

Is God A Judge?

Discussion Notes

YOUR FAVOURITE PICTURE/METAPHOR FOR GOD

Which of these is your favourite? Why?

- Potter (Isaiah 64:8)
- Light (Psalm 27)
- Shepherd (Psalm 23)
- Fire (Deuteronomy 4:24)
- Fortress (Psalm 46)
- Home (Dwelling Place) (Psalm 90)
- Rock (Psalm 18)

Perhaps it's another?

What do you think of the picture/metaphor 'God is a judge?'

JUDGEMENT = DECIDING AND DIVIDING

JUDGEMENT in the ancient language is KRISIS - it simply means divide/decide.

KRISIS is:

- like a ball on the apex of a roof - it has to go one way or another - left or right.
- like a watershed, when water hits a mountain peak, it flows one way or the other.
- marking an exam (tick or cross, right or wrong).
- when you come to a fork in the road - do you drive east or west?
- deciding whether someone is innocent or guilty in a court.
- necessary for life.

So in this ancient concept judgement can be:

- BAD: harsh, false, wrong, unjust, by appearances.
- GOOD: discerning, wise, perceptive, a natural part of thinking
- ***What's the difference for you between good and bad judgement?***

IS GOD A JUDGE? YES! THREE REASONS...

1. GOD JUDGES (DECIDE/DIVIDE) IN CREATING

Genesis 1:3-4

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light...

And God separated the light from the darkness and called the light 'day' and the darkness 'night' ...

God decides what reality will be and divides existence from non-existence. God creates by dividing into day and night, sky from land, and sea from dry land. God decides, divides, and names things for what they are. To create the universe requires a kind of judging!

2. GOD JUDGES (DECIDE/DIVIDE) BECAUSE GOD IS GOOD

Psalm 7:11

God is a righteous judge.

If God did not distinguish good from evil, then God would not be Good. If God accepted evil, God would not be good. So in calling God "judge" we are not saying God is angry or harsh, just that God is good, the ultimate one who distinguishes, decides and divides.

3. GOD JUDGES (DECIDE/DIVIDE) BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:6

"Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth."

To actually BE love, God must also be a judge because love distinguishes between evil and truth.

You might look up 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 and list the things there that are divided and rejected.

- *What do you think of these three ways God judges? What needs clarifying?*

THE PROBLEMS WITH CALLING GOD JUDGE?

The idea that God is judge has been abused throughout history. Many have used it to condemn others and to take power over them. People have often been falsely certain that God shares all their prejudices. So the idea that 'God is judge' is unpopular. It can go wrong in many ways...

1. IT MEANS WE SHOULD NOT JUDGE!

Most want to decide and define our own lives. But if God is judge - that means we are not! If God is judge, it means we should not judge - that's God's role not ours. (Eg. Matthew 7:1-2)

2. IN A SICK WAY WE MIGHT ENJOY GOD JUDGING OTHERS

Have you ever enjoyed saying 'I told you so?' The pleasure that can come from seeing your enemy fail is called 'schadenfraude'. It's wrong. If you're too comfortable with the idea of God as judge you might be a little blind about your own sin (for instance your materialism as you eat nice meals and

think about buying more stuff while others starve). Many people who like to loudly say “God is judge” are actually just judges themselves. (Eg. Matthew 7:1-5)

3. IT'S SCARY.

If you take seriously that God has every right to judge you, that is scary. It might have consequences.

- *What problems can you with calling God judge? Which of these concern you the most?*

BUT JUDGEMENT IS NOT THE SAME AS CONDEMNATION!

Judgement is simply deciding and dividing, but condemnation questions our worth.

JUDGEMENT:

- Simply defines/decides/divides:
- Right/wrong, truth/lie, innocent/guilty

CONDEMNATION:

- Questions our worth
- Punishment, rejection, hates hurts, hell

God still judges, but God has chosen not to condemn!

I have truly experienced judgement without condemnation. I have experienced good friends tell me I am wrong and in sin. They have come to me full of love but honestly and they have brought judgement, *but* no condemnation. They didn't think less of me. They didn't come as superiors but alongside me. They still loved me. They didn't change their commitment to me.

- *Have you ever experienced judgement without condemnation?*

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION.

Romans 8:1

There is now **NO CONDEMNATION** for those in Christ Jesus.

God has not stopped distinguishing good from evil. God has not stopped being good and being opposed to our selfish, materialistic, narcissistic lives. But in Christ, we do not face condemnation, we do not fear being wiped out, we do not face hell or anything like it. There is not one shred of condemnation left for us! When you feel you're worthless or a failure, when you hear voices tell you to quit, when you feel like you are not worth saving - that is condemnation and it is NOT from Jesus!

- *Have you ever felt condemnation and known it WAS NOT from God?*
- *Finish by each saying personally to each other Romans 8:1.*