi 3:16. The goal is not to inform God, but to vindicate the faithful (Daniel 7:22).

Who is the judge in this heavenly court? Jesus confirmed that *“the Father... has committed all judgment to the Son”* (John 5:22). Imagine this: the one who judges your case also walked in your shoes. *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”* (Hebrews 4:15) *“He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”* (Psalm 103:14)

At its climax, the Son of Man—Christ—approaches the Ancient of Days and receives *“dominion and glory and a kingdom”* (Daniel 7:13–14). This scene parallels Revelation 11:15, affirming Jesus' right to rule following the judgment.

For believers, this courtroom brings hope, not fear. God's justice is fair, His records are accurate, and through Christ, the saints are vindicated. *“The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom”* (Daniel 7:27). Judgment isn't the end of the story—it's the beginning of Christ's eternal reign and the final deliverance of His people.

When does this judgment begin? Daniel 7 interleaves the heavenly scene with the prophecies of earthly kingdoms, implying that the overthrow of the earthly kingdoms comes as a result of this heavenly judgment. The prophecy continues in Daniel 8, but using sanctuary symbols, showing more specifically the history of God's people. Daniel sees a desecrating power trample the sanctuary and asks *“how long”* would it be before this sanctuary is cleansed or restored. The answer, given in Daniel 8:14, points to the precise time: *“For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”*

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

SCRIPTURE: *“He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.”* – Acts 17:31

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come...”
– Revelation 14:7

“Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...?” – 2 Peter 3:11

REFLECTION: How do you feel when you consider this present, end-time judgment? Does it give you fear or hope?

How does it affect you to know that Jesus is both your judge and your advocate? (Hebrews 4:15)

EXPERIENCE: Do you act or speak differently if you know someone is watching you? How do your actions change if you know that person cares for you and wants you to succeed?

QUESTION: Why is it important that the judgment takes place before Christ's return?

RESPONSE: Will you commit to living in *“holy conduct and godliness”* knowing that this is the hour of God's last-day judgment?

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