

The God of Judgment

By Don Green

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Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

We gather this evening to return to our study of the Psalms. Psalm 75 is our text for this evening and I'd invite you to turn there with me. This is kind of the classic illustration of is the glass half empty or is it half full? After tonight we'll either be halfway finished with the Psalms or we'll have half of them left to go after starting about four years ago. So this is a bit of a milestone and I've enjoyed every one of them.

Psalm 75. Let me read it as we begin.

1 We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks, For Your name is near;
Men declare Your wondrous works. 2 "When I select an appointed time, It
is I who judge with equity. 3 The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I
who have firmly set its pillars. Selah. 4 I said to the boastful, 'Do not
boast,' And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn; 5 Do not lift up your
horn on high, Do not speak with insolent pride.'" 6 For not from the east,
nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation; 7 But God is the
Judge; He puts down one and exalts another. 8 For a cup is in the hand of
the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this;
Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. 9
But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of
Jacob. 10 And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, But the horns of
the righteous will be lifted up.

This Psalm speaks of God as the God of judgment and if you're taking notes, that's the title of tonight's Psalm, "The God of Judgment" here in Psalm 75. Psalm 74 ended with a plea for justice against the enemies. If you look up to verses 22 and 23 of Psalm 74, it says,

22 Arise, O God, and plead Your own cause; Remember how the foolish
man reproaches You all day long. 23 Do not forget the voice of Your
adversaries, The uproar of those who rise against You which ascends
continually.

The compilation of the Psalter is a matter of interest to me, why was each Psalm placed in the particular sequence that it was, and we can't always tell and determine that, certainly

not through the whole sweep of all 150 Psalms, but sometimes you can see that Psalms were intentionally placed back-to-back because of the way or even in longer sequence, because of the way that they respond to one another and common themes carry over from one Psalm to the next and that is the case with Psalm 74 and Psalm 75. In Psalm 74, we saw that the psalmist was praying that God would return and deliver them. It was a prayer for justice, a prayer for deliverance in the midst of the destruction of the land by enemies, and so at the end of Psalm 74, it prays for God to rise up against the enemy. Well, now here in Psalm 75, you see the answer of God to that prayer and Psalm 75 is a grateful recognition of God's role as Judge and it also has God's declaration that he will indeed judge the wicked when his time comes.

And you know, the more that we go through the Psalms, I hope that you're starting to see more and more, it's very common and it's proper and right for people in times of hardship to turn to the Psalms and to look for comfort in them, but as you study the Psalms systematically what you find is that they are presenting a comprehensive worldview that helps you interpret all of life and Psalm 75 is like that. In the midst of setbacks, in the midst of the prosperity of the wicked when it seems as though the people of God are on the downturn, the people of God are being marginalized and the wicked and those who oppose the name of God and oppose Scripture are elevated, it's easy to wonder how long is this going to go on and where is God in all of this. Well, what you find in the Psalms and in Psalm 75 in particular is a steadfast certainty that God reigns over all and that in his good and sovereign wisdom and good and sovereign time, he will exercise his judgment and make things right in the end and we must have that as the formative principle that informs our view of the future and even our view of the present, you could say, that in the end God's sovereignty will prevail and the seeming injustices of the present day will be righted. He will make things right in the end and we know that to be true because he is God, he is righteous, he is sovereign and he is the God of judgment, and the wicked, you could say, are living on borrowed time, to use a very kind of crass picture of it. God has already stepped on the air hose of the wicked and they are breathing on borrowed oxygen that will not last them long, and God delays his judgment only long enough to give them opportunity to repent. God, mark it as that which determines your view of the future, that God will judge at his appointed time. He will put down the wicked and he will raise up the righteous and that is more than sufficient motivation and comfort for you and I to persevere in the midst of a hostile world, in the midst of a hostile environment, in the midst of personal setbacks. That's all we need to know. That's all that we need to know. We don't need to know how our circumstances turn out in the end, it's enough to know who God is because knowing that determines the outcome for us.

So in light of those lofty themes, this Psalm warns the wicked to repent and it encourages the righteous to praise and what I would have you see is that the call to the wicked to repent and the call to the righteous to praise is rooted in a single common reality. Both responses are rooted in the fact that it is the God of the Bible who is the God of judgment and all that that means.

