

Earth's Rulers Judged
Study Outline – Grace Bible Chapel
Psalm 82:1-8
Sunday – April 9th, 2017

CONTEXT of Psalm 82: - This is another of the Psalm's of Asaph (Psalm 73-83). God calls to account the rulers of the earth (Vs. 1-4). This not only indicates His sovereign hand and omniscient interest in all history, but prophetically addresses the time when these will stand before God and give an account of their decisions. His question of "how long" (Vs. 2) indicates His knowledge and His coming vindication.

The "they" (Vs. 5-8) is a direct reference to the rulers the Psalmist addresses on behalf of God. What then follows is a description of their condition based on their actions. Here they are called "darkness" and their actions are described as shaking the "foundations of the earth." That is their actions are contrary to the revealed will, and just purpose of God on the earth. The statement "I said, 'You are gods,'" (Vs. 6) is a reference to their position. They have been placed by the true God into a high position for the purpose of ministering justice (Rom. 13). Christ quoted this passage (John 10:32-36) to rebuke the Pharisee's in His proof that He was sent by God.

Despite their position, they "will die like men" (Vs. 7) – in other words, they are not privileged of God to be above the justice they are called to represent, but are accountable. In fact, we know from other passages those who are in leadership positions have a higher degree of accountability. In the final verse 8, the psalmist calls on God to arise and "judge the earth!" This is precisely what God will do and the details of that judgment are described in Matthew 25:31-46 at the second coming of Christ to the earth. True justice will not prevail on the earth until Christ comes as judge. We say therefore with Asaph and with John in Revelation 22:20 "come Lord Jesus."

Introduction:

- Today more than ever we are bombarded with information & controversy of our countries leaders & leadership in the world via daily news & information.
 - We see the daily struggles between warring factions attempting to control the power – some are well intentioned, but most are not. Most are selfish, prideful, personal, & these will use any method to gain their way.
 - We view their sins, mistakes, bias, judgments and challenges.
 - We see the controversies between view points as observers – but more importantly, what these ultimately do affects us as citizens.
 - It can affect our thinking, and lead us into sin.
 - It can discourage us, & cause us to think God is not concerned or that He doesn't care or is incapable.
 - We see the politics of leader's manipulation and attempts to achieve goals that are both good & evil – unfortunately most prominent is evil.

Point: What we should be seeing & falling back on through it all is that God is on His throne, and all the efforts of man will ultimately result in God achieving what He wants to achieve, and that He will bring all men to accountability at His judgment.

I. Coming Day of Accountability (82:1)

- **Vs. 1** – "takes His stand" – that is He stands – above it all or in the place of supreme authority. He is the sovereign God. He is gloriously directing the events of life in a manner to achieve His perfect will.
- "His own congregation" – His assembly of powers and authorities in the heavenly places that do His perfect bidding. These oversee and deal with the rulers and authorities of the earth.
- "He judges in the midst of the rulers" – what is really happening is that despite what appears to be the sovereign rule of temporary leaders is really not. They make evil decisions, they act & live contrary to wisdom & righteousness – but...the comfort behind it all is "God judges in the midst of rulers."
 - This does not mean that God does not allow them to do evil Ps. 2:1-2.

- What it does mean is that God is able to take whatever man does and accomplish His perfect will – even that which is rebellious, ridiculous, and evil.
- But notice – Ps. 2:4,10-12 – such rebellion of man is therefore insane & will ultimately be brought to accountability.
- Even in the immediate be reminded of who is in charge – Is. 40:21-24.
- We need merely to go to Rom. 13 to understand “there is no authority except from God, and those who which exist are established by God.”

Point: This first verse sets the theme of God’s sovereign rule over all the affairs of man. We may not see it daily, but it is present. Something we need to constantly be reminded. God is prevailing & will prevail no matter what we see going on daily. In our text the writer is dealing with man in relation to God and man’s accountability.

II. **Call for Justice** (82:2-4)

- **Vs. 2** – “How long...wicked?”
 - This is a statement addressed as if God is speaking to the judges of the earth.
 - What is the prevailing manner of their judgment? – unjust, or unrighteous.
 - What do they do? “show partiality to the wicked?” They do not decide cases or situations according to the priority of the truth, or of God - they have their own agenda.
 - What explanation can be given? Evil begets evil (Rom 3:10-18) & the thrust of it is Rom. 3:18 “there is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Point: As the fear of the Lord is not present in society, so goes justice. This is the reason for the actions of injustice by so many in places of authority even in America. It has a two-fold edge – it works both in ignorance (because they do not know God’s Word), and in outright rebellion because of their lack of fear of God.

