

# God shall judge the secrets of men

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- [ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to sing to God's praise from Psalm 50, the first version of the Psalm.
- Psalm 50, the beginning. The mighty God, the Lord, hath spoken and it calls. He hath from rising of the sun to where he hath his fall.
- From out of Zion hill, which of excellency and beauty the perfection is, God shined gloriously. How God shall surely come, keep silence shall not he.
- Before him fire shall waste, great storms shall round about and be. And to the heavens clear, he from above shall call. And to the earth likewise, that he may judge his people all.
- Together let my saints and to me gathered be. Those that by sacrifice have made a covenant with me. And then the heavens shall his righteousness declare.
- [ 1 : 09 ] Because the Lord himself is he by whom men judge it are. And so on. These verses, Psalm 50, from the beginning. The mighty God, the Lord, hath spoken and it called.
- The mighty God, the Lord, hath spoken and it called.
- The earth-nosed sin of the Son, to where he hath his fall.
- From earth, O Zion, here with joy of excellency, And purity and perfection is all shining gloriously.
- Our hope shall surely come, keep silence shall know ye, Behold him, my child with tristons shall run about in thee.
- [ 3 : 04 ] Unto the heavens clear, he from all of us shall fall, Unto the earth learn what is not he, Make us just keep the law.
- Together let my sins, under me color free, Those that I shall give, I shall make, Thou come and with me.
- And then the heavens child, His righteousness declare, It calls the Lord in severity, By her man guided.
- Amen. We can turn for a short while to the passage that we read together In Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 2.
- And we can read at verse 14. For when the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, These having not the law are a law unto themselves, Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, Their conscience also bearing witness, And their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.
- [ 5 : 35 ] In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.
- Particularly the words that we have in verse 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.
- Is there any merit in preaching a sermon on judgment on an evening of a prayer meeting?
- When we know that most who are present are, if not communicant members, at least, interested in the things of God.

We know that this chapter here is a chapter that speaks of judgment on several levels. It speaks of those who judge others and who expose themselves to judgment by so doing.

[ 6 : 57 ] It speaks of the judgment of the lives of those who profess an interest in God, And lay claim to God as their God.

And yet they judge others extremely harshly when they themselves are not as careful as they ought to be with regard to the word of God that they apply stringently to others.

But it also speaks to us about the general judgment. The judgment that awaits the world. That day, that great day when God will bring all to judgment.

In his best-selling book, and it is a best-selling book written by John Blanchard, Whatever Happened to Hell, he makes the following statement, The judgments of God fall often enough in this world to let us know that God judges.

But seldom enough to let us know that there must be a judgment to come. God, he says, God is not a God of immediate justice, but he is a God of ultimate justice.

[ 8 : 39 ] And we know that to be true, because the word of God reminds us that there is a judgment to come. We can't read our scripture, we can't read the Bible, whether it's Old or New Testament, without being made aware of the fact that God will bring all works to account.

God is a judgment to account. There is a judgment day, and just as surely as there is a judgment day, it is a judgment for all.

As one theologian has put it, he writes, God's judgment of all people at the end of the age, entrusted to Christ, who at his return will reward the righteous and punish the unrighteous.

Let's put succinctly. Ordinarily, we think along the lines of the word that is preached, being a word where judgment is the theme or the topic, that those best served by hearing such sermons are those who are careless or indifferent about how they live their lives in the world.

But we should always remember that while it does serve a purpose to put the fear of judgment before men and women of every age, It is also important to remember that the whole counsel of God must be preached to all men and women of every generation, to the exclusion of none.

[ 10 : 45 ] None must be excluded from any teaching, regardless of what that teaching is. Certainly, the judgment to come is part of the Bible's teaching.

And if we are to preach the whole counsel of God, we are to preach it. And we can't say, well, we'll preach it here and not at other times.

But what benefit would the Christian derive from a consideration of judgment, of the fact that there is a judgment for all?

What do we as Christians gain from it other than to be reminded of the solemnity of it? I think, when I was reflecting on this, the conclusion that I came to was that it reminds us of the fact that Christ, by his death, secured victory for the sinner over death and the grave.

And at the end of the age, this fact will be given publicity. That the full extent of God's judgment on the sinner is something that the believer in Christ will be spared.

[ 12 : 29 ] And that Christ will be given the glory as a consequence of that. If you read the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, it reads there, The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient.

There's both sides to it. But it's interesting that this is where it takes us for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect.

And we are to remember that as Christians, if that is what we are. That when it comes to the day that God will bring all to the judgment seat, without exception, those who are his will know that they are adding to the glory that belongs to him.

The believer in Christ longs to see that day. And no matter how much there may be in trepidation of what awaits them at the judgment seat.

Is it wrong for a believer to be in trepidation? Is it something that you say to yourself, well, I believe in Jesus Christ?

