

A Lord's Day Snippet!
Biblical And Southern Studies
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1 Day of judgment! Day of wonders!
Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,
louder than a thousand thunders,
shakes the vast creation round.
How the summons
will the sinner's heart confound!

2 See the Judge, our nature wearing,
clothed in majesty divine;
you who long for his appearing
then shall say, "This God is mine!"
Gracious Savior,
own me in that day as thine.

John Newton (1725-1807)

God Is Just

"The Almighty ... is excellent ... in judgment, and in plenty of justice."
Job 37:23

Excellence characterizes every facet of the person and work of the true and living God. Oh, the perfection of our great Jehovah! This is true in the judgment of the all-powerful God. Almighty judgment has to do with the making of a decision in a case judicially. The word "judgment" (mishpat) is often translated "justice" and also in this verse we have "in plenty of justice" (tsedaqah) the righteous justice or rule of God. God's justice is His holiness in action.

Go with me to the scene of the most profound revelation of the justice of God. It is a place called Calvary where a lone voice is sending up a wailing cry while hanging on a cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Here God was sacrificing His Son to redeem the lost sheep. The sinless Christ was bearing the sins of many as He became their substitutionary sacrifice. Peter said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

"Judgment" puts us in the hand of a just God who does all things immaculately well, even judgment. "Justice embodies the idea of moral equity, and iniquity is the exact opposite; it is *in*-equity, the absence of equality from human thoughts and acts. Judgment is the application of equity to moral situations and may be favorable or unfavorable according to

whether the one under examination has been equitable or inequitable in heart and conduct” [Tozer].

Remember when the warning was given that the Lord was going to judge Sodom and Gomorrah; it was then that Abraham began interceding for Lot, “That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right” (Gen. 18:25)? Abraham must have stopped praying too soon for he finally prayed, “Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake. And the LORD went his way...” (Gen. 18:32-33). But judgment fell upon the place for its utter wickedness. Only four were to escape but Mrs. Lot looked back and became a pillar of salt.

“Judgment” is sometimes used of the legal foundation of God’s government in the sense of His ultimate authority or sovereign right. In the Old Testament this refers to the authority of God being complete. Moses by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit declared, “Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God’s” (Deut. 1:17). The reason judges must not respect persons by giving them special treatment is because the Sovereign Judge is God Himself. God treats all men justly. Even in redemption justice is maintained for the Saviour must bear the judgment of those He saves and gifts His righteousness to each of them. The judge’s authority was conferred by God as David pointed out in his prayer, “Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment” (Ps. 72:1-2). This is David’s intercession for his son Solomon. The universal reign and rule of God is set forth by the word “judgment.”

The Almighty has “plenty of justice.” “Plenty” means an abundance. “Justice” means the righteous rule or government of God. The Almighty who has “plenty of justice;” He also is “plenteous in mercy” (Ps.103:8) and He has “plenteous redemption” (Ps. 130:7). “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right” (Gen. 18:25)? “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne” (Ps. 89:14). “He ... is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deut. 32:4).

In order to save His people from their sins His holiness and justice were inflexible. Justice had to be perfectly satisfied. Christ became flesh, did no sin, died a vicarious death, victoriously rose from the grave, and ascended to His throne by His Father’s side. “Rather than the rights of justice should suffer in the redemption of the lost, He Himself became a man, ‘and the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’ Rather than eternal equity should be injured by the salvation of the unjust without a propitiation, He Himself would take their place, bear their sins, and endure their punishment” [John Stock]. Jesus satisfied the justice of God in His substitutionary sacrifice, and He turned on as it were the mercy of God toward His people. Those condemned through sin can receive mercy through Christ.

God would not put His holy Son to such suffering and death to save a people and then let the wicked escape justice. “His hands will wield the thunders of retribution, and His justice will apportion to each man his equitable doom” [Stock]. A just and holy God must stand against the sinner for condemnation. Many have perceived of God as a feeble being that they can fool

and get by with sin and still hope for a good result. One has said that this is “a deadly opiate” in the “consciences of millions. It hushes their fears and allows them to practice all pleasant forms of iniquity while death draws every day nearer and the command to repent goes unregarded. As responsible moral beings we dare not so trifle with our eternal future” [Tozer].

Henry Martyn (1781-1812) was in prayer one evening when he said, “I had such a near and terrific view of God’s judgment upon sinners in hell, that my flesh trembled for fear of them. I flew trembling to Jesus Christ, as if the flames were taking hold of me. Oh! Christ will indeed save me, or else I perish!”