

Thankfulness for God's Judgment

Let us turn to Psalm 75. Psalm 75. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

Psalm 75. We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks. For your wondrous works declare that your name is near.

When I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly. The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved. I set up its pillars firmly.

I said to the boastful, do not deal boastfully. And to the wicked, do not lift up the horns. Do not lift up your horn on high.

Do not speak with a stiff neck. For exaltation comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is judge. He puts down one and exalts another.

On the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red. It is fully mixed, and he pours it out. Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down.

But I will declare forever. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked I will also cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Let us pray. And in this psalm of glorifying and praising you, God, for your wondrous works, particular God, the wondrous work of judgments, of exalting and setting down in judgment with the cup of judgment, the dregs therein for the wicked of the earth, our Lord and Savior. And we read in verse 10 here how ultimately at the end of the day, the end of the ages, in fact, that those who are unrepentant will be cut off, but those who follow our Lord and Savior with humble hearts, regenerated by the Spirit, will indeed be exalted, not because of their own perfection, but because they are united with Christ.

May this psalm, I pray, God, in the midst of what we see and witness in our own lives, and even within this week and so, of injustices, of wickedness, of people getting away with murder, there seems to be no judge sometimes in our lives around us, but God is judge, as the psalmist reminded us, and we should therefore rejoice in this fact. By the blood of Jesus we pray, who is our Lord and our Master. Amen.

The psalm here is about a somber topic, the judgment and justice of the Lord God, creator of heaven and earth. He first offers praise on behalf of the people of God, the first person, we, for the judge's wondrous acts in general before specifying the wondrous acts of his judgments. This is especially detailed in the second half, where he describes as well as warns the wicked of the impending doom if they continue in their evil lifestyle, their evil pride.

In all this, the theme of thankfulness is not lost as the psalmist ends with the praise of God, the God of Jacob or of Israel, for his judgments in ruling against the wicked. Is the heart of praise for the covenant gods, impending justice, wrong? By how some Christians think and operate, it was seen that the Old Testament saints were sub-Christian since they took much zeal in such things, and certainly David did, but that can't be the case, of course, for the book of Revelation itself looks forward for our collective time of rejoicing in Christ's

judgment across the world, because wherever and whatever the Lord does is good, and we should be glad therein. It's as simple as that.

But consider today, because I think this psalm is helpful for us as we know of many things again in our own life and experience of wicked things, of injustices and vile things that people get away with. We just had a hung trial for a murderess. Colorado's judicial system protects teachers who secretly groom impressionable students into the gay community, denouncing their parents and even changing the gender without parental knowledge has happened more than once.

I know these cases and read up on them. We also know of a number of unjust and even cruel rulings the last several years where obvious criminals were let free over and over again, but they get to go on subways and stab people and murder them and are still not put to the chair. Gross injustices, let alone the many more unfair and deplorable judicial or political decisions in our own lifetime, such as the top of the heap, the horrendous and sad acts of injustices, like the silent butchering of unborn children since about the time I was born.

54 years. Thankfully, we don't live in a sea of injustice, to be sure. Although our judicial system, of course, is not perfect, as none are this side of eternity.

But there are many, many things, as I've missed to hear, that remind us we want justice. This is terrible. These are heinous, wicked things that people, even entire nations, get away with.

As believers, indeed, we want people to repent of their crimes and murders. Yes, a thousand times yes. And I wish we had a system in which before anybody went to life in prison, which is apparently 20 years or more, certainly the electorate chair, or whatever it is they use nowadays, should have access to a good pastor to give them one last chance before it's too late.

This is our heart's desire. But at the same time, we should also want justice. The psalmist hears about such justice, both for the church, of course, in the Old Testament form of it, and especially against the hardened enemies of Christ, of God Almighty.

Thankfulness for God's Judgement

Let's look into the text here. Thankfulness for God's judgments. Verses 1 through 5, we give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks.

That's clearly what he wishes to emphasize here. And at the end, he rejoices and he praises God. I will sing praises, verse 9, to the God of Jacob.