- **Vs. 3** – What should they be doing!
 - The role of God given authority is to make sure those who cannot defend themselves are treated equally with those who can.
 - The four groups he names are defenseless (weak, fatherless, afflicted, & destitute).
 - If you go to Washington & view the emblem at the supreme court building it is a blind-folded woman holding scales of justice – blind justice assures fair justice by treating all equally no matter their status in life.
- **Vs. 4** – Tells us what the wicked prey on – weak & needy. Most of societies in history have been vile unrighteous monarchies who used and abused the people ruled.
 - But, I see this graphically over my life-time in our so-called democracy. Liberals who by appearance seem to support the down & out of society, are really using & abusing them for their power – keeping them down, & picking their pockets – deceiving in order to attract their votes. So that even in a so-called democracy the same attitudes prevail.
 - He ends this paragraph with a prayer – “rescue & deliver them.” Ultimately, true deliverance comes from God. He sometimes brings temporary deliverance thru people & circumstances today – but not always!
 - But ultimately He will bring true final deliverance at His coming & restoration from the curse!

III. **Condition of the Judges** (82:5-7)

- **Vs. 5** – “They do not know nor do they understand” – this is not excusing their behavior. The thrust is they have no desire to administer justice because of who they are.
 - Their priority is not the truth, or what is right!
 - They are not interested in the facts of a particular case.
 - They have their own interests & agenda.
 - Their ignorance is willful – they shut their eyes against the obvious.

Point: We see this in society today – judges appointed to uphold the constitution pay no attention to the constitution – they rule according to their own agenda.

- What is the problem? – “they walk about in darkness” – it is a statement of fact as Christ stated “men loved darkness”(John 3:19) – they prefer untruth, unrighteousness, evil, their own way – not God’s way which is the exclusive way of truth and justice!

Point: The way of darkness can never be pleasing to God – never! People even that know of God, or have some sense of Him often talk themselves into thinking God does not care, or it does not matter, but truth and righteousness matter to God (just look at the cross) and therefore all will be held accountable.

- How important is it? “All the foundations...shaken.” The fundamental bases on which the life of man upon the earth rests in God, the very principles of morality, are shaken, totter and fail, when those whose place it is to administer justice pervert it and deal out injustice instead.
- This is not something of little import, or just politics to be excused – it matters immensely.
- This will only be corrected when Christ will literally rule!
- **Vs. 6** – “I said you are gods” – who said? God said – the idea is that God placed these leaders into their lofty & privileged positions as His representatives. Their very purpose is to act as God acts on behalf of God in the affairs of man.
 - “And all of you are sons of the Most High” – your decisions, because you are in authority, are to be considered as coming from God. You occupy a rank over others in a similar manner as God holds a rank over all.

Vs. 7 – “Nevertheless you will die like men” - you are mortal, like other people. This fact you have overlooked. You instead have been lifted up with pride by your position, as if you were in fact somehow not mortal like other people.

- The idea is that your time is coming. You are accountable for your actions & will die and be judged just like all people. Remember the words of Heb. 9:27 – “it has been appointed for men once to die, then comes the judgment.”
- As with teachers (Jms. 3:1), God holds those in privileged positions with extra accountability – righteously so! Think of Christ’s words to the Pharisees (Mat. 23).
- “And fall..princes” – history repeats. Look at history – all the kings over regimes great & small come & go. The unstated point for kings is be wise in their rule, their time, & opportunity is short and they are accountable before God for it.

IV. Cry for the Day of the Lord (82:8)

- **Vs. 8** – This final prayer is a plea that is similar to that stated in Vs. 4.
 - My reference to the “Day of the Lord” is a phrase repeated in the Old Testament (Is. 13:6, 9; Ezk. 30:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 2:11, 3:14; Amos 5:18; Oba. 1:15; Mal. 4:5) to refer to the coming of the Lord to judge in the earth in the last days before His literal reign.
 - “Arise” – matches what Christ will do at the last as He is now shown as sitting at the right hand of the Father (Ps. 110:1). He will arise & He will judge the earth.
 - He is currently the sovereign controlling the events of history.
 - This judging is a literal correcting of the wicked judgment of these leaders of the earth.
 - This is a prayer that is being answered – that is God often intervenes in ways we cannot understand to maintain good for His people on the earth. He does this daily, even moment by moment.
 - This is also a prayer that will be answered in completeness at the coming of Jesus Christ. This is seen by the last statement “for it is You who possesses all the nations.”
 - Zech. 14:2-4; 9-11 – this is Christ’s literal reign (Rev. 20) – in His reign will be the removal of the curse, & the restoration promised in Gen. 3:15.
 - Notice back at the end of Zech. 14:5 “all the holy ones with Him.” If we are in Christ Jesus we will be there on that day in glorified bodies. This is the ultimate answer to prayer. What a great day it will be – until then pray, trust, wait, & abide.

Closing:

- What caught your attention in this passage? God's warning to the leaders of the world. God's encouragement to His own that He hears our prayers and will ultimately act.
- What does this passage tell us about God? He will not tolerate injustice. He will hold those in positions of authority accountable for their actions.
- What does this passage say about mankind? People will not naturally listen to God even after receiving His blessings. People are naturally stubborn of heart. Those in high places think they are above the judgment of God.
- Based on this passage, what should you & I do? We should pray for God's justice on the earth. This is similar to 1 Tim. 2:1-2. We should wait on the Lord. We should pray for and look forward to the Day of the Lord when justice will cover the earth.