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God The Judge

Introduction

1. Do you believe in divine judgment?
2. By this I mean, do you believe in a God who acts as our Judge?
3. Many do not.
4. If we speak to them of God as a father, a friend, a helper or one who loves us despite all our weaknesses, follies and sin, then we find them in agreement with us.
5. However, if we speak of God as a judge, they frown and begin to shake their heads in disagreement.
6. It is a truth which some cannot accept.
7. All that being said, there are few things which we find stressed in the Bible more strongly than the reality of God's role as Judge.
8. It is a term often applied to Him:
 - a. When Abraham was interceding for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he asked God, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25, NKJV).
 - b. In Judges 11:27, as Jephthah was concluding his ultimatum to the Ammonite invaders, he declared, "I therefore have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong by making war against me; may the Lord, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon.' "" (Judges 11:27, NASB95)
 - c. The psalmist in Psalm 75:7 wrote, "But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another." (Psalm 75:7, NASB95)
 - d. And in Psalm 82:8, he wrote, "Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations." (Psalm 82:8, NASB95)

- e. The writer of the letter to the Hebrew Christians writes in chapter 12:18, “For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind” and then tells us to what we have come, beginning in verse 22, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect . . .” (Hebrews 12:22-23, NASB95).

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I. The Reality of Divine Judgment

A. REVEALED THROUGH BIBLE HISTORY

1. God judged Adam and Eve by removing them from the Garden of Eden and pronouncing curses on their future earthly life (Genesis 3).
2. He judged the corrupt world of Noah’s day by sending a flood to destroy mankind (Genesis 6-8).
3. He judged the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah by destroying the two cities (Genesis 18-19).
4. God judged Pharaoh and all of Egypt for their oppression of the Israelites through the ten plagues He brought upon the land (Exodus 7-12).
5. He judged those who worshiped the golden calf at Mt. Sinai by utilizing the Levites as His executioners (Exodus 32:33,35).
6. He judged Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire to Him (Leviticus 10:1ff.).
7. He judged Achan for his greed and theft by wiping out him and his entire family (Joshua 7).
8. God judged the northern kingdom (Israel) by sending them into Assyrian captivity (2 Kings 17).
9. In like fashion, He judged the southern kingdom (Judah) by sending them

into Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 25:1-30).

10. This judgment by God continues throughout the New Testament:

- a. He judged the Jews for rejecting Christ (Matthew 21:43f.; 1 Thessalonians 2:14ff.)
- b. Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-10).
- c. Herod Agrippa I died a tragic death because of his pride (Acts 12:21-23).
- d. On the island of Cyprus, Elymas the magician was struck blind on Paul's first missionary journey because of his opposition to the gospel (Acts 13:8-11).
- e. According to the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11, some of the Christians in Corinth were afflicted with illness (some even died) because of their irreverence in connection with the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:29-32).

B. THERE IS A GREATER EMPHASIS UPON DIVINE JUDGMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Some believe that when we shift from the Old to the New Testament, this theme of divine judgment fades into the background.
2. In reality, the emphasis upon God's role as Judge intensifies.
3. Throughout the entire New Testament we are reminded of the certainty of a coming day of universal judgment.
 - a. Seven times we find the term "the day of judgment" (Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17).
 - b. Thirteen times it is referred to simply as "the judgment" (Matthew 12:41, 42; Luke 10:14; 11:31-32; Acts 24:25; Romans 2:2, 3; 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Jude 6)
 - c. Three times it is called "the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7; 1

Thessalonians 1:10).

- d. Once it is called “the day of wrath” (Romans 2:5).

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4. Twice, the apostle Paul declares that it is a universal judgment (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

“For we must all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Romans 14:10).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

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5. Not only is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, He is also . . .
- a. “the Judge [who] is standing right at the door” (James 5:9).
 - b. “the righteous judge” (2 Timothy 4:8)
 - c. “ready to judge the living and the dead” (1 Peter 4:5).
6. Paul told the Athenians that God “has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31, NASB95)
7. Paul informed the saints in Rome that “God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus” (Romans 2:16, NASB95).

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II. The Biblical Concept Of Judge

A. A JUDGE IS ONE WITH AUTHORITY

1. In the ancient Biblical world, the king was always the supreme judge, because his authority to rule was supreme.
2. In the same way, God is the judge of the world.
3. As our Maker, He not only owns us, He has a right to dispose of us.
4. He has the right to make laws for us, and to reward or punish us according

to whether or not we keep those laws.

