

Jesus in the Psalms

God of Vengeance

Psalm 94

January 5th, 2025

I. Introduction (Acts 17:31)

There will be a Great Reckoning, for God has so appointed it: “[God] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). This Man is _____. This song is an expansion of that prayer which is always in the mouth of God’s Church, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20)—“O God of Vengeance, O Lord Jesus Christ—come shine forth! Rise up, O Judge of the earth!”

II. The Text: Psalm 94

*1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs—
O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!
2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth;
Render punishment to the proud.
3 LORD, how long will the wicked,
How long will the wicked triumph? . . .*

III. The Ministry of God’s Vengeance (Rom. 13:1-5)

God’s vengeance is ordinarily expressed in this world is through the _____. Whatever structural form it might take, God’s purpose for it is to promote the _____ of human society by punishing evil and rewarding those who do good (1 Pet. 2:14). In particular, God has appointed the civil magistrate to be His minister of vengeance. It is one of His answers to this prayer. God’s people cry out, “O Lord, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth!”—and He answers by giving us civil magistrates that faithfully wield His sword of vengeance, punishing evildoers and rewarding the good.

- John Calvin: “Mankind derives as much benefit from it [the civil authority] as it does from bread, water, sun and air, and its dignity is far greater than any of them. For unlike them all, civil order has not only to do with men’s breathing, eating, drinking and flourishing (although it certainly encompasses all these, in that it makes human association possible). Its concern, I say, is not only with these, but what is more [important], it prevents idolatries, sacrileges against the name of God, blasphemies against his truth, and other scandals to religion from emerging into the light of day and spreading among the people; it prevents disturbances of the public peace; it allows each to remain safe and unharmed in the enjoyment of what is his; it makes possible innocent contacts between people; and it sees to the cultivation of upright conduct and decency. In short, it upholds a public form of religion amongst Christians, and humanity amongst men.” (*Institutes*, Book IV)

IV. The Judge of Judges (Jer. 18:6-11)

The Church, however, often find herself oppressed by governmental powers and bad laws and corrupt judges. What is our comfort when the ministry of God’s vengeance is not executing His vengeance but their own twisted, greedy, self-serving version? In such times, God answers His Church by bringing vengeance upon the powers-that-be. Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and all _____, in heaven and on earth, are charged to serve Him with fear (Psa. 2:10-12).

The Lord God sits in judgment over the nations, for they belong to Him. He has commissioned His Church to go forth to preach the Gospel of peace to all the nations. But this Gospel comes with a call of _____. It comes with the call to fear God and turn away from evil. If this word is not heeded, the Lord will with vengeance judge the nations. He will pluck up and break down and destroy every nation that does not bow the knee to Him. But for all who repent, these He will spare, plant, and build.

V. The Great Reckoning (Rev. 21:22-27)

As Paul writes, “The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later” (1 Tim. 5:24). Some sins are brought to light in this age and dealt with; others, like tares among the wheat, are not dealt with until the Day when Jesus, the Light of the world, exposes all darkness and sin, and once and for all puts it away. This psalm shall receive its final answer on that Day, and the glory of the New Jerusalem shall shine without any blot or blemish. The City of God shall be completely pure and holy, for the Lord God Himself shall be its light, illuminating every corner of it.

VI. Mercy Triumphant Over Judgment (Jam. 2:13)

Jesus has come and will come in fulfillment of this psalm. He executes His vengeance through the sword of the civil magistrate. He executes His vengeance upon the corrupt civil magistrate. And He will execute His vengeance on the great day of His wrath. But notice why it is Jesus who gets to do this, and why it is *His* vengeance, and not ours. It’s not simply because He is the Almighty that He gets to do it. It is because He is the Lord, the Lord a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He does and He will visit the iniquity of men. He does and will punish sin and sinners. But before and above and spilling out over His vengeance and His wrath is His _____.

The Lord God is a long-suffering, patient, merciful Judge who does not thirst for blood, but for *repentance*. He delights in the wicked coming to their senses, waking up, putting off their old self, dying to their sin, coming to Him for mercy and for peace, and being clothed with the righteousness and holiness of Christ.

The most glorious and fullest execution of the vengeance of the Lord God is not found in the swinging of the sword of the civil magistrate. It is not in the destruction of an ungodly nation. It is not even on the Day of Judgment. The fullest execution of God’s vengeance is found at the Cross, where Jesus was crucified. It is here where judgment triumphs—that is, where judgment is perfectly executed and satisfied—and yet, *mercy* overflows.

God heard our prayer for vengeance and He answered it, not by crushing our heads, but by bringing the sword of His wrath down upon the head of His Son and our Lord, and so setting free unbounded mercy—mercy triumphing perfectly over the satisfied justice of God.

VII. A Table of Mercy

As we come to the Table this morning, we come to a Table spread with mercy. All who eat of this Table eat mercy. And if we eat mercy, it means that we must also *show* mercy. As our Lord has said, “Everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Lk. 12:48). We have been given much mercy. And what does God require of us? He requires of us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him (Mic. 6:8).