

Psalm 82

Introduction: This Psalm was penned that you and I know our LORD's sovereignty, authority, and His provision in His ordaining or setting forth His principles and commands for those He has set in authority. This Psalm teaches GOD's instructions for those whom He has chosen to represent Him and to carry out His will and ways toward mankind and for His glory. This Psalm is designed to make those whom GOD has placed in authority wise and to instruct their way – it is to be His way. Though this Psalm most closely applies to those whom GOD has chosen to mete out His justice and mercy; the people of GOD will certainly be comforted by the understanding that government and authority at any level belongs to and is in His hands.

This Psalm opens with a grand scene of the Almighty as Judge much like we see in Isaiah 3:13. [Isaiah 3:13 NASB] **13 The LORD arises to contend, And stands to judge the people.** This is not just any court scene. The Creator and Sustainer of all is opening proceedings to judge with righteousness. I will read a scene from Isaiah so that our hearts and minds be set upon the One Whom demands this justice and righteousness:

[Isaiah 40:21-28 NASB] **21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. 23 He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. 24 Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble. 25 "To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing. 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"? 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.**

Read Psalm 82

Verses 1: The LORD GOD is arising to contend and stand as Judge to open proceedings. The government of man is GOD's idea, not man's, and is to be carried out as He has commanded. This charge in king David's day was for the Sanhedrin, those who were in places of power, as judges on this earth. This Psalm also lays charge in our day to those in our government from the President to our local leaders and judges. Other versions use "gods" with a lower case "g" in lieu of rulers as the NASB renders. This term, "gods" is used again in verse 6. How are we to understand this? Jesus made plain in the Gospel of John how this is to be understood. [John 10:34-36 NASB] **34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'?' 35 "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 do 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'?** Our Savior and LORD, the Eternal Logos, states this from verse 6 of Psalm 82. So those whom the LORD designates as little gods are Namely those to whom the Word of GOD came as seen in vs 35. This would have been the appointed judges of Israel and in a broad sense applies to those whom GOD has set in authority throughout history. The LORD quantifies the responsibility of those in authority by using "gods" (with a lower case "g") that they know and understand that all authority is by His decree and is to be exercised by His way.

Verse 2: The LORD GOD demands justice to be exercised by those who judge. The essence of justice is the application of equity – to do that which is right without partiality and compromise. The LORD levels a charge in the form of a question. How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? The evil of not executing justice and showing partiality to the wicked is the very opposite of what the LORD GOD has commanded and not only is it injurious to those who are weaker in that the wickedness is tolerated, but the perpetrator is emboldened to continue in this atrocious sin. The Word of GOD has much to say about justice and is connected to His righteousness when mentioned in the Word. We see that Abraham was chosen so that he may command his children after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice.

(Genesis 18: 18-19) We see this truth spoken of King David - [1 Chronicles 18:14 NASB] **14 So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people.** We are told the affect that justice has for both the believer and the unbeliever. [Proverbs 21:15 NASB] **15 The exercise of justice is joy for the righteous, But is terror to the workers of iniquity.** Our Lord Jesus Christ mentioned the Pharisee's disregard of justice as to the reason of His pronouncement of woe upon them. [Luke 11:42 NASB] **42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.**

Verses 3 - 4: In verses 3 and 4 the Word of GOD demonstrates what justice and mercy look like when carried out. The weak and the fatherless will be vindicated; mercy will be extended to the afflicted and destitute, and it will deliver the weak and the needy from the hand of the wicked to the glory of GOD.

