

Justice and Judgment

- I. Sometimes we are called upon to render judgment in the court of the church and we may be called upon to sit on a jury in a civil court.
 - A. As a church we have judicial authority over our individual members. **1CO 5:12; 6:1-5.**
 - 1. Our power only extends to separating company from an offender.
 - 2. Church membership is voluntary and apostates are free to leave. **JOH 6:66-68.**
 - 3. This is a power of free association that can only be harmed by church incorporation, not helped by it.
 - B. In all criminal prosecutions, the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to a trial by jury.
 - 1. jury: In legal use. A company of persons (orig. men) sworn to render a 'verdict' or true answer upon some question or questions officially submitted to them; in modern times, in a court of justice, usually upon evidence delivered to them touching the issue; but in the earliest times usually upon facts or matters within their own knowledge, for which reason they were summoned from the neighbourhood to which the question submitted to them related, or in which the person or persons lived as to whose conduct or death an 'inquest' or investigation was held.
 - 2. trial: *Law*. The examination and determination of a cause by a judicial tribunal; determination of the guilt or innocence of an accused person by a court.
 - 3. In such a case, the jury sits as the judge.
- II. This is a study of the system of justice and judgment among men.
 - A. God's judgment is total and extends to all the crimes that men have committed. **MAT 12:36; GAL 3:10; JUDE 1:14-15.**
 - B. In a human system of judgment, it is the responsibility of the judge(s) to determine guilt or innocence of a defendant accused of a specific crime committed at a specific time.
 - 1. Anyone who stands to be judged in a human court is a sinner. **1KI 8:46; ROM 3:23.**
 - 2. Therefore, the issue to be decided is not whether the accused has ever done anything wrong, but rather whether he is guilty of the specific crime with which he is being charged.
- III. The execution of justice and judgment is more important than religious sacrifices and rituals. **PRO 21:3; ISA 1:10-24; MAT 23:23.**
- IV. Isaiah 59 gives a vivid description of a society in which justice and judgment are absent. **ISA 59:4, 8-9, 11, 14.**
 - A. Such a society is characterized by deceit, violence, and destruction. **vs. 4-7.**
 - B. Where there is no justice, there can be no peace. **v. 8.**
 - C. In vain does such a society look for light and guidance. **vs. 9-10.**
 - D. Where there is no judgment, there is no salvation. **v. 11.**
 - E. There will be no true justice in a society that legislates God out of its affairs. **v. 13.**
 - F. The decent law-abiding citizen becomes a prey in this kind of society. **v. 15a; 2TI 3:3.**
 - G. Such a state of affairs displeases the Lord. **v. 15b.**
 - H. The despicable condition of this society was not owing to a lack of self-esteem, nor a lack of wealth, nor a lack of redistribution of wealth, nor a lack of jobs, nor a lack of schools, nor a lack of tolerance for alternative lifestyles. It was owing to a lack of justice.

