

Quarter One: God's Love and Justice

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Lesson 12—Love and Justice: The Two Greatest Commandments

Tuesday: God Loves Justice

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- **Last Week:** “What More Could I Have Done?”
 - Although there are Q's pertaining to the evil & suffering in the world, yet, when we look at the cross, we see the true character of God
 - Jesus is the rightful King of this world
 - Two-stage destruction of Satan: at the Cross & again at the end of time
 - The vindication of God's name & character
- **This Week:** “Love & Justice: The Two Greatest Commandments”
 - The call on the Christian's life to love others - & to alleviate suffering & evil where we can
 - God is love: if we love God, we will love each other
 - God loves justice: if we love God, we will love justice, too

Memory Text: “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:20, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Two Greatest Commandments (SQ)
 - Matt 19 & 22 – love God & love others
- 2. **Monday:** The Two Greatest Sins (John L)
 - Ps 135 & Zech 7 – idolatry (opposite of love for God); & injustice & oppression of others (opposite of love for others)
- 3. **Tuesday:** God Loves Justice (Jill)
 - Ps 82 – God is passionate for the oppressed & suffering while having righteous anger against the victimizers & oppressors
- 4. **Wednesday:** Called to Establish Justice (Daniel)
 - Multiple Scriptures – both OT & NT – God calls us to call out the injustice & to focus on what really matters & relieve the suffering of others
- 5. **Thursday:** Who Is My Neighbor? (James)
 - Luke 10 – importance of ministering to the hurting / suffering around us

Tuesday: God Loves Justice

Ps 82; Ps 33:5; Isa 61:8; Micah 6:8; John 13:35; 1 John 4:8 - 16

- Lesson: “God is consistently passionate in favor of the downtrodden and oppressed while expressing righteous anger against the victimizers and oppressors.
- Psalm 82 = within Book III of the Psalms
 - Ps 73 – 89 & focuses on the question: “God where are You?”
 - Starts with Ps 73

- Also, includes some Zion theology
- **Psalm 82 = A Plea for Justice**
 - Switches from addressing the nation of Israel that doesn't listen –
 - To Israel's leaders & judges who rule unjustly
 - Heavenly court scene – God is judging those who judge unfairly
 - Ever felt –
 - Where are you God?
 - Why do things happen in God's church?
 - Why aren't things stopped at my place of business?
 - How can those in governmental authority get away with that?
 - This Psalm is that judgment
 - Dual application:
 - God's judgment against the earthly rulers responsible for the injustice in society
 - God's judgment against celestial rulers (the "gods") behind those corrupt earthly judges & rulers (Satan himself & his evil angels)

7 takeaways from Psalm 82

- Ps 82:1 – "God stands in the **congregation of the mighty**; He judges among the **gods**."
 - Congregation of the mighty = lit, "assembly of God (El)" or "divine assembly"
 - gods = *Elohim* – usually refers to God Himself
 - Sometimes, refers to "Mighty" or to "gods" (as Laban's gods that Rachel stole in Gen) or (gods in Egypt in Exodus)
 - Here, refers to earthly rulers, leaders, mighty ones, judges, and/or princes
 - **Takeaway #1: God is the ultimate Judge who is fair**
 - God is judging the rulers, taking them to task
 - Gen 18:25 – "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
 - Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah
 - God won't destroy the righteous with the wicked
 - He is just & fair
- Ps 82:2 – "How long will you judge **unjustly**, and show partiality to the wicked? Selah."
 - In contrast to God's righteous judgment, these earthly judges are unjust
 - Unjustly = Heb, "injustice, unrighteousness"
 - **Takeaway #2: God takes account of corrupt leaders who exploit the vulnerable**
 - So unfortunate that those appointed by God to care for the vulnerable – utilize their political or religious position to abuse & exploit others
 - We think nobody sees; yet He sees – and calls them to account
 - We cry out, "Where are you, God? How long, oh Lord?"
 - Yet He is judging

- Ps 82:3 – “Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.”
 - **Takeaway #3: Stand up for the vulnerable**
 - The orphan
 - The financially destitute (the homeless; those on the street)
 - *passed woman & baby outside Kroger (groceries / gas)
 - Jill passed by on the other side (Priest / Levite)
 - Micah 6:8 – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”
 - 1. Do justly = practice justice toward others – not injustice
 - 2. Love mercy – don’t mistreat others
 - 3. Walk in humility with God – do all as unto Him; reverence Him
- Ps 82:4 – “Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.”
 - **Takeaway #4: Rescue the vulnerable**
 - Don’t just call out those who are oppressing others
 - Don’t just stand up for the vulnerable
 - Rescue the vulnerable from those who oppress them
 - *Get involved
 - Rescue the sex trafficked
 - Provide a safe space for the abused child
 - Assist someone in a homeless shelter
 - John 13:35 – “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - The disciples’ mission is described in terms of love for others
 - 1 John 4:11 – “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”
- Ps 82:5 – “They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are unstable.”
 - **Takeaway #5: How we treat the vulnerable matters**
 - The world / society is thrown completely in disarray
 - Why? The injustice (perversion of justice) & suffering and evil that exists due to the oppression of leaders & others
- Ps 82:6, 7 – “I said, ‘**You are gods**, and all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.’”
 - **Takeaway #6: God will judge those who mistreat the vulnerable**
 - You are gods = refers to the human judges
 - Not gods in the absolute sense, but “children of the Most High” (parallel sentence)
 - These rulers / judges will eventually fall from their exalted position in society when they are judged by God
- Ps 82:8 – “Arise, O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all nations.”
 - **Takeaway #7: Plead with God to act**
 - Appeal to God to arise and judge the earth in the absence of just earthly judges

7 Takeaways from Psalm 82

- #1: God is the ultimate Judge who is fair
 - #2: God takes account of corrupt leaders who exploit the vulnerable
 - #3: Stand up for the vulnerable
 - #4: Rescue the vulnerable
 - #5: How we treat the vulnerable matters
 - #6: God will judge those who mistreat the vulnerable
 - #7: Plead with God to act
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- Who is God calling you to reach out to and minister?
 - Who is vulnerable that needs assistance, rescue and love?