Verse 5: It is a great mercy to have understanding, which those mentioned in this verse do not have. The fruit of understanding is righteousness which is marked by justice. What a terrible trouble for a nation to be in when justices know no justice and its judges have abandoned right judgement. So many in our day pursue a path that GOD declares knowledge and righteousness are required and essential; yet they walk in darkness to the point of the foundations of the earth are shaken. How are GOD's people to respond? [Psalm 11:3 NASB] **3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?"** There are people in our day at every turn that are bent on undermining and subverting the Word of GOD. What are the righteous to do? We are to be ever before the throne of grace pleading with the LORD GOD to change the hearts of those who are wickedly attempting to destroy the foundations. We are to endeavor to build one another up in the most holy faith, constantly affirm the Truth while others deny it, and we should contend earnestly for it and stand fast in it. [Jude 3 NASB] **3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. [1 Thessalonians 5:11 NASB] 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.**

Verses 6 – 7: Here is the second reference to men as "gods", with a lower case "g". Once again, the Great Judge, the Almighty, the King of kings in His great mercy lends His Name to those He has given authority; to those who are to make judgement in the earth and this shows the authority that He has given to act on His behalf. The LORD GOD bestows upon them the great honor delegating them little gods, and also reminding them they are but men. They too, like all men will die – they are not invincible. We must remember and be mindful of the fact that when those in authority are walking in darkness; we are to call them to repent with meekness and gentleness. We are to correct our opponents with gentleness hoping that GOD will grant repentance. So, as the apostle Paul instructed Titus, I am to give the same charge. [Titus 3:1-2 NASB] **1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.** And the following verses tells us we are to do so because: [Titus 3:3-7 NASB] **3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4**

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Verse 8: The Psalm closes with the Church's plea for our Mighty GOD to judge the earth which will come to fruition one day as the Lord Jesus Christ will in all of His glory, majesty, splendor, and strength judge and set in order all of creation. There is little purpose to reason with those who proudly oppress the Truth and are walking in darkness unless it is done upon the principle of Who GOD is and to His glory.

To consider:

To show the holiness, sovereignty, and righteousness of Him who demands righteousness and justice: State the line of questioning of this heavenly court scene to Job in chapter 38 through the end of the book. GOD in His mercy taught Job who He is. It led to JOB's confession: [Job 42:1-6 NASB] **1 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." 4 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' 5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; 6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."** This is why it is important for us to study our LORD's attributes. This confession is coming from a man that before this confession was described in the Word of GOD blameless, upright, fearing GOD and turning away from evil. This shows us that repentance is not a one-time event, but ongoing in the life of a believer. We will by His mercy and granted faith perpetually repent as He reveals more of Himself to us. Our being built up in this manner is how we can bring glory to our LORD (sanctification) and that His glorious grace be seen and magnified when it seems as evil is prevailing.

Amen

Reference Verses that show our LORD's demand for justice and mercy (righteousness):

[Exodus 22:22-24 NASB] **22 "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. 23 "If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; 24 and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.**

[Exodus 23:6-9 NASB] **6 "You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute. 7 "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty. 8 "You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just. 9 "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

[Deuteronomy 1:16-17 NASB] **16 "Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. 17 'You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'**

[Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NASB] **17 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. 18 "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. 19 "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.**

[Deuteronomy 16:18-20 NASB] **18 "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 "You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. 20 "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.**

[Deuteronomy 27:19 NASB] **19 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**

[Isaiah 10:1-3 NASB] **1 Woe to those who enact evil statutes And to those who constantly record unjust decisions, 2 So as to deprive the needy of justice And rob the poor of My people of their rights, So that widows may be their spoil And that they may plunder the orphans. 3 Now what will you do in the day of punishment, And in the devastation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your wealth?**

[Jeremiah 22:1-9 NASB] **1 Thus says the LORD, "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word 2 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, who sits on David's throne, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates. 3 'Thus says the LORD, "Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place. 4 "For if you men will indeed perform this thing, then kings will enter the gates of this house, sitting in David's place on his throne, riding in chariots and on horses, even the king himself and his servants and his people. 5 "But if you will not obey these words, I swear by Myself," declares the LORD, "that this house will become a desolation.""** 6 For thus says the LORD concerning the house of the king of Judah: "You are like Gilead to Me, Like the summit of Lebanon; Yet most assuredly I will make you like a wilderness, Like cities which are not inhabited. 7 "For I will set apart destroyers against you, Each with his weapons; And they will cut down your choicest cedars And throw them on the fire. 8 "Many nations will pass by this city; and they will say to one another, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this great city?' 9 "Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God and bowed down to other gods and served them.'"