- I. Though men may fail to execute justice, God will nevertheless execute His judgment. **vs. 16-18.**
 - J. Man's injustice does not escape the cognizance of the ultimate, supreme Judge. **ECC 5:8; PSA 82.**
 - K. If man would execute judgment, God would not have to step in. **1CO 11:31.**
- V. When the system becomes corrupted, people tend to look for a knight in shining armour to cure all ills and in so doing they court tyranny. **ISA 3:5-7; 1SAM 8:3-5.**
- VI. The general ignorance of the principles of justice has led to the pitiful state of affairs in our nation. **ISA 5:13; HOS 4:6.**
- A. Equal opportunity and equality before the law is being cast off in favor of equalization of standards of living through wealth redistribution.
 - B. Uniform justice through the law has commonly given way to "social justice."
 - C. Public officials are too often elected not to uphold or restore justice but to bend it to the benefit of a class of voters.
 - D. The rights and property of individuals are too commonly deemed inferior to the concerns of the state, of regulatory agencies' whims, of international concerns, and the "global" concerns of spurious science.
- VII. What are justice and judgment?
- A. justice: I. The quality of being just. II. Judicial administration of law or equity. Exercise of authority or power in maintenance of right; vindication of right by assignment of reward or punishment; requital of desert.
 - 1. just: That does what is morally right, righteous. **just before (with) God** or, simply, **just**: Righteous in the sight of God; justified.
 - 2. right: sb. The standard of permitted and forbidden action within a certain sphere; law; a rule or canon. 2. That which is proper for or incumbent on one to do; one's duty. 3a. That which is consonant with equity or the light of nature; that which is morally just or due. (Often contrasted with *might* and *wrong*, and in ME. freq. coupled with *reason* or *skill*.)
 - 3. right: adj. Of persons or disposition: Disposed to do what is just or good; upright, righteous. Of actions, conduct, etc.: In accordance with what is just or good; equitable; morally fitting. In later use chiefly predicative.
 - B. judgment: The action of trying a cause in a court of justice; trial. 3a. The sentence of a court of justice; a judicial decision or order in court.
 - C. judge: sb. A public officer appointed to administer the law; one who has authority to hear and try causes in a court of justice.
 - D. judge: v. To try, or pronounce sentence upon (a person) in a court of justice; to sit in judgement upon.
 - E. Judgment requires discernment between that which is good and that which is bad, which requires a standard of good and bad.
 - F. Inherent in the definition of *justice* is a standard of right which is a law.
 - 1. The lawgiver is God. **JAM 4:12; ISA 33:22.**
 - a. It is by the wisdom that comes from God that justice is decreed. **PRO 2:6; 8:15-16.**
 - b. The ultimate source of your law is your god.
 - c. If the ultimate source of law is humanity, then humanity cannot be under the

- law.
2. All men from the supreme magistrate on down are under God's law. **PSA 103:19; COL 2:10; PSA 2:10-12.**
3. In a just society, rulers themselves are restrained by law. **DEU 17:14-20.**
4. We need judges in the church and in the nation that are informed in the laws of God. **EZR 7:25.**
5. When God and His law are ruled out of a society, justice is gone.
 - a. Absolutes will give way to relativism.
 - b. Right will be determined by might or by poll and therefore subject to continual flux.
 - c. There can be no stability in such a system.

VIII. The primary function of a civil government is to execute justice and judgment.

1PE 2:13-14; ROM 13:1-7.

- A. The primary functions of the king in Israel were those of commander of the military and to execute justice. **1SAM 9:16; 2SAM 8:15; 2CH 9:8.**
 1. By means of the military the king saved his people from oppressors outside their borders.
 2. By the execution of justice the king saved his people from oppressors within their borders.
 3. The very name of "the king's court" (**AMO 7:13 c/w LUK 7:25**) reflects the judicial power of a king.
 4. (**PRO 16:10**) A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.
- B. The execution of justice by a civil government establishes a land. **PRO 29:4.**
- C. Civil governments overextend their function to trying to save people from poverty, hunger, ignorance, factionalism, insults, and disease.
 1. While a civil government can restrain wickedness, it cannot renew men in righteousness.
 2. Only Christ can save men from all the consequences of sin.
 3. Consider the messianic character of our modern government and politicians.
 4. Politicians tend to set forth visions that are like prophecies of the new heavens and the new earth.

IX. **2CH 19:5-11** sets forth several principles of the duty of judgment.

- A. The execution of judgment is something to be done for the Lord.
 1. Our system of trial by jury is a power in our civil government.
 2. Remember that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (**ROM 13:1-7**) and justice is their primary function.
 3. Judges should act as representatives of God, not of the state.
 4. Judges should not represent the society at large, for that would give no protection to the individual from the will of the mob.
 5. If one ever has a judicial appointment or is ever on a jury, he would do well to remember that he is there by the appointment of God to execute justice as His servant.
- B. Judgment is to be faithfully done in the fear of God. **EXO 18:21-22 c/w LUK 18:2.**
- C. God's law is to receive paramount consideration. **ACT 5:29.**
- D. Judgment should be administered courageously. **DEU 1:17.**

E. The Lord is with us in judgment and shall be with the good. **2CH 19:11.**

X. In order to have true justice, there must be not only the administration of *law* but the maintenance of *right*. **PSA 9:4.**

A. This follows inasmuch as wrong can be framed into law.

EXO 1:22; EST 3:8-15; DAN 3:1-6; 6:4-9; PSA 94:20-21; ISA 10:1-2.