Why? Because the wicked will be cut off and the righteous will be exalted. Praising God is another way of saying thanking God for His wondrous works for us. And so, many Bibles will have a simple title there of thanksgiving for God's judgment or justice.

And it's thanksgiving or thankfulness here, in particular, for His wondrous works. We give thanks to you, God. Why? Because of things that He has done for us.

And not just anything wonderful or wondrous works here. The word is often used in the Psalms, both for providential or everyday natural occurrences, but often for the miraculous. Often for miraculous deliverance and protection from God Almighty.

But, of course, it includes and does include all kinds of things of God's creation, both visible and invisible, that portray His might and His power, and therefore His wonder and His glory for us. And providence, of course, is sustaining all the amazing things of creation in and around and through us, as we heard this morning in God's decrees of providence. The beautiful sunrise, the cosmic wonders.

I tried to capture the cosmic wonder a week ago, the blood moon. But I didn't have the right settings on my camera. It was dark.

I didn't have a camera, a light, or anything with me. So I wasn't able to pull anything off. But we could at least sit there, my daughter and I, my wife, and stare at the beautiful moon, realizing God made that and God holds and sustains it all together.

Down to the bountiful spread of our dinner table. These are wondrous works to be sure. But especially here, as the rest of the Psalm clearly portrays to us, God's judgment or His justice, that He is a judge and a ruler.

Deliverance is implied here, especially the miraculous type. As of the Old Testament, they had lots of miracles where God brought them out of Egypt, being the greatest Old Testament miracle of all, that they always remembered and called back to and upon. But whatever the case is, they're all rejoicing.

We give thanks, the psalmist writes here, because when it's a public deliverance by God, a public judgment for the sake of His people and His church, a public protection, whatever the case may be, for your family and the like, we should all raise our voice for praise and joy, and not just on Sunday. As we have opportunity, as circumstances arise, we should honor God and thank Him, and not just, of course, on Thanksgiving Day. Now, the psalmist here directs the Thanksgiving in his praise and his wonders for God for the particular work of judgment.

Verses 2 through 5, drill this home when I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly. Verse 7 through 8, but God is the judge. He puts down one and exalts another.

And, of course, at the end, the acts of judgment, although the word judgment isn't there, but clearly the act is being done to the horns of the wicked who were cut off by God Himself. So, it's a psalm of judgment, but of the psalmist rejoicing, of thanking God that He is a just judge and deliverer. The word wondrous works here.

It is indeed used to describe judgment. Exodus 3.20, we read, So I will stretch out my hand, God declares, and strike Egypt with all my wonders. That's the same word.

I will do in its midst, and after that He will let you go. And what wonders did God do in the midst of them? Judgment. There are acts of judgment, or as I like to call them, I guess, negative.

I mean, they're miraculous, but they were negative miracles, bad things that were happening to them, supernatural things, death even, the final judgment. And the goal here of verses two to five of judging and warning, we have here a change of speaker, it looks like. He comes from, we give thanks to God for the marvelous things that you do, of course, especially here judgment as he drills into here.

When I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly. Who is the I? Is it the psalmist? Some commentators think it is the psalmist. They think it's King David, for example, during the tumultuous time from the transition from Saul to David as king over Israel.

We don't get a lot of hints of the tumultuous time going through Samuel. We went through 1st, 2nd Samuel, 1st, 2nd King on Wednesday nights. But you know, it's there.

Lots of things are going on as it were behind the scene of the text, because that's how life is. People are complicated, things change, people don't like change. Others, such as Calvin, for example, thinks it's a change of words, of God's words.

I, the Lord God, the judge of the universe. I'm inclined towards Calvin's position, but I think it can overlap insofar as the king of Israel is a type of Jesus. The king David is a picture of Jesus as king, as Lord, as judge, and thus it points right to Jesus.

So I think either way, we come back to his lordship. And we read here, in particular, I'm going to flip it over, verses 2 and 3. When I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly. The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved, I set up its pillars.

