

Intro: Avengers. Love ideas of justice and evil people getting what they deserve. We picture ourselves as on the good team. As the Avenger. Surely I would do the right thing. Amps us up. But we forget that the only truly good and righteous Avenger and judge of Evil is Jesus, who will return in Vengeance.

Thesis: "Jesus will return in Vengeance and Grace"

I. The LORD is a Just Judge

- A. **Hebrews 10:26-31.** Vengeance is mine. He is a God of vengeance and He will pay back.
- B. **Everyone wants justice.** Most of the political conversations people have are about justice. What's fair, what's not fair? What's equal?. Fair share. Punishment. Balance. Law & Order.

ILLUSTRATION: Victim's advocate for local BLPD. Past week, phone conversation. Why does a town even need a victim's advocate? Because there's injustice in our town. Domestic abuse, human trafficking (sex/porn industry; drug slavery), revenge porn, kidnapping, custody battles, crimes against children,

- C. **We cannot judge justly or perfectly.** Because we're not God. Thank God that He will return with justice. But what many of us forget, is that we will face that same judgment.

ILLUSTRATION: Frodo and Gandalf. Pity? Judgment? Our role is to trust Jesus with the outcomes.

- D. **Ultimate Justice belongs to Jesus.** Thank goodness He's a just judge and a merciful judge.
- E. **Revelation 22:12-17.** Justice & Mercy. Judgment & Grace. Vengeance & Provision. **JESUS.**
- F. **Romans 3:21-26.** He's just and the justifier.

APPLICATION:

1. **Political Conversations.** Gender change surgery (mutilation), abortion (murdering babies in the womb), race and hate crimes, discrimination based on a name, hairstyle, clothing, skin color, women's pay, reparations, social justice, "wokism", etc. These are all conversations about justice. What is just? What is fair? Where at times it's gone way to far, or been over-applied or twisted. But we don't have enough wisdom to know where the line is perfectly. Only an all-wise and perfectly uncorrupted and unbiased God can do that. That's who Jesus is. The Bible can give clarity to political conversations, but social conversations and political views or parties should not influence how we read the Bible.
2. **You will be judged too.** Justly. Everything you've ever done, laid out before an all-knowing, infinite God, and then paid back what it deserves. "Wages of sin is death. Free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." **Your sin will be punished one of two people: You or Jesus.**

II. The LORD is Loving Father

- A. It is because He loves us that He disciplines (teaches).
- B. **The Father's discipline of His children is not punishment.** It's different. It's loving guidance.

ILLUSTRATION: Schaeffer Quote about discipline.

- C. **Hebrews 12:3-11.** He disciplines the ones He loves as a loving Father.

ILLUSTRATION: "I Asked the Lord". Not what he expected. Not often what we expect. But it's **blessing.**

- D. **"Thank you Jesus for loving me enough to cause me great discomfort in my unbelief & sin."**
- E. **He loves His children too much** to let us continue in *self-dependence, sin, unbelief or idolatry.*
- F. **If our relationship with Him is our greatest good,** He's going to remove anything that gets in the way of that, because of His grace, love and mercy. And sometimes "it hurts like heaven," which is worse than "hurting like Hell," because it hurts more to get the Hell out of us, because it's become such an ingrained and enmeshed part of us.

APPLICATION: 1. If God is our refuge, in Jesus, then we are safe from His just judgment. If our greatest threat becomes our refuge, then we are ultimately safe. Are you IN CHRIST? In HIM? If you are in Him, then you are safe.

ILLUSTRATION: AC-130J Ghost Rider: "Angel of Death." Powerful. Multiple weaponry. Extremely accurate. I do not want to be on the ground when that thing comes. **But if I'm inside, I'm safe.**

Frodo and Gandalf. Book 1. Chapter 2. Page 85.

"Frodo: 'It's a pity Bilbo didn't kill Gollum when he had the chance.'

Gandalf: 'Pity? It's a pity that stayed Bilbo's hand. Many that live deserve death. Some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them, Frodo? Do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment. Even the very wise cannot see all ends. My heart tells me that Gollum has some part to play in it, for good or evil, before this is over. The pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many.' Frodo: 'I wish the Ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened.'

Gandalf: 'So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us. There are other forces at work in this world, Frodo, besides that of evil. Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, in which case you were also meant to have it. And that is an encouraging thought.'

VERSE 1

I asked the Lord that I might grow

In faith and love and ev'ry grace,
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

VERSE 2

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer,
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

VERSE 3

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once He'd answer my request
And, by His love's constraining pow'r,
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

VERSE 4

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart
And let the angry pow'rs of hell
Assault my soul in ev'ry part.

VERSE 5

Yea, more with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Humbled my heart and laid me low.

VERSE 6

"Lord, why is this," I trembling cried;
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith."

VERSE 7

"These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy
That thou may'st find thy all in Me."