

Message #57 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Who Is The Judge Of God?"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. And thanks for the inquiries. It's always nice to hear from our listeners. I especially like the questions. In fact, if you have a question concerning a certain subject in the Bible, please let me know. I'm always looking for direction as to what message to use for the next program. Who knows, maybe your question is a question other people are looking for but are afraid to ask. Anyway, if it is something that can be presented in our weekly broadcast, I may do that. But if not, I'll answer you directly. So write to me, either by regular mail or by e-mail, and I'll respond either on the air or directly to you, or both. Listen at the end of our broadcast and Kim will give you the addresses. Now, let's go on with our subject for today.

Have you ever thought how much human beings love to be in control? I mean, we humans have a natural tendency toward telling other people how something should be done. Whether we realize it or not, we like to supervise. No, not everyone does this overtly, but almost everyone does it to some extent. One of the ways we do this is to find fault with other people. Then we either discuss this with others, or think about it within ourselves, expressing our opinions as to how others should act or speak. In some sense, this is not a bad trait. However, it can easily get out of hand. Rather than just recognizing people's actions and words for what they are, and acknowledging whether they are proper social and spiritual responses or not, sometimes we, and yes, I do mean we, attempt to fix the situation. This is where we make the transition between judging whether something is right or wrong, to attempting to take authority over the situation.

In the Bible, we see that there is a definite line of authority. Authority is important to God. First of all, if there were no line of authority than God would not be all powerful. He would not be the

Almighty God, but would only be a lesser god who was subject to other authority. I, personally, like to worship an Almighty God. I would have a real hard time worshipping any god other than the supreme God of the universe, for unless God is supreme, how would I know I would not become subject to a greater god at a later date? I'm fairly certain that you would not like to worship anyone who was not all powerful, either. We could end up in real trouble if God was not Almighty, especially in times when we found ourselves in a lot of trouble.

But sometimes people complain about how God does things. Sometimes people speak out about the things that God has done, or things that God has promised to accomplish in the future, and they may give the impression that they don't think God is being fair. This is an interesting concept. We're talking here about a God, who is so awesome that we can't even imagine the extent of his existence. We can't even imagine God not having a beginning or end. To have a God who has always existed is outside of man's ability to understand. And then on the other hand, we ourselves are human beings. We only exist because God created us. Let alone not existing always, we don't even live all that long. In fact, as soon as we're born, we begin the process of deterioration and a journey toward death. And we're powerless to do anything about it. In comparison to God we are puny. And that's putting it mildly. Yet, we humans have this ridiculous tendency to put God on trial. We actually find ourselves acting and speaking in a manner that is ludicrous, and sometimes take upon ourselves the role of judges, with God as the defendant.

But the day God actually goes on trial will never come. We are the ones that are on trial. That's what this life is all about. We are being tried to see if we are found to be innocent or guilty. And even when we think we are acting as a judge, we are actually only giving testimony concerning our own goodness or wickedness. That's because God is the judge, and we aren't.

In Numbers, chapter 31, we have an interesting bit of history concerning the Children of Israel and the Midianites. Receiving instructions from God, Moses sent the Children of Israel to war against the Midianites, and they went. But on their return, Moses saw that they had brought back the women and children as captives. Now, the purpose of the war had been specifically to avenge the Lord for the wickedness of the Midianite people, for it was through the Midianites that wicked temptations had overcome Israel. Moses was angry with the Israelites because they had not destroyed all the inhabitants of Midian, and issued orders to kill every captive male child, and every woman who was not a virgin. Now, we can easily see that this is an extreme situation. We know that Moses was not acting independently, but that God was the authority working through him. Therefore, we must realize that God ordered the deaths of not only older men and women, but also little boys.

I suppose many Christians have never read the whole Bible. And, I suppose that many Christians have never read these specific verses, or at least never stopped and thought much about them. But if you have, then you may have had questions concerning God's reasons for doing something like this. But before we go on further, let's take a look at a few other verses in the Bible. In Deuteronomy, chapter 20, we have an interesting directive from the Lord. Through Joshua, the leader of Israel who succeeded Moses, God told the Israelites that when they defeated people who lived in far distant cities from Israel, they could keep the women, children and cattle for

themselves. However, when they went to battle against a city in their own vicinity, they were not to allow the women or even the children to live. In fact, they were instructed that for these cities which were close to them they were to utterly destroy anything that breathed. Here again is an incidence of God requiring the complete destruction of anything which might possibly cause a future corruption of his people.

And one more example of this is found in 1 Samuel 15:2-3, where God, through the prophet Samuel, instructs King Saul to go out to battle against the Amorites. God explicitly instructs King Saul to kill everything that breathes. Not just every domestic animal of the Amorites, but also every man, woman, little child, and even nursing babies.

Now, you might think this is a bit harsh on God's part. However, we should make note here that the Amorites were a wicked nation. The reason God called for their annihilation was because he wanted to destroy the wickedness so completely that it would never again corrupt his people. And, there's another reason why God brought this to pass. It was to show us that he means business when he says he is going to utterly destroy the wicked people of earth. When God makes us a promise of eternal life with him if we will accept him and his son Jesus Christ, he means it. And in addition to this, when he makes a promise to send all the wicked people to hell, he means it.