So the earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved is a picture of the breakdown of society. In the time of David, of course, if it's during the transition there, all the chaos being brought by having a new administration, of course. But more broadly, although I think it is more broadly here, all of society across the world over time and eventually to the end of age, there's much chaos.

Much disillusion of social mores. The cohesion of society slowly breaks down. We see some of that in our own lifetime, unfortunately.

And the contrast to that is I set up its pillars firmly. In verse 3, the pillars of society are the pillars of the world, of all the nations and facts, as God the judge only can. So during trying and hard times of disillusion, the judge is going to come along here.

I choose the proper time. I will judge uprightly in the context of everything falling apart, of disillusion, and I will set up firm pillars. What's a pillar? It supports things, right? It's a foundation of hold.

And so the king here, King Jesus, when he chooses in his time, will have a proper judgment across the world in which the disillusion of all things, the chaos of sin and its wickedness and

how it destroys all things, will be cut off and the right way will be firmly established by him in his proper time as only the king can. And I want to remind us again, why am I using the word king when the text doesn't say king, it says judge, and in verse 7 it says, but God is the judge. Because in the ancient Near East, kings were judges and judges were kings often.

Now there were judges who weren't kings, they were lesser judges, but every king was a judge, period. They didn't break up to three branches of government like we have in the American system. It just simply wasn't that way.

In fact, the king himself could legislate authority and laws, and he did. If he was a wise king, he'd get advice from his counselors, kind of like a legislative body, and maybe modify his rulings, and sometimes they did that. But at the end of the day, if he was in a foul mood, he could just make up new rules.

He was a despot in the traditional sense of that word. And so when we read judge here, we're also reading king. And especially here, I will judge uprightly in my proper time, God himself will establish what needs to be done on the Lord's cosmic timetable.

A thousand years is a day to the Lord and a day to a thousand years. For us, we're like, it seems forever. God, he's timeless.

This timetable is his timetable, and we ought to be sufficient and rejoice therein. And so judge and king here is the same idea. It's synonymous.

Judgment, justice, ordinance, rulings, all kinds of words, even sometimes the same word is translated differently, even in the KJV of these Hebrew words of the Old Testament. But they all have the same idea of regal or authority, judicial authority, royal authority, rule by judgment. And when he ruled, when the king made decisions, they were of two types of what we think of today as two types.

One is judicial. King Solomon, two women come to him. I have this kid.

Whose kid is it? The other is administrative. How are you going to set up particular laws or the boundaries or matters between people and whatnot and contracts and everything else? They didn't think of it that way as such. He just made rulings.

The text isn't very specific here. It doesn't need to be specific as far as rejoicing in God's upright justice. I will judge uprightly, verse two.

God always does. And that justice, of course, is judicial when we think of it as Christians because we deserve judgment, but also administrative wise in which God changes the form of the church, like the Jewish form in the Old Testament, now modified to the New Testament era. We don't have to do Jewish things anymore.

And it gets modified yet again in heaven, doesn't it? Well, there's no more marriage. And the things will change in a lot of ways. Now we have a warning here, verses four to five.

It said to the boastful, do not deal boastfully. And to the wicked, do not lift up the horn. Do not lift up your horn on your high.

Do not speak with a stiff neck. There's warnings here of the boastful and the proud. Of course, when we read here of the boastful, of stiff neck, there's another way of describing someone who's proud and insistent and stubborn in his own ways.

We're not talking about people who are proud of hitting a fastball or boasting of their good looks. It must clearly be about wicked and vile acts. That's why he's thankful for God's justice.

As with the other psalms, the wicked boast in their wickedness in general, doesn't get specifics, or often evil deeds against God's church and his people. Attacks upon Jerusalem, as you read in other psalms, for example. And this is why the psalmist would rejoice, because God is protecting and preserving his people.

The horns of the righteous shall be exalted. Verse 10. What are these horns? They are symbolic of earthly power, or of power in general.

