

## God's Divine Judgment

Last week, we outlined the character of God, noting His holiness and His ability to look into the inner heart of man. As His creation, we are made to walk in good works (Eph 2:10), being a people who should desire to live in submission to His will. Being a loving and just God, however, He does not demand our obedience. It is of our own free will that we choose to trust and obey His precious word.

In this study, we will focus on the negative aspect of free will: man's choosing of sin and disobedience toward God. His divine judgment of the world is recorded for us in the Old Testament, and the coming final judgment is foretold in the New Testament. In light of eternity, let us study the Scriptures together.

### OLD TESTAMENT

1. It doesn't take long for man's free will to fall into the tempter's snare. In the beginning chapters of Genesis, we find the first recorded sins, each followed by God's divine judgment. Read each account and write the punishment associated with the sin.

Scripture	Sin	Punishment
Gen 3:11-13, 14-19, 23-24	Adam & Eve eat of the forbidden fruit.	
Gen 4:1-15	Cain murders his brother Abel.	
Gen 6:1-2, 5-7, 17-24	Man's wickedness and violence pervades the earth.	

These narratives reveal God's attitude toward sin. This darkness is outside His character, and He utterly abhors it (I Jn 1:5-6). As we contemplate our own shortcomings in remaining obedient to the Lord, it is important to remember that God cannot allow sin to enter His holy presence, and He expects greater of His creation.

**2.** Having left the children of Israel in a wilderness camp at the foot of the mountain, Moses ascends Sinai to converse with the Lord and soon receive the Ten Commandments. As the scene is set, the Lord makes a seemingly strange demand of Israel.

*Exodus 19:10-13*

- What were the people not allowed to do?
  
- Why might God have set this boundary?

To the rational mind, this punishment of death may seem "cruel and unusual." You touch, you die! Yet this judgment is teaching us something: God's character and person are holy. It is not the mountain that will put the people to death, but rather, it is God's holiness! No sinner can stand in His presence. By His generosity and mercy, He has given the people a boundary that will protect them; likewise for us today, He's given the complete, inspired Scriptures as a blueprint for righteous living.

**3.** During David's reign as king over Israel, a man named Uzzah was helping drive the oxen cart that carried the ark of the covenant toward Jerusalem.

*II Samuel 6:1-8*

- What did Uzzah do?

- Why was he punished, despite seemingly good intentions? (see Numbers 4:15)

Though a helper of the Lord, Uzzah's disregard for that which is holy cost him his life. Divine judgment was exacted immediately, just as God said it would happen. The first five books of the Bible, also known as the Pentateuch or the books of the Law, carefully detail God's expectations for His chosen people during this time. Deuteronomy 28 explains both the blessings that would thrive amidst covenant obedience and the curses that would overtake those who disobeyed. Just as God's people under the old covenant were expected to live by His word, we find similar instruction for the church today.

## **NEW TESTAMENT**

The Apostle Paul, esteemed writer of many New Testament letters, has much to say on God's righteous judgment of the disobedient in his letter to the Christians in Rome.

### **1. Romans 1:18-23**

- On whom does the wrath of God fall? (v. 18)
  
- Why will there be no excuse at the final judgment? (v. 20)

### **2. Romans 2:1-11**

Paul is writing to Christians who have found themselves regressing into the ways of the "old man" (Col 3:5-11); yet they proclaim the name of Christ with hypocrisy. Paul reasons that God's judgment, unlike their own, will be righteous.

- How can we receive eternal life as believers? (v. 7)

- What does it mean that there is “no partiality with God?” (v. 11)

### 3. Romans 6:1-14, 20-23

- How do we walk in “newness of life?” (v. 4)
- How can sin reign in our mortal bodies? (v. 12)
- What is the ultimate cost of sin? What is the ultimate fruit of holiness? ( v. 22-23)

## **CONCLUSION**

God’s divine judgment is righteous and just. Though our mortal minds may not grasp His ways, that is okay (Isa 55:9). He is the Creator; we are the created. We’ve noticed that judgment was swiftly executed in the Old Testament while we in the New Testament Age sometimes feel we can get away with sin and avoid lasting consequences. Paul warns us of this attitude, urging Christians everywhere to be mindful of the coming final judgment. As eternity beckons, the choice is ours. Will we stand with God or will we experience the enduring punishment of His wrath?

## **Discussion Questions**

- How does my understanding of God’s divine judgment affect my relationship with the world?
- What current habits do I need to leave behind in order to better prepare myself to stand face-to-face with the righteous Judge?
- Why are good intentions not enough to receive the eternal reward?