

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
LXXXII. Handling Unjust Judicial Powers
(Psalm 82:1-8)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many judicial powers today function unjustly, what threatens the welfare of a lawful and orderly society:

(1) It occurs at the international level: “The same Biden-Blinken brain trust responsible for the debacle in Afghanistan has . . . pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into Gaza and betrayed Iranian dissidents . . . There are inadvertent favors too, like the US weapons left behind in Afghanistan that found their way to Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip, according to a Newsweek report in June.” (“Quotable, Republican-American, October 10, 2023, p. 6A, citing Miranda Devine, “Reckoning needed after Biden’s failed foreign policy gave Hamas’ terror the element of surprise,” New York Post, Oct. 8) With the atrocities being committed by Hamas in the current Gaza Strip war, one wonders where is the justice due not only to the terrorists, but also to those who have aided them.

(2) It occurs at the national level: (a) Many Democrats, and the mainstream media claim that the impeachment inquiry on President Biden is “without evidence,” but “numerous witnesses, many with no connection to one another or political agendas, have independently testified that he was involved” in his son Hunter’s foreign business dealings. (David Harsanyi, “Impeachment inquiry backed by lots of evidence,” Ibid., September 18, 2023, p. 8A) If Hunter were guilty of “(t)eaming up with his father to extort foreign actors in exchange for political favors,” it “would make him, and the president, some of the most prolific criminals in American history.” (“A convenient prosecution,” Ibid., September 23, 2023, p. 6A) (b) However, the standard of justice is different for President Biden’s political rival: “(T)he New York . . . Law . . . under which Donald Trump” was “found to have committed fraud” has led to “his business units ordered dissolved within 10 days . . . before a trial in which the state of New York seeks . . . \$250 million from the Donald . . . (Amazingly,) (t)he order by New York Supreme Court Justice . . . Engoron . . . acknowledges no victim of Trump’s fraud ‘lodged a complaint’ or ‘otherwise claimed damages’ . . . and in fact made money.” (Red Jahncke, “The draconian law and order being used to prosecute,” Ibid., October 4, 2023, p. 6A)

(3) It occurs at the local level: State Senator Rob Sampson claims that Connecticut’s current high crime rate is “the direct result of a decade of bad criminal justice policies that remove consequences for criminal behavior.” (Sen. Rob Sampson, September 4 CT Examiner, “Let’s God GOP, CT Dems are Making it Easy For Ya,” cited in “Quotable,” Ibid., September 8, 2023, p. 6A)

(4) As a result, a lawful and orderly society is itself at risk: “In an atomized, fractured social landscape” that is typical where a pronounced lack of justice abounds, “what matters is how much individuals can get away with – how much can be successfully extracted from government or commerce for one’s personal benefit, everyone else be hanged.” (“Quotable,” Ibid., October 2, 2023, p. 8A, citing Lionel Shriver, Sept. 2023 Spectator Magazine column, “Shoplifters need to feel shame”) Then, ““(w)hen the social norms that allow for day-to-day cooperation” between people in society “break down,” and “if the slide is not arrested, eventually the entire system falls apart.” (Auron MacIntyre, “The end of high-trust society,” The Blaze, Oct. 4, cited in “Quotable,” Ibid., October 9, 2023, p. 8A)

Need: So, we ask, “*With their harm to a lawful and orderly society, what can we do about unjust judicial powers?*”

I. Psalm 82:1-8 addressed the problem of unjust judges in society. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 854)

II. In verse 1, the psalmist presented God as presiding as Judge over an assembly of human judges:

- A. The Hebrew word *‘elohim* that often means “gods” or Israel’s “God” is used in verse 1 of human judges, Ibid.
- B. Accordingly, God is presented as standing in an assembly of human judges to render His judgment on them!

III. The Lord then delivered His indictment of these judges for failing to administer justice, Psalm 82:2-5:

- A. The judges were partial to the powerful and the guilty while not rendering justice for the helpless, v. 2, 3-4:
 - 1. The judges had failed to defend the “poor” (v. 3a KJV), the *dal* in Hebrew, the lower class that was easily abused. (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 195; H. A. W., T. W. O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 190)
 - 2. These judges had also failed to uphold the cause of vulnerable people groups like orphans, Psalm 82:3b.
 - 3. Another failure was not upholding the rights of the “afflicted” (v. 3c KJV), the *‘ani* in Hebrew, those who suffer restrictive disabilities or distresses. (Ibid., B. D. B., p. 776-777; Ibid., H. A. W., v. II, p. 683-684)
 - 4. They forsook the “needy” (v. 3d KJV; *rash*), the poor, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 930; Ibid., H. A. W., v. II, p. 840.
 - 5. These judges had not delivered the “poor” (v. 4a KJV), the Hebrew word here is *dal* again, referring to the lower class that was vulnerable to harm by the upper class. (Ibid., B. D. B., p. 195; H. A. W., v. I, p. 190)