Used a number of times in the Bible, a picture of that thing, of this idea of animals lifting up horns, probably, up high in triumph, the victory over their enemy in their combat. And so applied to the humans as a symbol of power itself. And so when they lift up their power, they lift up their horn on high, they do it with what? A stiff neck, out of stubbornness, as well as pride.

The two go hand in hand often. Look at my might, and look what I have done as a wicked man. I've gotten away with evil.

I am boasting. I can go after God's church, and God's not going to stop me, like the Assyrians, perhaps, thought, or the Babylonians, and the like, who read in Hosea. But God will judge them.

In fact, God, the Lord, warns them here. The warning is clear. I said to the boastful, do not deal boastfully.

Do not lift up the horn. You should be humble before me as the judge of the universe. Through the church of old, and the prophets, and Moses, and the pastors of today, they are warned.

The evil boasters of the world are warned, or should be warned. Through history, in fact. Even if they don't have access to the church, they have common sense.

They can see with their eyes. Things and people are judged in history. Nations fall.

Leaders are slain and assassinated because of their wickedness and wretchedness. They themselves admit it, although they make excuses for themselves, and saying, well, when I do it, it's okay. But when he does it, I'm glad he got his comeuppance.

But they recognize judgment, nevertheless, in other nations, and the destruction therein. And through their own conscience as well, that they try to suppress an unrighteousness. They know right from wrong.

Both from the church, both externally outside of them, and within their own hearts, a great day of judgment is coming, and there is no excuse. So the warning is here. The warning is now.

It's real. Do not deal boastfully. Do not lift up the head and the horn in pride.

Description of God's Judgement

Verses 6 to 10, the second half of the Psalm, description of God's judgment. The description of God's judgment. We have the warning a little bit here, and the thanksgiving that God will choose.

It is proper time, of course, when proper judgment is appropriate, both in history and ultimately the end of history. Verse 6, we read of the source of exaltation. Of course, it flows from verses 4 to 5. It's an artificial distinction to make it easy for you to remember the sermon.

But he says, don't boast, don't speak with a stiff neck, for exaltation comes neither from the east nor the west nor from the south, not from all these nations, not from all these directions, but from God who is the judge. If you want to lift up your horn on high, it only should be lifted when God lifts it up and not yourself. You are nothing compared to Him.

He is the source of all glory. This is a form of glory to be exalted publicly, of course. Again, either judicial or social or all of the above in the case of God.

Kings at that day and age, of course, would promote a servant to a greater office. He would exalt him to his right hand, especially. That language you know often in the Bible, my right hand, my right hand, it's the hand of privilege, privileged position or of power.

The king declaring the man innocent in court, for example, is also a way of exalting him. God, the judge and king of all, exalts and even puts down, verse 7, He puts down one and exalts another as the judge of the universe, both in time and history and providence, where nations and leaders and presidents rise and fall. That's because of God's eternal plans, as we heard this morning.

And ultimately, at the end of all ages, when only the righteous shall enter heaven, and those are the righteous by Jesus Christ. And so all the promotions from there on into eternity are from God and God alone. And God as judge, verse 7, now it becomes more explicit.

The actions are there, I will judge uprightly, verse 2. Here, He's actually called that, but God is the judge, the only judge that ever counts. All earthly judges pale in comparison. They are but shadows of what He is, like fatherhood is a shadow of God Himself and His love for His people.

Judges make errors, God does not. What He puts down should stay down, and what He exalts will be exalted, and no one can stay His hand. Broadly, again, as king and judge, you promote some and not others, and narrowly, or more specifically, the final judge over all of creation at the end of all time.

The proud and boastful think they promote themselves. This is often the case. Look what I've done by my own right hand and my power.

Politicians, brag about it in our own day and age, or they can get away with their own wickedness, and they get caught on audio tapes today. They couldn't get caught on tapes back then. The servants would hear it, perhaps, if they weren't careful.

But the judge of the universe will have the last say. It doesn't matter. And that's the point.

