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Exhortation

"The God of my life"

10. "The God of judgment"

Jim Wood

WITH GOD there is no respect of persons. God judges a person's words and actions according to principles which He has determined. Those principles are consistently and perfectly applied, with due attention to mercy dependent upon situation and circumstance. Sometimes we may agonise over decisions we have to make. Occasionally we may not be too sure of the principles. At other times we may not know how to apply the principles, or may feel inadequate, first to collect all the facts, and second to weigh them all together in a fair, honest and true way. We may feel incapable of finding the correct balance of strict discipline, corrective reproof, sympathy and mercy. With our God this is not so. Being God, He knows all things, and His judgement will be righteous judgement. He cannot be wrong.

His people from earliest times have been instructed to apply the same standards and rules of conduct. Moses was commanded to instruct all the congregation: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour" (Lev. 19:15). In Deuteronomy this is enlarged upon: "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous" (16:19). Jesus summarised it in this way: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jno. 7:24).

Lack of moral perfection necessitates judgement. The process of judgement leads to decision. That decision results in condemnation or justification. The application of these matters in governing man's living is illustrated in these words: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deut. 25:1). Such matters featured in Solomon's prayer: "hear Thou in heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants,

condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness" (1 Kgs. 8:32). They are to be seen in those familiar descriptions of the judgements of the nations:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Mt. 25:31-34,41).

It is our declared belief "That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible . . . dead and living—obedient and disobedient—will be summoned before his judgment seat 'to be judged according to their works'" (Statement XXIV in *The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith*). Though the thought of being judged, and then hearing the decision as to whether we are to be invited into the Kingdom, may, if not worry us, then deeply concern us, we are assured that everything will be considered, and there will be no false witnesses and no spurious evidence. There will be no miscarriage of justice, no grounds for a reappraisal and no appeal to a higher authority. The decision will be final and perfect.

We are further encouraged by God's promise to His people through Isaiah: "And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you . . . that He may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him" (30:18).

Let us ensure that, in our waiting, the only God of our life is this merciful, gracious and righteous God of judgement.