But there are some out there who claim that God is unfair. They claim that God has no right to destroy people just because they are a threat to righteousness. But, I guess the question I would ask, is, "who's bigger, you or God?" The bottom line is that God is God, whether you like it or not. But the great thing is that he's not only a big God, but that he is a righteous God. And it is because of this very righteousness that God must do what he does. I don't know if you've ever thought of it this way, but what if God didn't destroy wickedness completely? What if he allowed just a little bit of wickedness to continue without ever destroying it? What if he allowed evil to continue to exist forever because he hated to see anyone suffer? If this were the case he would not be a God you could depend on to protect you from wickedness. You would be at the mercy of Satan forever.

God's word makes it very clear that his purpose is not to exist for man's sake, but his purpose is that man should exist for God's sake. Some people can believe that God created the heavens and the earth, and they can believe that God created man. But then they also believe that God is such a softy that he would never make anyone go to hell. But if he wouldn't, than his word is a lie, because his word specifically says that the wicked were created for the day of evil. He says very plainly in the Bible that he hates the wicked. Yes, God is a God of love, but the bottom line here again is that God is a God of love to those who love him, but not to those who reject him.

Many people refuse to accept God's ultimate authority, and continue to live the way they want to live and to deny that God has any authority over them. But, God is a great God. He is an awesome God. He is a God that can open up the earth and cause man to be swallowed up. He is a God that can rain fire down from heaven and consume evil men. And, in addition to this, he is the judge of all things, and he, and he alone, will determine what is evil and what is righteous.

No matter what man does, and no matter what man says, the end result is that God is God, and man is man.

In scripture there is a concept concerning the sin of trespassing. The Israelites were required to bring a sacrifice to God whenever they transgressed against God in the form of trespassing. To trespass means to walk without invitation on someone else's territory. It means to enter into someone else's borders without their approval. Let me give you an example of this.

Let's say that you live next door to a sheep farmer. One day you look out your window and see your neighbor's sheep, and you observe that the wool on your neighbor's sheep is quite long. Let's say that you decide that those sheep are in need of a good clip job. So, you put on your best sheep shearing clothes, grab your sheep shearing clippers, and head over to your neighbor's farm. About 20 minutes later the sheep farmer comes into the barn and sees you shearing his sheep. It's about this time that your neighbor says, "What in the world do you think you're doing?" Now, I think you see this picture, and I think you understand what I'm getting at. No amount of persuasion is going to convince your neighbor that you have the right to shear his sheep just because you think they need it. I think you realize that your neighbor would waste little time giving his opinion concerning your mental abilities. In short, he would explain to you that you were trespassing, because you were taking liberties which were clearly within the borders of your neighbors territory and therefore under his authority and not yours. I'm also certain that if you happened to be the sheep farmer, and someone else came onto your property and began to take the authority that was clearly yours, you would strongly disapprove of their actions, too.

It's no different when God is the authority and you trespass against him. Can you imagine how ridiculous it would be to tell God that you've decided to shear his sheep because you think it needs to be done? If God is the Almighty God, which means the All Powerful God, then he is the authority over all things. Anytime you go against the authority of God you're trespassing on his territory. If everything belongs to God than his borders reach into infinity. And if his borders reach into infinity there is nowhere you can tread without trespassing unless you are given permission to walk there.

However, God does give people permission to tread within his gates, but only in a limited fashion. He appoints kings and presidents, but they only rule within the areas of authority he has set for them, for no power exists but that which is of God.

So, let's go back to the example of the sheep shearing, and alter the example just slightly. Let's say that instead of you being a neighbor of the sheep farmer, you are an employee of his. And let's say that you have been given authority by the sheep farmer to shear the sheep when you deem that it is necessary to do so. Using this scenario we can envision the situation where the sheep farmer comes into the barn and finds you shearing his sheep. This time he will not be upset, but thankful. He will appreciate that you are doing that which he asked you to do.

Clearly, it is necessary to realize your place of authority with God, and also to realize when he has given it and when he has not. Because God owns everything, we have no legal or moral right to make our own decisions concerning anything in this world. The only way we have a right to

do this is within the scope of God's will. And God's will is very clearly and specifically spelled out in his word. It makes no difference if you see it a different way. It is still God's will that prevails because he owns everything. The only way you have a right to even exist within his borders is by his permission. Although this is a simple concept, many people make the mistake of not recognizing God's omnipotence. They assume they have as much right to their own opinion as God has to his.

But, God is a jealous God. He will not allow others to determine what is right and what is wrong. He has established righteousness according to his own terms. When some puny human being comes along and decides to establish a different set of rules, God laughs at them. And he will have the last laugh. No human is going to change the times and laws that God has established. The Bible tells us in Daniel, chapter 7, about the horn that rises up among the 10 horns of a fourth beast. It tells us that this evil entity will attempt to change those times and decrees that God has established. The Bible clearly tells us that this horn of the fourth beast will not be allowed to change what God has established, and that this wicked thing will be destroyed.

