

The Judge of Judges

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 82

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I. Introduction (cf. Ps 2:8)

Asaph summons God to arise and judge wicked judges because he knows that God has promised that all nations will belong to God and to His Christ, His Anointed King (cf. Ps 2:8).

Psalm 82 - A Psalm of Asaph.

¹God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.

²How long will you judge unjustly, And show partiality to the wicked? Selah ³Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. ⁴Deliver the poor and needy; Free *them* from the hand of the wicked. ⁵They do not know, nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are unstable. ⁶I said, "You *are* gods, And all of you *are* children of the Most High. ⁷But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes."

⁸Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations.

II. The Judge of Judges

A. *Introduction:* God is the Judge of Judges (1 cf. Ex 22:9; Lev 19:15; Dt 1:16-17)

Who are these "gods" among whom *God stands and judges*? I contend it refers to human _____ who in their task of judging serve as types of God the Judge:

- First, in the oracle, the charge against these "gods" is that they "*judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked*" (2). In the law, these exact words were routinely used to describe the responsibility of _____ in Israel.
 - ¹⁶"Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. ¹⁷You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's... (Deuteronomy 1:16-17a)
 - ¹⁵'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. (Leviticus 19:15)
- Second, the law occasionally calls the judges of Israel "_____."
 - "For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges (lit., gods); and whomever the judges (lit., gods) condemn shall pay double to his neighbor" (Ex 22:9).

B. *Oracle:*

1. God's Indictment of Wicked Judges (2-5 cf. 1 Sam 8:3; 1 Kgs 21; Pr 16:2)

God convicts these judges for their injustice and instructs them on their duty. When a judge acts corruptly, then he falls under the condemnation of this oracle. "*It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by _____*" (Pr 16:2). Unjust judges disturb *the foundations of the earth*.

2. God's Sentence Against Wicked Judges (6-7 cf. Rom 13:1; Ps 2:10-12)

Because God is the one who invests earthly rulers with their authority (cf. Rom 13:1), they are accountable to Him. Hence, when they violate their task, He promises to judge them.

C. *Appeal*: Arise, O God, Judge the Earth! (8 cf. Dt 32:4; Ps 2:8; 72:8-11)

Asaph summons *God to arise and judge the earth* because all _____ will eventually belong to God and to His Christ, His Anointed King (cf. Ps 2:8).

⁸*He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. ⁹Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, And His enemies will lick the dust. ¹⁰The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. ¹¹Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him. (Psalm 72:8-11)*

III. Application

A. Judges are oftentimes corrupt (cf. Dan 4:30; Acts 12:20-24)

As we meditate on this psalm, we learn that judges oftentimes become _____. One of the great temptations of those who become judges is to imagine that they are superior to others. C.S. Lewis illustrates this in *The Magician's Nephew*. When Digory called his Uncle Andrew, "Rotten!" for tricking Polly into touching one of the rings, Uncle Andrew responded:

"Rotten?" said Uncle Andrew with a puzzled look. "Oh, I see. You mean that little boys ought to keep their promises. Very true: most right and proper, I'm sure, and I'm very glad you have been taught to do it. But of course you must understand that rules of that sort, however excellent they may be for little boys—and servants—and women—and even people in general, can't possibly be expected to apply to profound students and great thinkers and sages. No, Digory. Men like me who possess hidden wisdom, are freed from common rules just as we are cut off from common pleasures. Ours, my boy, is a high and lonely destiny."

This is one reason why our Founding Fathers developed a system of governance that emphasized the importance of checks and balances. Thus, James Madison remarked, *"In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control _____."*

B. God judges the judges of the earth (cf. Jn 10:34-38; Rev 1:6; 17:14; 22:20)

Jesus alluded to Psalm 82 in His interaction with the Pharisees. They were critical that He called Himself the Son of God. Jesus repudiates their concern by quoting Psalm 82:

³⁴*Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" ' ? ³⁵If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God' ? ³⁷If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." (John 10:34-38)*

If human judges who make judgments in God's Name are called "*gods*" because they issued *the judgments of God* (Dt 1:17), how much more appropriate is it for Jesus, God's Messiah, to call Himself God's Son? Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is "*the ruler of the kings of the earth*" (Rev 1:6). Thus, He "*stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods*" (Ps 82:1).

C. Cry out for righteousness (cf. Ps 37:28; Pr 11:31)

_____ typically follow a standard blueprint. First, a small cadre of elite seize power, even if they are carried to victory on the shoulders of an uprising of the masses. Then, that elite imposes its utopian ideology on the country by smashing existing social conventions, laws, and structures and crushing dissent. Typically, much of the populace must be reeducated, and a new dictator emerges to keep the revolution moving forward... (Patterson, 71)

IV. Conclusion