6. The judges had also failed to deliver the “needy” (v. 4b KJV), the Hebrew word being *‘ebyon* and meaning those in need of social protection from evil, socially powerful people. (Ibid., H. A. W., v. I, p. 4-5)
- B. Consequently, God ruled that these judges lacked spiritual or intellectual understanding since they functioned in spiritual darkness, and their unjust rulings caused “the foundations of the earth” to be “shaken,” a figurative expression that means that “law and order” were “undermined,” Psalm 82:5; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.
- IV. God thus ruled that though He had appointed these judges as “Elohim,” His representatives on earth, He would cause them to die as mere “adam,” the Hebrew word for common men (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1048; R. B. Girdlestone, Syns. of the O. T., 1973, p. 45-48) and fall like other rulers fell, Psalm 82:6-7.**
- V. The psalmist closed the psalm by urging God to arise and judge the whole earth, for all nations were His possession and were accountable to Him, Psalm 82:8; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.**

Lesson: *God sovereignly rules over the world, including those powers He has allowed to administer justice in society, and He holds them accountable and will judge them on how well they uphold God’s justice for all people.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we call on God to administer justice relative to all the injustices in the world. (3) Since we today do not live in a theocracy like the author of Psalm 82 did, after applying “(2)” above, we must heed Scripture for the current dispensation of the Church as clarified in the “Conclusion.”*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

We view Scriptures that address the issues of concern in our introduction for our dispensation (as follows):

(1) As we often assert, Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 predicted a “mini-Great Tribulation” for our era of the Church where oppressive rulers in the world who are full of intrigue afflict subordinates. God allows this state occur to drive believers to seek spiritual balm in Bible expounding churches and to lead unbelievers to seek spiritual balm and find it by faith in Christ for salvation of the soul followed by exposure to Bible exposition in Biblical churches.

(2) To counter society’s breakdown in law and order caused by unjust judicial powers, Proverbs 28:4 claims that if we obey God’s Word, we resist the wicked. So, as believers in Christ, we should rely on the Holy Spirit for the motivation and the power (Galatians 5:16) to uphold law and order (a) first in our homes: (+) Husbands should assume headship over their homes but love their wives in self-sacrificial ways like Christ loved the Church, Ephesians 5:25-33a. (+) Wives should submit to their husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife just as Christ is the Head of the Church, Ephesians 5:22-23, 33b. The exception to this rule is when the husband’s directive violates God’s directive for the wife, Acts 5:29. (+) Parents must not exasperate their children but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4 NIV. (+) Children must obey their parents, with God’s promise of a good and long life, Ephesians 6:1-3. The sole exception to this rule is Acts 5:29 that directs a child to obey God over his parents if they differ. (b) Second, we should obey the laws and ordinances of the secular world as Romans 13:1-5 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 direct, the sole exception being our need to obey God’s Word over man’s law if they differ, Acts 5:29. (c) Third, we should uphold law and order in local churches, what involves (+) our leaders obeying 1 Peter 5:2-4 by (-) taking oversight of God’s people willingly, (-) not greedy for money, but eager to serve the Lord, (-) not ruling as dictators, but leading by example to gain Christ’s eternal reward. (+) For those in the pew, Hebrews 13:17 directs that we obey those in authority over us in Christ for blessing. (d) We should practice law and order in the workplace, with (+) overseers treating subordinates with respect, knowing their accountability to God, and with (+) subordinates heeding their overseers as being in accountability to the Lord in doing so, Ephesians 6:5-9.

(3) The current Gaza Strip war (a) is properly understood by handling Scripture literally at Daniel 9:26-27. Accordingly, we view this war as part of the prolonged “war” and “desolations” state that was predicted to occur in Daniel 9:26c of the whole era between Christ’s crucifixion (v. 26b) and the start of the seven-year Tribulation Period under the antichrist (v. 27). Be assured that we believers in Christ in the Church era will not face the Tribulation Period, for Christ takes us to heaven in the pretribulation rapture before the antichrist is revealed in Daniel 9:27 according to 2 Thessalonians 2:6-14! (b) The current “war” and “desolations” state in Israel is God’s judgment for the nation’s rejection of Messiah Jesus, and this troubling state will end with Christ’s Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation Period to start His Millennial Kingdom with believing Hebrews and Gentiles, Zechariah 12:1-14:21.

[(4) As for the judgment against Mr. Trump, he would have avoided prosecution had he stated the true value of his properties in applying for his loans, so we must function “squeaky-clean” to avoid trouble from faultfinders.]

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we call on God to administer justice over unjust judges while heeding God’s Word ourselves.