

Biblical Authority- *Pleasing God*

Lesson 2: “*setting a plumb line in the midst of My people*” - *God’s Perfect Judgment*

God has the right to rule

Last week’s lesson introduced the topic of Biblical authority and God’s right to rule the universe. God demonstrated His absolute authority through the very act of creation and verified this right by His control over events and natural laws of the world. Today’s lesson presents the next logical concept in God’s right of rule; His authority to judge His creation.

God has the right to judge

Having authority necessitates a right to judge. Since time began, God has enforced His will. He rewarded those who pleased Him and punish those who elected to disobey. God once wiped the face of the earth clean through a flood, saving only 8 souls, seeing man’s defiance to Him (Gen 6:5). He even punished rebellious angels (Jude 6). The apostle Peter warns of another worldwide judgment (2 Pet 3:10-13). God has a right to judge. Will we be ready?

- **God’s judgment is real**

We will all be judged. The Hebrew writer guarantees that we will all meet two appointments; death and judgment (Heb 9:27). Our non-Christian friends understand the concept of death but they do not all believe in an actual spiritual judgment. Even if we acknowledge that every man will stand before the judgment seat of God, some rationalize that our final destination will somehow be negotiable. Through the use of a parable, Jesus teaches that at the point of death, our eternity is sealed (Luke 16:19-26). There is a literal Hell and a literal Heaven, whether we believe it or not. Men, in every generation, have mentally excused the unpleasantness of a horrifying judgment. The Hebrew writer warns that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb 10:28-31).

- **God’s judgment is according to Truth**

It took three visions from God for Amos to understand the necessity of a judgment against the children of Israel (Amos 7:1-8). God’s perfect verdict is compared to a surveyor’s plumb line, providing an undisputable standard for true measurement. “Setting a plumb line in the midst” of their lives exposed every failure, every flaw. Paul explains that God judges according to truth (Rom 2:2). When “truth” is placed against our lives, sin is exposed. God already knows our shortfalls; His revealed law is for us to see what He sees. Sin results in a failure to please God which leads to spiritual death (Rom 6:23).

Pleasing God means obeying Him

The discussion of our ultimate judgment is critical in a study of Biblical authority. We will be judged by God according to His standards. Through the scriptures, God tells us what is acceptable to Him and what is unacceptable. As we continue the study, we will discuss how to apply God's revealed Word in our lives and talk about possible reasons why people do not all see the teachings of the Bible alike? We must learn to please God and study what God finds pleasing. "As the Creator of the universe, the Father of our spirits and the Judge of Eternity, God has the right to command His will and enforce it as He chooses. As lowly and sinful creatures, we have the sole obligation to obey that will" (Jonas). God has promised that He will justify those who live out their earthly lives in obedient faith (Rom 3:23-26).

Questions:

1. Is there always an immediate consequence of disobeying God?
2. How does Rom 7:7 fit into a study of God's authority?
3. Are we responsible to make spiritual judgments in this life? Are we supposed to decide who we feel is in a right relationship with God? What is the difference between our judgment and God's ultimate judgment?
4. What reason did the Apostle Paul provide to the Galatians for the establishment of the Old Law (Gal 3:19)?
5. Is the act of being religious enough to be acceptable to God (Matt 7:21-23)?
6. Some do not fear God's presence. From Amos 5:18-19, when should we fear?