[ 14 : 19 ] I believe that my sins are forgiven. I believe that all my sins will be covered when I appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

And yet because of our sin, because of our many shortcomings, there is always a sense of shame that follows us through our life.

And that when we appear before Christ, no matter how honest our faith is and how earnest our faith is, how genuine it is, there is still not so much a sense of foreboding, but a sense of embarrassment, if you like.

If you like, a sense of shame that we are not the way we could be or should be. If you notice here in verse 15, it speaks about the conscience bearing witness and their thoughts and meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.

For the believer, for the believer, it will be a day of confirmation to them that the very thing that sustained them through life are quickened and an enlivened conscience.

[ 15 : 57 ] It is something that they are indebted to God for. And the act of conscience surely means that they are always on tender hooks, as it were, with regard to this examination that the eye of the all-seeing God brings to bear upon.

Let us think just one or two things that are contained in this verse that we are focusing on in particular.

When it comes to the judgment of God, there are many passages that we could go to and think of. But I wanted to think of these thoughts that the verse itself brings before us.

It speaks first of all of a day when God shall judge the secrets of men. And if you are interested in theology, theology leads you up in many, many tangents as to the nature of judgment.

And when you especially delve into the thoughts of theologians who are interested in the millennium or the post-millennium or pre-millennium and the reign of Christ and the thousand years and all of these things, which are complicated and complex in their own right, there are those who are of these schools who would find within the scriptures more than one judgment, more than one day of judgment.

[ 18 : 00 ] But what seems to be obvious from this passage, and many reformed theologians insist upon it, that it is a coming day that the scripture lays emphasis on with regard to the judgment before which all will appear.

It is the coming day of the Lord.

It states that it is an event, an experience that man must pass through at a given point in his conscious existence.

And it is not several, and it is not a gradient of one or two or three, arriving at a more pronounced judgment.

But this one judgment of which this passage speaks is the judgment day that God forewarns us of. God, I will give you a quotation from Professor Fulnesson, which you can, if you remember, take with you and think about this thought.

[ 19 : 47 ] He says, Death has temporarily broken up his personality.

It takes a resurrection to restore personality in all its parts, to integrate the true self. Here, the Christian doctrine of resurrection comes in as a prelude to judgment.

Now, that's a very interesting thought, and I think it's quite correct in what he is saying.

But he's emphasising this point that the Christian, all men will be judged by God, and that necessitates a resurrection to judgment.

There are many who believe that, or hope, I would argue, that because the body lies in the dust and decays, that judgment is something that will not take place.

[ 21 : 22 ] Those who submit to the burning of the body, two ashes, and scatter these ashes to the four winds.

I'd be persuaded that judgment on that level is impossible. But the thinking of Professor Fulnesson, I suppose, requires us to understand that the very promise of judgment requires us to believe that there is a day coming when the graves will open.

The soul which went to God who gave it will return and be reunited with the body. And all the constituent parts of the body will be reunited with that soul to appear in the presence of God who will judge.

And that itself is something of a phenomenon where you think about what will take place on that great day. The point that we can make is this, that it is a day set by God.

An appointment which must be kept. Unlike many of the appointments that we are aware of in our present situation.

[ 22 : 48 ] Appointments that are broken, appointments that are cancelled, appointments that come to nothing. This is one that God has set.

I think the linguists will say that the setting of the day by God is such that it is something that will not be in any way disturbed or nullified.

It cannot happen here. The second thought arising from this verse is that it is God's appointment carried out by Jesus Christ.

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel, says. The man that he has ordained is the man Christ Jesus.

A God who is a triune God and yet specifically identifies his only begotten Son as the one entrusted with that.

[ 24 : 02 ] It doesn't mean that God the Father couldn't judge and is not involved in judgment. But this particular role belongs to the one who is the mediator of God's elect.

In Robert Shaw's comments on the confession, he states that it is fitting that this high office should be conferred upon Christ as an honorary reward for his extreme abasement and ignominious sufferings.

He gives that as one reason among many. As if this is the main reason why Christ is entrusted with that role.

Not the only reason, but a preeminent reason. However, as theologians see the fact that Christ is a suitable candidate for judgment, carrying it out because he is the man Christ Jesus.

Because of his humanity, he is judging those who are men and women. Of whatever description, they are the descendants of Adam.

[ 25 : 30 ] The first Adam, as he is the last Adam, he will judge them. With the ability to judge them as those that he understands.

The psychology, the sociology, everything there is to be understood about what kind of people they are. One of the commentators makes mention of the fact that when you choose a jury, one thing that marks the jury out is that they are a body of people, of their peers.

In other words, men and women who will have experience of what it is to live their life in this world. And on that basis, they are more qualified to judge those who are before them.

Christ is God's appointed executor in this respect. Paul says, according to my gospel.

The frequency which Christ spoke of the judgment is evident from his words in scripture. He often speaks of it far more than people want to give credit to him for referring to it.