Now let me ask a question. Is there anyone listening to this who thinks that God would destroy the power of this great horn, yet, allow some human to change the times and laws that God has established? I don't think so. But sometimes people don't really try consciously to change God's laws and decrees, they just ignore them. Sometimes people never stop to think of God's ultimate authority. Sometimes they just go around in a daze and do things that are truly stupid. Human beings seem to be smart enough that they would never step into a boxing ring with another person who is twice as big as they are, and twice as fast. They can clearly comprehend that this would not be such a good choice to make. Yet, they do the same thing with God. They challenge God to a duel, and expect to come out a winner. But know this, no man will ever come out the winner if they go against the power of God. God is not only the judge, but he also wrote the laws. He is the one who determines what he likes and what he doesn't like. And if he doesn't like what you're doing, he's not going to look the other way. And in fact, if you're reasonably intelligent, and you really do want to worship God, then you would never want God to do anything else except to destroy wickedness, no matter where, or in who, you find it.

Just imagine worshiping a God that was more concerned that a wicked person might suffer than he was concerned about one of his own children suffering. Imagine what would happen to God's kingdom of righteousness if even one tiny bit of wickedness was allowed to remain. That one tiny bit of wickedness would then exist to contaminate righteousness. Just as the wickedness of other nations contaminated the righteousness of Israel in the time of the Old Testament, any wickedness in the eternal future would also act like a disease and contaminate us. So, what remains is that wickedness cannot be ignored. In fact, what would you think if you went to God and complained that a wicked nation was persecuting you and God replied that he was sorry you were suffering but that he didn't want to cause the wicked people any actual discomfort? In short, you would be angry. You would remind God that he had promised to take care of you and to protect you against wicked men.

God's promises to us are only going to be accomplished if wickedness is ultimately destroyed. There is no way that eternal joy with God in heaven is ever going to come to pass if any

wickedness is allowed to exist in any form. Those who claim that God is unrighteous when he destroys the little children of wicked nations are the same people who would complain to God that the wicked nation's children had grown up and were now hurting their own children. You can't have it both ways in a kingdom of righteousness. The warfare that we are experiencing in this world is a warfare between good and evil. If you want God to go soft on wickedness, then you are not on God's side. You may not be on the devil's side, but if you're complaining that Satan is too concerned with wickedness and that God is too concerned with righteousness, then who are you going to appeal to when the final battle is over? If you don't approve of God's handling of the affairs of this world, how could you stand to live with God for eternity? In addition to this, what do you think God will think about you when you continue to complain about his right to make decisions about human beings?

There are a lot of people in the world today, and even many of them professing Christians, who are straddling the fence when it comes to God's authority. But fence straddlers are not Christians. They are just basically people who do not believe that God is a righteous God. They do not believe that God has the right to be the all powerful God. These people will go to their eventual fate in the lake of fire because they only professed to believe in God, but did not truly believe God's claim to righteousness. Being righteous means to be right. If you call God wrong for anything that he does, you are actually insinuating that God is not really right, but only partially right. Even if you believe God is mostly right, but not completely right in what he does, you are not truly a follower of him. If you say that God is not a righteous God, as he says that he is, then you are calling God a liar. This is not a healthy place for a person to be.

God is the ultimate authority. He is also the righteous judge who will determine the fate of every last person on earth. God doesn't have to do things our way, but only has to be true to his word. If someone chooses to ignore the destructive power of God, because they don't think it is right to destroy children or babies, then maybe they should consider whether or not they truly understand what it means to be a God who detests wickedness so much. God hates sin. He hates sin so much that he became a man and suffered the excruciating death of a man in order to destroy the power of sin. If he has gone to this extreme in order to destroy evil, do you actually think that he would ever consent to allow sin to take a foothold in the world again? Besides, if flesh and blood will not inherit eternal life, then why is flesh and blood such a precious thing to God's children? Sometimes people put more emphasis on the value of human flesh than they do on righteousness.

Let me leave you today with a scripture. It's found in Luke 14:26. It reads, "If any man comes to me, and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." God is not talking about hating everyone, but when we compare the righteousness of God, we must look at anyone else who opposes God as if we hated them. If we choose to love someone else more than we love God, even if it is our own children, then we are not worthy to be followers of God. God is calling his people to reject that which is of the flesh, that which is of this carnal world, and be born again in spirit. If you truly are born again in spirit, you will realize that flesh and blood is not where it's all at. But God is a spirit. When the end comes, if you value flesh and blood over the righteousness of God, you will not be judged to be a child of God, but an enemy of God. And the enemies of God, whether

they approve of God's actions or not, will find themselves suffering the same fate as those other flesh and blood people who were children of wickedness. No, I'm sure there is no one who likes to see anyone destroyed, whether they are adults or children. But I'm also sure that God has made it absolutely clear by his written word that when the end comes he will not go soft on wickedness. He only promises eternal life to those who completely accept him. All others have been, and will be, damned.