



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"I'm So Thankful that THIS Is Our Judge"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Isaiah 1:21-31; Ps. 68:5-6; Ps. 72; Isaiah 9:6-7; Heb. 12:5-11; Deut. 30:19

When Isaiah looks at Jerusalem, his words come out like a lament. *"How the faithful city has become a harlot! She was once full of justice. Righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers"* (Isaiah 1:21, TLV). It's as if he's saying, "How did this happen?" God's people, meant to be a city of righteousness, had become corrupt and self-seeking. Their silver had turned to dross, their wine diluted, their rulers friends with thieves and lovers of bribes. The poor, the widow, and the orphan were abandoned.

And into this mess, God steps forward—not only as Judge, but as the Mighty One of Israel. And here's the good news: He's not a corrupt judge like their leaders. He's not selfish, bribed, or blind to the hurting. He is the Judge who steps in to purify, restore, and redeem His people. That's why I can say today—I'm so thankful THIS is our Judge!

1. THE WRONG JUDGE BRINGS DEATH

Isaiah describes rulers who were supposed to lead with justice but instead rebelled. *"Your princes are rebellious and friends of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does a widow's case come before them"* (Isaiah 1:23, TLV). The leaders were corrupt, and the people followed their example. Society collapsed into selfishness, and the vulnerable suffered most.

This is what happens when we trust in the wrong judges—whether political leaders, cultural influencers, or even our own self-rule. The widow and orphan are forgotten. Justice is perverted. Life becomes devalued. And Isaiah says the faithful city becomes a place of death. Friends, if our hope is in human judges alone, we will always end up disappointed. Wrong judges bring death. And isn't that true in our world today? Whenever leaders prioritize greed and power over righteousness, society breaks down. Whenever we chase self-interest instead of God's ways, lives are shattered. Scripture reminds us that leadership sets the tone for a people, and when leaders rebel against God, the consequences ripple out like poison. But the beauty of Isaiah's prophecy is this—it doesn't end with corrupt judges. God Himself will step in.

2. THE RIGHT JUDGE PURIFIES

But then God speaks: *"Therefore, thus says the Lord, Adonai-Tzva'ot, the Mighty One of Israel: Oy! I will get relief from My foes and avenge Myself on My enemies. Then I will turn My hand on you, purging away your dross, removing all your alloy"* (Isaiah 1:24-25). Normally, when God says, "I will turn My hand on you," it's a word of judgment. But here His hand comes to purify. Like silver in the fire, He intends to remove the dross, to refine until what remains is pure. His judgment is not to destroy His people—it's to cleanse them. Hebrews 12 reminds us that His discipline feels painful in the moment, but it produces righteousness and peace.

This is why we can be thankful THIS is our Judge! He doesn't crush us—He cleanses us. He doesn't delight in punishment—He delights in restoration. Think about the times in your own life when God has allowed fire to touch you—not to consume you but to refine you. It hurt in the moment, but looking back, you see His hand purging away things that needed to

go. That is the work of a righteous Judge who loves His people too much to leave them in their corruption.

3. THE TRUE JUDGE RESTORES

The Lord doesn't stop at purifying; He promises restoration. *"I will restore your judges as at first, your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called City of Righteousness, Faithful City"* (Isaiah 1:26, TLV). What began as a lament over corruption ends as a promise of renewal. This points forward to Yeshua, the Son of David, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He is the Judge who makes all things new. Those who persist in rebellion will face destruction, but those who repent will be redeemed in His justice and righteousness. God's heart has always been not only to judge sin but to restore His people to the calling they were meant to fulfill.

And that's the ultimate reason we can say, "I'm so thankful THIS is our Judge." He is not content to simply point out our failures or condemn us in our sin. He lifts us up, restores what is broken, and calls us into the future He intended for us from the beginning. When He is finished, we won't just be patched up—we will be what He always said we would be: a City of Faithfulness, a people of righteousness, a testimony to His glory.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah presents us with a choice: Will you keep trusting in corrupt "oaks," false leaders, and alliances that fail? Or will you trust the Mighty One who purifies and restores? He invites us: *"Come now, let us reason together... though your sins be like scarlet, they will be white as snow"* (Isaiah 1:18, TLV). I'm so thankful THIS is our Judge—because His justice is laced with mercy, His discipline is filled with love, and His goal is always restoration. The Judge who rules over us is the Savior who gave Himself for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Isaiah begins with such a shocking description of the faithful city becoming corrupt?
2. How do you see parallels between Israel's corrupt rulers and leaders in today's world?
3. What does it mean to you personally that God's judgment is not only about punishment but also about purification?
4. How have you experienced God's hand of discipline leading to deeper restoration in your own life?
5. Why is it such good news that Yeshua is our Judge and not someone else?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba, we are so thankful that You are our Judge. We are so thankful that You are not like the corrupt rulers of this world—You are holy, righteous, merciful, and faithful. Thank You that when You turn Your hand upon us, it is to purify us, not destroy us. Thank You that You restore us to be what You always intended us to be: a city of faithfulness, a people of righteousness. Cleanse us, refine us, and lead us in Your justice. We trust You, and we rejoice that THIS is our Judge.

In the name of Yeshua our Messiah, Amen.