

“Judgment and Justice”
Psalms 7, 9, 11, 58, 75, 82, 94; Proverbs 21
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Introduction

- When I first became a Christian the message to me was that I was a sinner and that I needed to put my faith in God. God loved me and Jesus died for me and had a wonderful plan for my life. When I started reading the Bible, especially some sections of the Old Testament, God didn't seem very loving. He was vengeful, judging, and He punished people. Where was His love? It took me a while to understand this, and if you are having the same issue, then hopefully this lecture will help you.
- In the second century, Marcion of Sinope (AD 85-160) saw that the God of the Old Testament was wrathful, punishing people, and vindictive; but the God of the New Testament was loving, forgiving, and kind. He came to the conclusion that the God of the Old Testament, Yahweh, was not the God of the New Testament, God the Father. He subsequently rejected the whole Old Testament, got rid of most of the New Testament except for Luke and ten epistles of Paul, and removed all references to the Old Testament or allusions to it. But that wasn't enough, for he also found other writings and made up some of his own. This person, who created chaos in the some of the churches of the second century, was branded as a heretic and excommunicated from the church.
- Unfortunately, this concept of a God who is only loving and not also a judge is widespread in our culture today. Those in the world generally only see God either as loving and will save all people, or they see Him as a cruel God who is always condemning and judgmental.
- These two views of God are both wrong: for God is both loving and just, merciful and holy, righteous and judging sin. In fact, we see God judging sin in the New Testament:
- **1 Pet 4:3-5** *For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry...but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*
- **Rom. 2:6-8** *He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*
- We also see God as merciful, kind, and forgiving in the Old Testament:
- **Ex. 34:6-7** *The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.*
- **Psa. 25:6** *Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.*
- Let's briefly look at the concept of God's wrath, justice, and judgment.
- **God's Wrath:** *God's wrath means that He intensely hates all sin.* – Grudem, Systematic Theology

- In the Bible God's righteousness and justice are the same word:
- **God's Righteousness/Justice:** *God's righteousness means that God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right.* – **Grudem**
- God's judgment in the Bible contains two ideas: (1) A decree, sentence, or condemnation of wrong; and (2) the execution of the judgment. This is seen in Nelson's Bible Dictionary:
- **God's Judgment:** *The process of discernment or to the punishment meted out to those who fall under His wrath and condemnation...In the Bible the most important judgment is the final judgment, the ultimate separation of good and evil at the end of history.* – **Nelson's Bible Dictionary**
- God acts always in accordance with His character. Sin must be judged. Notice the ideas of God's kindness and severity in the same verse:
- **Rom. 11:33** *Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.*
- God's anger and judgment are often delayed, but this is only for a season, and not an indication that God doesn't know or doesn't care:
- **Isa. 48:9-11** *For my name's sake I defer my anger; for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.*
- God's final judgment is certain and will occur when God decides to execute it:
- **2 Pet. 3:7** *But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*
- **Rev. 20:11-15** *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. ... And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ... Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*
- With this as the background, let us look at the passages of our study for this week and see what they say about God's judgment and justice and the principles that we can glean from them:

- **Lesson**
- **Point #1: God judges those who don't repent**
- **Psa. 7:11-12** *God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow.*
- God is righteous and holy and cannot tolerate sin. He is indignant, angry with sin, and hostile to it. God is patient and allows people time to turn to Him, but if a person does not repent, to turn to God, God will judge them. God delays His judgment out of mercy, not because He

won't judge, but because He will judge at the time of His choosing, allowing all people the time to turn to Him.

