

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Judgment is for Glory

As the true church of God, the called-out ones, we must not lose sight of the judgment of God. However, at times, from what I hear coming from the church of our day, it seems that some quarters are ready to move beyond God's judgment as if we are on the other side of resurrection. Another way of stating this is that it seems some Christian groups are expecting to come into the glory of Christ in this age with little vision or expectation of the glory of the next age. Part of the problem comes from the emphasis that the church is going to heaven and a failure to see that heaven, in the form of the kingdom of the Son of God's love, is coming to the earth; and when it does come, the conquering body of Christ will rule with King Jesus over the nations for the ages to come until all things in heaven and on earth are subjected to Jesus.

Perhaps, open dialogue about judgment is avoided because it is seen as something terrible, as if God is so mad that He might torch some in literal fire. What we need to see is that judgment from *God is love* is a good thing; it is good and right, for in judgment God sets things right.

Another point that we need to see is that judgment means God makes judgments upon which He acts. In other words, as shown below, His judgment is a verdict; determining the state or condition of what is in view. In this respect, judgment is two-fold: He makes a determination (judgment) then He acts upon this judgment to bring about His intended result, which is to set things right.

To add to this, let us consider some scripture.

Early on in the Bible, through Abraham, we are told that God is the judge of all the earth.

'Far be it from Thee; doth the Judge of all the earth not do justice?' (Genesis 18:25 YLT)

The word *judge* is translated from the Hebrew word *shaphat*, which means "to judge, govern." The word *justice* is translated from the Hebrew word *mishpat*, which means "a verdict, either favorable or unfavorable." In the English language, *justice* refers to being "just or fair." These are judicial terms.

Notice that prior to Abraham stating this truth, the Lord spoke of the blessing given to Abraham, which is what could be called the *Abrahamic covenant*.

Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice [right] and judgment [*mishpat*]; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. (Genesis 18:18-19 KJV [added])

Abraham's household was to do justice and judgment, which has carried over to our time for all who are of the faith of Abraham, meaning those who belong to Christ (Galatians 3:9, 29). Justice and judgment bring blessing. Does this sound like judgment is a terrible thing if it brings blessing? Hardly!

A similar word appears in Psalm 9 and is quoted in Acts 17.

But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, and He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. (Psalm 9:7-8 NASB)

Truly, then, God overlooking the times of ignorance, now strictly commands all men everywhere to repent, because He set a day in which "He is going to judge the habitable world in righteousness," by a Man whom He appointed; having given proof to all by raising Him from the dead. Psa. 9:8 (Acts 17:30-31 LITV)

Jesus will judge the world in righteousness. For what purpose? To bring blessing! But there is more.

At night my soul longs for You, Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; for when the earth experiences Your judgments [*mishpat*] the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Though the wicked is shown favor, he does not learn righteousness; he deals unjustly in the land of uprightness, and does not perceive the majesty of the LORD. (Isaiah 26:9-10 NASB [added])

For the modern-day church that seems satisfied, at least according to some doctrine, that billions are destined for an eternal hell (torture), Isaiah gives us a most profound truth that blows out of the water the tradition of men called *hell*. God's judgments of the earth have a glorious purpose—***so that the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness***, God's righteousness. Judgment is not for punishment like what man metes out or for destruction or for torture.

When the wicked are left to their own devices, they simply do not learn anything of value. Even when they are shown favor, they do not turn from their wicked way and do not perceive God's majesty. There is only one way for them to come into or to learn true righteousness, and that is through the judgment of God. But, again, the purpose is to learn, not to be destroyed. It is for glory.

When the ancient sons of Israel were in unbelief and the Lord was ready to wipe them out, Moses pleaded for the Lord's reputation among the nations. The Lord heard his plea, pardoned them, and made a promise that extends through our age into the age to come.

"Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." So, the LORD said, "I have pardoned them according to your word; but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. (Numbers 14:19-21 NASB)

The same promise is given to us through other prophets.

They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9 NASB)

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14 NASB)

Do you see the greatness of this promise from the Lord? His plan of the ages to achieve His ultimate purpose of all in all is to flood His creation with His glory, starting with earth. The destiny of all the nations is to come into the glory of God. Learning righteousness leads to glory. Praise God!

When God looks out upon His creation, He sees the result He has had in His heart from the very beginning—He sees His love filling all and, in this filling, He sees glory. The glory of the Lord!

Consequently, God's judgment is for glory!