The creator judge will have the last say, and He will put up one and take down another, as only He can. And then we come to very strong words here in verse 8. V.8 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red. It is fully mixed, and He pours it out.

Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down. So He ties here the exaltation and the pulling down of the proudful and the boastful with a cup of judgment, a known imagery. We read about it in Acts of Judgment.

Jeremiah 25.17 Then I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord has sent me, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, its kings, and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day. He made them drink it, and what happened? They were judged. It's a cup of judgment.

As the Geneva Bible notes explain, God's wrath is compared to a cup of strong and delicate wine, with which the wicked are made so drunk, that by drinking it till they come to the very dregs, they are utterly destroyed. That's the imagery. The cup of judgment shall be drained to the last drop.

Surely its dregs, the bottom of it, shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down. God's judgment at the last day will be thorough and utter, utterly thorough, down to the last drop. Every vile act that we know of, and read of, and even heard about in our own lifetime, things I just touched upon a little bit in the introduction, will be set right as it ought to be.

The unrighteous, which is to say the unrepentant, will not get away with it. Those who revel in injustice and boast in evil, and people think they died and got away with it. Another wicked woman died recently, Gloria Steinem.

She lived to a ripe old age. And you can think unbelievers, and I saw some of them, like, well, I mean, she got away with it. She promoted wickedness and abortion all her entire life.

And she lived to a ripe old age. No, she didn't get away with it. If you believe that God is indeed a just God, she did not get away with it.

If she did not repent on her deathbed, she has seen her maker, and not one who's a redeemer. They think they've escaped, but their end is marked and settled by God Almighty. They will drink to the uttermost.

Every nation and all the leaders of the nations and all peoples will drink of it if they have not Jesus who drank of it instead. He took our judgment. He took our punishment.

He was judged in our stead, and He drank it down to the last dregs, brothers and sisters. And thus the praise to the God of Jacob. But I will declare forever.

I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. It's an old way of speaking of the God of Israel. He rejoices, and He is thankful.

We ought to rejoice and be thankful for the salvation we have, that Jesus was judged instead, that we are justified by faith and faith alone, and not by our perfection. At the same time, of course, to make the text more immediately applicable, He's rejoicing that God is bringing justice to the wicked. That's most of the theme here, right? The boastful, verses 4 through 6. Again, verse 8, which is many, many sentences here.

Verses aren't always sentences. It's a large swath, at least half the text, half the chapter, is about judgment and the worst sense of the word. Of those who refuse to submit to Jesus Christ.

It's a terrifying day. The horns of the wicked. Let me read here.

All the horns of the wicked also will be cut off, but the horns of the righteous should be exalted. You have a contrast here. Here, with respect to the contrast, is the use of the word horns is probably slightly a little different.

So in the first case, all the horns of the wicked, their supposed glory and their power is now going to be cut off. They can't exalt themselves. Whereas the horns of the righteous, their power, of course, is in Christ Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit and their glory.

So the imagery here probably shifts from power to glory. They obviously are very similar for a king and leadership. I have power, I have glory.

And for us, it's the glory of the righteousness that we have in our Lord and Savior. And the whole world will see it and know about it. I've been reading through 2 Corinthians chapter 5, I think it is, through Thomas Manson's sermon series on it.

He's got three or four sermons on one verse, and that's the verse about judgment. And he points out rather well and in good detail here of that final day of days at the end of time, which leads us here to the last point, the day of God's judgment.

Day of God's Judgement

Verse 2 we read, "...when I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly." That can be seen as a prophetic picture of the future, of the end of all the ages, I think, in which God will indeed judge all, all the inhabitants of the entire earth.

And God will set up the pillars of righteousness, public righteousness. And so Thomas Manson highlights the point there, "...the horns of the righteous shall be exalted." Exalted in what sense? In a private sense? Christianity is not a private religion. I know in America we like to make religion private.

It's not a private religion. It is a public religion. It's a public declaration of what Jesus Christ has done to sin and death and calls all to repentance, not privately and quietly, but publicly and loudly, if possible.