5. Simply put, He is both the Lawgiver and the Judge.

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B. A JUDGE IS ONE KNOWN FOR DOING WHAT IS GOOD AND RIGHT

1. Today, we often think of judges as being cold and dispassionate.
2. This was not to be true of the biblical judge.
3. God required him to love justice and fair play and to loathe all ill-treatment of man by his fellow-man.
4. As our Judge, God loves righteousness and hates iniquity.
5. He is wholly concerned with what is good and right.

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C. A JUDGE IS A PERSON OF WISDOM, ABLE TO DISCERN TRUTH

1. Under the Old Testament standard, the judge's first task was to ascertain the facts in the case that had been brought before him.
2. Because there was no jury, it was his responsibility alone to question and cross-examine so as to detect lies and determine how matters really stood.
3. As our divine judge, the emphasis is placed upon His omniscience and wisdom.
4. He searches our hearts and determines the facts — nothing escapes Him.
5. While we may fool others, we cannot fool God.
6. The reason that such knowledge is important is because "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

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D. A JUDGE IS ONE WITH THE POWER TO EXECUTE HIS SENTENCE

1. In today's world, a judge may pronounce sentence, but he or she is not able to carry it out.
2. The same was true in the ancient world.
3. God, however, is His own executioner.
4. First He establishes the law by which we must live, then He sentences us for having broken that law, finally He administers the punishment.
5. In Him all the functions of law come together.

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III. Judgment As Retribution

A. THE ESSENCE OF A JUDGE'S TASK

1. God renders to each person what he or she deserves.
2. He rewards good with good and evil with evil or punishment.
3. When the New Testament speaks of the final judgment, it always presents it in terms of retribution.
4. God will judge all men, "according to their deeds" (Matthew 16:27; Revelation 20:12).
5. This is the point which Paul makes to the Christians in Rome (Romans 2:6-11).

God "will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation." (Romans 2:6-8, NASB95)

"For there is no partiality with God." (Romans 2:11, NASB95)

6. As Christians, we are not exempt (2 Corinthians 5:10).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10, NASB95)

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B. GOD AS EVERY MAN'S JUDGE

1. God will see that every single person, sooner or later, receives what he or she deserves — if not here, then in the hereafter.
2. All wrongs will be righted some day.
3. There will be no questions of fairness.
4. The fact that God is the Judge, means justice will be done.

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IV. Final Judgment Will Be According To . . .

A. OUR WORKS

1. Our whole course of life.
2. This includes our works.
3. It isn't that our works will merit and award from our Father — they are too imperfect for that — however, they will provided a look at what is in our heart.
4. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus presents the criteria in judgment as whether or not we met human needs:

“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.” (Matthew 25:35–36, NASB95)

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B. OUR WORDS

1. Also included are our words (Matthew 12:36-37).

“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”” (Matthew 12:36–37, NASB95)

2. Our words also serve to reveal the contents of our hearts.

“The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34).

3. Our actions and our words reveal whether or not we have a true love for Christ.

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C. OUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Everyone knows something of God's will through general revelation — even if that person has not been instructed in the law or the gospel (cf. Romans

1:19-20).

“because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”
(Romans 1:19–20, NASB95)

2. Everyone is guilty before God for falling short of the best they knew (Luke 12:47f.)
3. The principle we find operating here is “Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required” (Luke 12:48b, ESV).
4. In each and every case, we can know that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Conclusion

1. Paul refers to the fact that we must all appear before Christ’s judgment seat as “the fear (terror) of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:11).
2. Jesus, our Lord is both holy and pure — we are neither.
3. We live under His watchful eye, He knows our secrets, and on judgment day our whole past lives will be played out as it were before Him.
4. In all truth, none of us are fit to stand before on our own merits.
5. The question tonight is “What do we do?”
6. The answer: *We must call upon our future Judge to be our present Savior.*
7. If we run from Him now we will meet Him as our Judge then — without hope.
8. If we seek Him now we will find Him.

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9. Only then can we face His future coming with great joy, knowing “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).
10. He alone is our Rock of Ages. Let us now hide ourselves in Him.