- **Psa. 9:16** *The Lord has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.*
- The greatness of God is demonstrated by executing His judgment upon those who are wicked and oppress the poor and the needy. The wicked may think that they got away with something, but they will be judged for what they have done.
- **Psa. 75:4-7** *I say to the boastful, 'Do not boast,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn; do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck.' For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.*
- God is against those who are prideful, to those rely upon their own strength, to those have a haughty defiant stiff neck. The figure here is of ox or cattle that resist the yoke for plowing. Just as cattle are punished for not following their master, so people are judged by God for their sin and unrepentant hearts. The wicked cannot escape His judgment. Their only hope is to turn to Him in repentance.
- **Pro. 21:2-4** *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.*
- God wants a heart turned totally to Him, not based upon pride or self-righteousness, for that is sin, but doing what is right and just, being the person that God wants them to be. Following God is more than mere outward obedience like offerings or sacrifices. Following God is a matter of the heart and turning to God with your whole being, not by mere outward show. Following God is listening to Him, obeying Him, and not sinning against Him.
- **Pro. 21:20-21** *Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it. Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.*
- The one who pursues righteousness and kindness is on the path that leads to wisdom by listening to God and doing what He wants. We are all on a path, but which is it? The path of the wicked or the path of the righteous? The path of righteousness and kindness is often mocked, but God rewards it with honor and blessings instead of judgment. It is a worthy path of good character and reputation that reflects and honors God. The path of the wicked leads nowhere but death.
- **Point #2: God always acts according to His character**
- **Psa. 9:7-9** *But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice, and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.*
- The throne of our sovereign God is established upon His attributes of justice, righteousness, and judgment. He can only act according to His character, for He does not change. His judgments are true and right and He judges with moral integrity, honesty, and equity. God has allowed sin to exist in the world; however, there will come a time when His holiness

demands that sin be judged. For those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, there is no fear. Christ's blood paid the penalty of death for our sins and He is our refuge and stronghold.

- **Psa. 58:10-11** *The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked. Mankind will say, “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth.”*
- For those who ask, “Where is God?” when men see sin multiplying, there is a day when judgment will fall upon the wicked. The righteous will rejoice when God judges sin as an affirmation of His holiness and righteousness. *To the righteous the death of the wicked is just and an indication that there is a God of justice* – **Longman, Psalms**. The righteous will be rewarded with eternal life, peace with God, joy, and blessedness. Though judgment seems to be long postponed, it is not forgotten. God fully intends to judge the wicked and punish them for their sin and their rejection of God. For it is compatible with who He is as a righteous, holy, and just judge.
- **Point #3: God provides for those who trust in Him**
- **Psa. 7:1** *O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me.*
- Trusting God means to turn to God in time of need, putting trust in God in the midst of trouble. We are called to put our trust in God every single day of our life, whether things are going well or poorly. God provides for those who turn to Him. The Psalmist asks to be saved, to be delivered. Sometimes God's strength is evident in helping through a trial; sometimes it is evident in delivering us from trials. God has promised to provide for those who trust in Him.
- **Psa. 9:10-12** *And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. Sing praises to the Lord, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds! For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.*
- We trust in God because we have a relationship with Him. We know His character, His power, and His faithfulness. God has not forsaken those who seek Him. They have a relationship with God: they know Him and have put their trust in Him. They praise Him and tell others about Him. Sometimes we feel that God has forsaken us, maybe when we have sinned or face some great trouble, or our prayers are unanswered. Even in those times, seek God, trust God, for God is sovereign and He does not forget or ignore the cry of the afflicted. God will answer and He will comfort us, for He knows us and we know Him.
- **Psa. 94:14-17** *For the Lord will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage; for justice will return to the righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it. Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against evildoers? If the Lord had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of silence.*
- Where would we be without God on our side? Knowing God will never leave us or forsake us is at the core of our faith. He promises justice for the righteous and those who truly follow Him. God will rise up and punish the wicked, for no one can stand against God when He acts. Where else can the righteous go, but to God, who has provided for them, who has given

life and salvation, to one who loves and cares for them. God provides for those that who are His.

- **Psa. 94:18-19** *When I thought, "My foot slips," your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.*
- If it were not for the steadfast love of God when we have a difficult day, even when it seemed that our foot slipped, it is God who holds us up. When the cares of our heart are many and even overwhelming, God is there to comfort and cheer our soul. Pray to God, turn to Him, even during difficult times, and He is there, waiting for us to turn to Him. He is always there to help us out. Though everything is crashing around us, turn to God and cry out to Him.
- **Point #4: God disciplines believers**
- **Psa. 11:4-5** *The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.*
- David probably had in mind the Lord's temple on the earth (the tabernacle) and God's temple in heaven. He is reminded that God had not left him. He hasn't gone anywhere. God is still sovereign as pictured by His throne in heaven. God is holy, all-powerful, and all knowing. His eyes see us, for we cannot hide from Him. It says here that God tests the righteous. God hates the wicked and those who love violence, and they will be judged. But God knows the righteous and He examines and tests them. God puts us in situations to see how we will respond. We know that God will not push too hard or forsake us, for we know that God is in control. Living life is a challenge. Not everything always goes right and most of the time it is not because we have done any wrong, but God wants us to grow and mature and be conformed to His image. God uses the tough things in our life not to destroy us but to encourage our faith, to trust in Him to grow, and to turn to Him throughout the day.
- **Psa. 94:12-13** *Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law, to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked.*
- We are blessed when God instructs or disciplines us. God wants us to grow and learn. The fools and the wicked will never listen to God, but His people trust Him. God has our best interests at heart and He loves and cares for us. He teaches us from His Word. How many times have you read God's Word and you are struck with some insight, or something that needs correcting within your life, and it's as if God was speaking to you just at that moment? When bad things happen asks yourself the question: What is God trying to teach at this time? What can I learn from this situation or my response? How can I bring glory to God at this time?
- **Point #5: God wants us to pray to uphold His justice**
- **Psa. 7:6,9** *Arise, O Lord, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have appointed a judgment...Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous—you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!*