1. Since justice is the administration of law, when mischief is framed by a law, enforcing it appears to be an act of justice.
2. Since people tend to think that anything lawful is just, unjust persons try to legalize their unjust actions.
3. The law "...was added BECAUSE of transgressions..." (**GAL 3:19**), the transgressions being established by divine precepts. *Concocting* transgressions contrary to divine precepts is NOT the making of just law. **ROM 4:15.**

B. Consider the sin of extortion. **EZE 22:12; 1CO 5:10-11.**

1. extort: *trans.* To obtain from a reluctant person by violence, torture, intimidation, or **abuse of legal or official authority**, or (in weaker sense) by importunity, overwhelming arguments, or any powerful influence.
2. When law is concocted or twisted to facilitate extortion, the legality is invalid.
3. "It is impossible to introduce into society a greater change and a greater evil than this: the conversion of law into an instrument of plunder."
(Frederic Bastiat, *The Law*, p. 8)
4. "But how is this legal plunder to be identified? Quite simply. See if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime."
(Ibid. p. 17)
5. "When law and morality contradict each other, the citizen has the cruel alternative of either losing his moral sense or losing his respect for the law. These two evils are of equal consequence, and it would be difficult for a person to choose between them." (Ibid. pp. 8-9)

C. The administration of an unjust law is an act of injustice.

D. The abuse of law is an act of injustice.

1. The early Jewish Christians were thus victimized by their own brethren.

JAM 2:6; 5:6.

- a. condemn: a. *trans.* To pronounce an adverse judgement on... b. Said of witnesses and acts: To procure the condemnation of, to bring about the conviction of.
- b. Here was a case where the rich used not the law for justice but for personal gain.
2. The greatest example of such abuse was what the guardians of law did to Jesus Christ. **ACT 3:14-15; 13:28.**
3. **(1TI 1:8)** But we know that the law is good, IF A MAN USE IT LAWFULLY.

E. Judges are commanded to follow that which is **ALTOGETHER** just. **DEU 16:18-20.**

1. altogether: Everything being included; in all respects, in every particular; entirely, wholly, totally, quite.
2. There are three elements to every case: fact, law, and determination.
 - a. *Law* is the rule of conduct under consideration.
 - b. *Fact* refers to the person's state of affairs, to what he did or did not do.

- c. *Determination* is the verdict of guilt or innocence arrived at when the facts are considered in relation to the law.
- 3. Consider this case: A certain man is charged with breaking the law that requires all pilots to have a pilot's license.
 - a. THE LAW is that pilots must have a license.
 - b. THE FACT is that the accused is not a pilot.
 - c. THE DETERMINATION is that the accused is not required to have a license and is, therefore, not guilty of breaking that law.
- 4. Consider this spiritual case: A N.T. Christian is charged with breaking the sabbath law which God gave to Israel under the Mosaic (O.T.) covenant.
 - a. THE LAW is that Israel under the O.T. must keep the sabbath law. **EXO 20:8; 31:16-17; EZE 20:16-17.**
 - b. THE FACT is that a N.T. Christian is not under the O.T. covenant.
 - c. THE DETERMINATION is that a N.T. Christian is not guilty of breaking *that* sabbath law. **COL 2:14-16.**
- 5. Consider another case: A couple is charged with breaking a law that requires all children to attend a state-accredited school.
 - a. THE LAW is that all children must attend state-accredited schools.
 - b. THE FACT is that the accused couple are not sending their children to a state-accredited school.
 - c. THE DETERMINATION is that the couple are guilty of breaking that state law, if you think the law is just.
 - d. HOWEVER, if you believe the state is at fault for making such a requirement, then THE DETERMINATION is that the couple are not guilty.
- 6. An "altogether just" judgment requires that the justice of the law itself be considered as well as the facts in arriving at a determination.
- F. We are not to judge God's law (**JAM 4:11**). It is the laws of men that we must judge as to whether they are just or not. We are to prove all things and hold fast that which is GOOD (**1TH 5:21**), not simply that which is made law.