And that's what we have here in verse 10, "...the world will see that we are his people." Right now it is unclear insofar as, you know, people lie and there's deceitful and there's deception and the like, and unbelievers don't know everything and they're not aware of things. Unbelievers will see it. The believers will see it.

They will know who is his and who are not his, who are the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. It's a public day of declaration. And so the word justification in that context means a public vindication of who they are already in Christ.

And the whole world will see it. That's the big difference. And God will judge on that time, in his way, as only he can.

We read a little bit here of the judgment of God, of right and wrong. The Lord God will return, but while he has not returned here, there's still a warning. He will choose his time.

Before that time comes, God, in verses 4 to 6, we read, he warns the boastful and everyone else to repent and not be prideful, but rather be humble and know their place before the cosmic judge of the universe. We read in Romans 2.3, Romans 2.3 and following, a similar idea here of opportunities for nations, families, and individuals to repent. All the while, as they do not repent, it builds up to a day of final judgment, a judgment of all judgments.

And do you think this, oh man, you who judge those practicing such things and doing the same, that you escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, the forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance, at least in the sense of leading the horse to water? Will the horse drink? I hope, we pray. Verse 5, but in accordance with your hardness and your impedance in heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to each one according to his deeds, whether he be stolen or a mother who kills her children. It matters not.

The Lord God has a day of judgment, Acts 17.31, because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained. And who is that, brothers and sisters? Jesus. Jesus is also judge.

He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. It will happen. It could be tomorrow.

It wasn't yesterday, but it could be tonight. It is a day to end all days. It is the end of time and the beginning of eternity.

It will happen. And we will give thanks for the Lord's justice, the justice in us by Jesus Christ and justice in others without Jesus Christ. But it is justice.

Is it okay to rejoice in God's justice? Yes, indeed it is. Rejoicing in the truth is a sign of love. Aren't you happy when good things happen to your friends and family? I hope so.

1 Corinthians 13.6, love does not rejoice in iniquity, but what rejoices in the truth. And God's justice is truth. And therefore we should rejoice in it, brothers and sisters.

Justice is not only truth, but it is a good thing. Titus 2.14, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Zealous for good works.

Justice by God is what? A good work, and we should be zealous for it, therefore, and rejoice. Certainly we can't do much of it. It's not like we're going to actually do the judging per se, although the imagery of the Bible speaks that way.

We're going to be with Him. We'll be judging angels, whatever that means. I don't know.

But in all this, we're going to be happy and thankful for these things, although it's hard to imagine sometimes, I know. The psalmist here sees with the eyes of faith, as we ought to see with the eyes of faith, and thank the Lord for His wondrous judgment and justice in Christ Jesus for us, and again, justice for others who are outside of Christ Jesus. It's justice in both cases.

Revelation 18.19 and following, Revelation chapter 18, they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing and saying, alas, alas, the great city in which all who had ships on the seas became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she is made desolate. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her, the city of Babylon the whore. They're rejoicing.

They're happy, the apostles and the prophets. We should rejoice with them. When the unrepentant and the wicked persist, God will judge them at the end of the day, the end of time.

In sum, as one writer explained, there is rejoicing in God's justice because the alternative is unthinkable, heaven populated with God's enemies. That would not be justice. Even as we humbly desire the conversion of the wicked boasters of evil brothers and sisters, and we should, let us give thanks and glory to God for His marvelous works of judgment, both in this life, as we see only snapshots of it, and the great day to come, especially, wherein His people will be publicly vindicated through Christ Jesus and His name magnified over the horns of His enemies, let us pray.

Father, God, Lord, and Savior, we do come before you and we pray for hearts that are thankful for this fact and this reality, as terrifying as it is, as we who are finite and made of dust, but we know we have the promises, as we heard this morning, that will never change, for your immutable counsel will stand forever, your love for us, we who repent and believe in Jesus. May this be the case for all of us, God Almighty, and in that status, as believers, may we have the joy of your justice. We ask this by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.