- David here requests that God would rise up against his enemies, enemies that were against God. He called upon *God the Judge to put an end to the wicked actions of his enemies and to bring the innocent to a safe place.* – **Longman, Psalms.** David prayed for the righteous God to be just and bring justice to the oppressed. He prayed for God to act according His character, and bring judgment upon them.
- **Psa. 9:19-20** *Arise, O Lord! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! Put them in fear, O Lord! Let the nations know that they are but men!*
- David boldly prayed, expressing a firm confidence in God's judgment, that God would act decisively and display His power of judgment that men and nations would learn their proper place before God.
- **Psa. 11:6-7** *Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.*
- Have you ever thought about what type of judgment you'd wish for your enemies? David was specific. He prayed they should be judged through fire, sulfur and burning wind. Tormented because of their wickedness. God's righteousness and holiness condemns sin; however, the righteous are loved by God and will see His face.
- **Psa. 82:2-4,8** *How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked... Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!*
- This is an interesting Psalm with many interpretations as to who is addressed: God, angels, or men. It seems best to take this passage as referring to God calling human judges to perform their God given job of judging and to make correct judgments in the administration of justice. Asaph, the author this Psalm, at the end of the Psalm calls upon God to properly judge the earth, since the earthly judges will not do their job. We are called upon not only to pray that God would judge the wicked, but that the earthly judges would also do the same.

- **Summary**
- **Point #1: God judges those who don't repent** – Those who turn to Him and repent will be saved; those who reject Him will be judged, for without sin being dealt with only judgment remains.
- **Point #2: God always acts according to His character** – He is unchanging, holy, righteous, and dozens of other attributes. God is God and He defines what is sin and what is not. As the righteous Judge, He is fair and unbiased for He could not be any other way.
- **Point #3: God provides for those who trust in Him** – God loves us and cares for us and He is always there to comfort and help us. He provides for those who are His. He wants us to turn to Him and rely upon Him.
- **Point #4: God disciplines believers** – God instructs, tests, and disciplines us to become the person that He wants us to be.

- **Point #5: God wants us to pray to uphold His justice** – We are called to have God judge and act against the wicked, for we desire God's justice to be administered.
- **Application**
- (1) We need to trust in God and be the person He wants us to be. Let God be God and let us be those who have faith and trust in Him.
- **Deu. 29:29** *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*
- We can't understand everything about God for He is infinite and we are not. God wants us to be a people that trust in Him 100%, no matter what happens, and no matter how much we hurt.
- (2) We need to have faith that God will reward the righteous and will judge the unrighteous. God has our best interests at heart, but we don't always see it that way. Sinners will be punished, maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but eventually they will be. Throughout our lives we should have faith in God and be the person God wants us to be.
- **Matt. 24:44-46** *Then they also will answer, 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?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*
- (3) We need to accept God's discipline in our lives, for it is for our good. Sometimes we sin and don't confess our sins to Him. God puts things in our life so we will turn to Him and live the life He wants us to live. Was it fair that Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers? What does Joseph say at the end of his life:
- **Gen. 50:19-20** *But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*
- Is it hard for us to accept God's discipline in our own lives? Yes, it is. But, why are we disciplined?
- **Heb. 12:5-6** *My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.*
- My prayer for all of you is that you would grow in your faith and trust in God and that you would accept the discipline that He puts into our lives as necessary for us to grow and to be conformed to His image. Overall, I pray that you would all cling to God tightly and turn to Him first instead of last.
- After our prayer, please stand for the doxology. Let us pray.