[ 27 : 00 ] They would much rather that their mention of judgment would be discredited. As if Christ coming into the world and Christ doing whatever they perceive him doing is sufficient grounds for them to believe that all aspects of judgment are alien to the gospel.

That's not what Christ teaches. There are many passages that he refers to or that we can refer to where he speaks about judgment and in its various forms.

And he has an insight and the knowledge of it as the one who will do the judging. That allows him to speak as an expert.

And to remind us that the day will come when he will separate the sheep from the goats. And he will deal with those who are before him with the accuracy that the knowledge of one who is the good shepherd knows.

We are reminded of the mock trial, if you can call it that, of Christ himself. And when you think of the judgment, you remind yourself of this fact that Jesus was brought before judges and he was brought into the presence of false accusers and he made gross, heinous allegations against his person that were false.

[ 28 : 49 ] That is the exact opposite of what will be true when he judges the world. There will be accuracy. There will be knowledge.

There will be a knowledge like no other knowledge. He goes on here. He is able to judge the secrets of men. There is nothing hidden from his eye that he cannot discern.

Christ will judge all the secrets of men. You go back to verse 6. He will render to every man according to his deeds, he says.

There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed. And people ask, well, what significance is this to the believer?

It's the believer to appear before Christ with that fear gripping their heart that there is something hidden within their lives that they have managed to keep away from the eyes of their fellow men.

[ 29 : 57 ] But for the believer, what it means, what it is, is the opportunity to repent, which they can't do because they are believers.

They have this grace. They have this opportunity to identify the things with the knowledge that this is the judge that will await them.

Christ, as one appointed by God, must bring every work into judgment. With every secret thing.

Go back to the Old Testament. Even there these words are written. Whether it be good or whether it be evil. That is what we are promised.

One of the Puritans says, recently, believers should have no fear of the day of judgment.

[ 30 : 55 ] But should live godly lives in anticipation of it. I wonder if that is what is true of all of us tonight. The scripture reminds us as the tree falls, so shall it lie.

To the north or to the south. The scripture brings warnings to the attention of all manner of person. Believer and unbeliever.

Believer and unbeliever. And we know that the day will come when judgment will be executed precisely as God has promised it. And the all-seeing eye will be.

It's a thought, really. It's a thought that everyone must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive what he has done in the flesh, be it good or evil.

And we are encouraged to think of that. We are encouraged for ourselves to think of it. We are encouraged to bear the solemnity of it in mind.

[ 32 : 08 ] This world doesn't believe that the day is going to come. The world doesn't believe it. But you should.

And because you should. It should be part of a remit as believers to bring it to the attention of others. Bring it to the attention of others.

I've used the illustration before. It's just a true story. It's just a true story of a man from South Lofts who lived to a ripe old age.

During his younger years he was living and working in America. In the steel yards over there. And he had the opportunity to work seven days a week, which he did.

And he made a good wage from it. But he returned home when things worked right up.

[ 33 : 12 ] But he lived beside a free Presbyterian minister. And he used to tell the minister how profitable it was for him when he was working over there.

But the minister used to say to him, oh, he says, you haven't got paid for that yet. But such was the natural blindness that governed his heart.

Oh, he said, yes, I got every farthing. Oh, he says, you haven't been paid for it yet. And many people don't believe. They don't believe that.

But that's not what the Bible teaches. And we can't, as those who believe the Bible, afford to ignore it, but remember it for our own good and for the good of others.

May God add his blessing to these three thoughts. Let us pray. Lord, help us to remember that we are on mercy's ground. You have said before us truths that govern the way we think and act in his word, reminding us that the day will come when we must give account, not just for our actions, but our thoughts, and that you are the God who has that knowledge of us, perfect knowledge.

[ 34 : 37 ] And we acknowledge the need that we have of your grace and your mercy and your peace. Watch over us each one. Cleanse from Jesus' name. Amen.

We're closing Psalm 97. Psalm 97, verse 8. Psalm 98, verse 9.

He sets them safe and free. For all those that be righteous, so is a joyful light. And gladness so is for all those that are in heart of light.

He righteous in the Lord rejoice. Express your thankfulness when ye into your memory do call his holiness. eternal life. His Son of God aca■m is aas■ innocent. Emang as you live with such a mystery in your heavenly head.

in the tear and joyful was like Judas I own it near and joyful was like Judas the other in my dream choice O Lord because thy judgment did appear for love O Lord our thy love all things on nether doth I did

[ 36 : 51 ] I know I could fall to other goals of our and children dip inQuest cockpit "'I'u' instrumental' Hidden all ye above the Lord, His sins so skeeve thee, And from the hands of wicked men, His sins soe and bleak, For all those that be right in us,

So this a joyful eye, And from the sword is far off, All those that not in heart of mine, Ye  
writers in the Lord rejoice, And bless your thankfulness, When ye enjoy your memory, You  
call His holy hand.