So let's look at it, I think there are three points to tonight's message. That's usually my default. I know that some people wonder if I'm actually able of counting to four based on

the number of points that I put into my messages, and I can, 1, 2, 3, 4, just to prove the point, but we have three headings for tonight's assimilation of this Psalm. It opens with point 1: a word of thanks from the people. A word of thanks from the people of God. It opens on a triumphant note of thanksgiving and it gives the reason or the grounds for their thanks.

Look at verse 1 with me as I read from the New American Standard version.

1 We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks,

Repeated for emphasis. This is an emphatic declaration of gratitude given to God. "We give thanks. Yes, I'll say it again, O God, we give you thanks," and he gives the reason for his thanks as he opens here,

For Your name is near; Men declare Your wondrous works.

The ground or the reason for which he gives thanks in this Psalm is the fact that the name of God is near and in this context, the name is a representation of his presence. The name indicates that God is everywhere near and as a result, as we see this Psalm unfold, his judgments on the wicked are inescapable. It's not that the wicked operate in a realm that is outside the view of God, it's not that they operate somewhere that is outside the exercise of his authority. As we said, the wicked conduct their sinful ways on borrowed time and the fact that they flourish for a time, the fact that they have the upper hand for a season is no indication that God has lost his righteous rule. His help for the righteous is certain to come and his judgment on the wicked is inescapable.

And beloved, rooted in all of those things is a great and profound reality that we have to settle in our minds and the beauty of you being here this evening, some of you in the midst of a bit of trial, some of you just in the midst of a period of calm in your life, beloved, I can't tell you how critical it is for you to be doing what you're doing here tonight, hearing the word of God and taking it in in a period of relative peace and calm certainly as we sit here this evening and certainly for that period of time that some of you are enjoying in your life. It is in the midst of such calm times that we are able to look at Scripture with a clear mind, develop our understanding and our resulting convictions about what it says and say, "Yes, this is what I believe. This is what Scripture teaches. This is where I rest my heart. This is where my convictions and my loyalties will always lie. I will live," you say to yourself, "I will live to believe these things, to teach these things, to defend these things, to live by faith in these things, to live by faith in the Christ who is the culmination of all of them." And as you do that with a Psalm like Psalm 75, it starts to dawn on you, it starts to take root in your heart and in your thinking and in your worldview a recognition that your life is not accidental, your life is not unplanned, you are not subject to random chaotic forces that are beyond anyone's control. They may seem unplanned to you, they may strike you at times that you are not expecting, but you come to Scripture and you realize that as this Psalm praises him for, this God of the Bible is the God who is near. He is the God who reigns over all and, beloved, mark this, imprint it deeply on your thought and heart and mind, that come what may, whatever else might

happen in life with us, with you, God's sovereign knowledge and God's sovereign care undergird the entire world. God's sovereign knowledge and his sovereign care undergird the entire world. Your life is not an unplanned sequence of random events, randomly bouncing from wall to wall, your life is unfolding according to a plan that God established for you before the foundation of the world. That includes the joys, it includes the sorrows, it includes every point in between. Your relationships that God brings to you are not random and chaotic. There is a purpose in them. Why do we know that? Because God is near. In all that happens, God is near. His presence is manifested and expressed through everything that happens everywhere for all time.

Look, if you will, at Psalm 23. David in this far more famous some of Psalm 23, finds his comforts and finds his courage. Notice the alliteration to help you remember. His comfort and his courage in life is grounded on the reality of the presence of God, that unbroken present, the omnipresence of God so that in Psalm 23:4 he can say,

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil.

Why? How can you say that, David, if your enemies are all around you? "I fear no evil because I know how it's all going to turn out in the end." That's not what he says. "I fear no evil, for You are with me." In other words, You are near, "Your rod and your staff, representative of God's sovereign control, God's sovereign power, God's sovereign care, his discipline and his care, "God, the fact that you are sovereign like you are and that you are near and you are a God of comfort to me, you're a God of provision to me, you're a God of guidance to me, therefore I am confident as I look to the future. I am not afraid," David says, "How could I be afraid when the God who is sovereign and good and wise and in perfect control has set his affection on me and uses his rod and his staff to guarantee my protection no matter where I go forward?"

