

Why We Ought Not to Doubt God is Just

(Psalm 82)

WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO:

God is the just Judge over all things in heaven and on earth; He expects ALL to use their God-given authority to promote justice, protect the poor and needy, spread God's salvation, and anticipate his coming kingdom.

1.) THE CONVENING OF THE COURT (v. 1)

Who are the "gods?" (See Isa. 43:10-13; no other gods exist before or after Yahweh)

- Yahweh exercises His **sovereign authority** over and judges the "Elohim" (אֱלֹהִים). The Hebrew word "Elohim" usually means God (big or little G), but it can also mean "judge" in a judicial sense (see Exodus 22:8-9, 28). ALL fall under Yahweh's authority.

So, two possibilities exist: (and in a sense, both apply, see #4):

- (1) **Human Judges**, notably those of Israel, were appointed to stand in Yahweh's place as His personal agent and to execute His judgments justly (Lev. 19:15). Men who administer justice are considered His agents, exercising a godly function ordained by Him; thus, he rebukes them for not rightly dispensing justice.
- (2) **Demons**, the "principalities, and powers" who corrupt human rulers and who influence pagan rulers with false pagan gods.

Either way, God's righteous standard applies on earth and in heaven!

2.) THE CHARGE AND INDICTMENT OF THE UNJUST (v. 2-4)¹

- God **indicts** the unjust "Elohim" in **verse 2** for deciding cases favoring perversity, dishonesty, and injustice. Such decisions favor the wicked over the righteous, which is exactly what Yahweh indicts them for: **lifting up the wicked**.
- Yahweh's just expectation for those in power is **to provide for** those who cannot help themselves, the weak, fatherless, poor, oppressed, and needy. These words stress the importance of the proper use of power.

- God-given power should always be used to **lift up the weak**, help the helpless, and relieve the oppressed.
- When leaders do not do this, they become the **"wicked"** and the "unjust." The prophets (and Moses as the example) were always concerned about the marginalized in society (see Duet. 24:1-22; 26:12-14; Isa. 10:1-4; Jer. 5:26-31; 22:15-17; Ezek. 18:10-13; Amos 5:7, 11-12; Micah 3:1-4; Hab. 1:2-4; Zech. 7:8-10; Mal. 2:17; 3:5).

Neither the rulers on earth nor the powers in heaven will get away with injustice!

3.) THE CHARACTER OF THE STUPID AND THEIR IMPACT (v.5)

- They walk in **darkness**. Justice is not possible when they know nothing, they understand nothing (Isa. 5:20, 41:24, 44:6-20). Isaiah says the exact same thing about the folly of idolatry and worship of false gods: "They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand."
- The foundations of common life (law and order) are **shaken** by wicked governance (ex. today: courts, schools, society in turmoil).

4.) THE CONVICTION AND LETHAL JUDGMENT (v.6-8)

- "Evil spiritual powers operating on the various nations were responsible for the type of kings, judges, and officials they appointed and empowered; Their will is administered by human agents, who are extensions of the divine presence in earthly affairs. Thus, the judgment of the "gods" is simultaneously a judgment of their human agents."¹
- "I said, You are gods," but you will die like Adam (a man). Wicked rulers are accountable. Israel's judges were, in a sense, "sons" of God; How far the gods have fallen from being "sons of the Most High," to their death sentence!
- NOTE: Jesus said to Israel's leaders that calling himself "Son of God" was not blasphemy in John 10:34, using Ps. 82:6. On the issue of "Elohim" dying "like men,"; recall Job had to "answer like a man" in Job 38:3; 40:7.

- ✓ **APPLICATION:** Leaders should use their God-given authority to promote justice, protect the poor and needy, spread God's salvation, and anticipate his coming kingdom. **They are not worthy of our devotion and loyalty if they do not.**

¹ S. Edward Tesh and Walter D. Zorn, *Psalms*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 112-113.

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