Now, beloved, I know that you've quoted Psalm 23 multiple times in your life. That's great. Psalm 23 is a passage that I almost always turn to in pastoral visits simply because it is so familiar. I like to take people to familiar words when they are in times of distress because the stability of that gives them strength in a way that I think is unique to perhaps a Psalm like Psalm 23. But you know this Psalm, what we want to move onto is to move beyond those words to what they mean and to the implications that they have for the way that we think about all of life. David said, "I fear no evil, for You are with me." The one racked in pain on his bed could say, "I fear not the doctor's report, for You are with me." The one isolated and alone says, "I fear no evil, for You are with me." The one betrayed by friends says, "I fear no evil, for You are with me." The one on the beginning cusp of life facing challenges that are exhilarating looks forward with confidence, "I fear no evil, for You are with me. You are with me. You are near."

You see, and I'll ask you rhetorically the question that I know the answer to but I ask you to reflect upon the fact, do you believe that to be true? Do you believe that God is near, Christian, you who have put your repose, your faith in Christ alone for the salvation of your soul? You who have been born again by the Spirit of God? You who belong to him

eternally? Do you believe that he is near as you are walking step-by-step through your life? I know that you say to that, "Yes, I do." What we're saying tonight is that that has consequences. That is like having a string of dominoes set up on a table and you say, "I believe that God is near." You have just flicked the first domino and a lot of other things fall in response to that. Your view of life is changed. Your fear of the future is challenged as being inconsistent with what you say is the fundamental conviction of your heart, and on it goes. We don't fear the rise and prevalence of wicked politicians. You can supply the "R" or the "D" according to your predilections. I don't care about that. We don't fear what they do because they exercise their little bit and realm and temporary hold of authority under the sovereign hand of God and he will take what they do and God will judge it, God will bring it to the outcome that he has appointed. He is doing that in everything that happens therefore David says, "I fear no evil, for You are with me."

Go back to Psalm 75. You see the parallel response that goes with that. "I fear no evil, for You are with me. We give thanks to You, O God, For Your name is near." And these convictions are not abstractions. These are the reason that we live. This is the core of what it means to be a Bible-believing Christian is to trust in these things and to gear our thinking and our lives around them. And I'll say, beloved, this is not the refuge that you go to after everything else has failed and you say, "Well, I've tried to fix this on my own and I thought the election would come out differently and I thought our finances would be different and I thought this relationship would go differently, now that it hasn't, now I'll turn to God." No. No, that's the exact reverse. If Don Bellamy, our friend with railroad days experience were here, I would gladly say that's putting the caboose before the engine. You see, you don't put this knowledge that God is near on the shelf and just pull it down in time of need, this is what you base all of life on. This is the engine that pulls everything else.

And as we consider God's name here in verse 1, he says, "Your name is near," God's name highlights the close connection with Psalm 74 as the enemy in Psalm 74 reviles and rejects the name of God. Look at Psalm 74:7, for example,

7 They have burned Your sanctuary to the ground; They have defiled the dwelling place of Your name.

Verse 10,

10 How long, O God, will the adversary revile, And the enemy spurn Your name forever?

The people of God were dealing with the destruction of their place of worship, the place where God infested his presence. By all external appearance, the presence of God was not near, it had just been destroyed.

Verse 18,

18 Remember this, O LORD, that the enemy has reviled, And a foolish people has spurned Your name.

And in verse 21,

21 Let not the oppressed return dishonored; Let the afflicted and needy praise Your name.

"God, here we are afflicted and needy, here we are with the enemy prospering and exulting over their conquest of us, God, I appeal to your name, I appeal to your presence, I appeal to the fullness of your character to come and vindicate this situation. Now, when we talk about God's name, often we talk about it as being representative of the fullness of his character, the fullness of his attributes, and that's accurate and that's probably the predominant sense in which it's used. Here, however, it seems to be a little bit different and be speaking about his nearness and his presence which would simply be a manifestation of him and all of his attributes anyway.

But what Psalm 75 therefore is saying, beloved, is this. I say this often and I want to say it again: it is a great blessing to my heart that you all are so faithful to be here on Tuesdays. I can't tell you how glad I am to God for that, how grateful I am to share in this kind of fellowship together, and I'm grateful for what it means about your love for the word of God and what it means about the direction of your spiritual life. You know, people don't come out on Tuesdays to hear an hour of Bible teaching unless the word of God means something to them and you manifest that week after week after week. So it's a privilege for me to stand and open God's word here and to be able to share in this kind of fellowship around his word with you. I love you. I love this church. I love what this church stands for and I look forward to what God is going to do in the future. Why? Why can I look forward? Why can I fear no evil? Because his name is near.

Psalm 75 shows us by its teaching that God is not a remote deity who is uninvolved in the affairs of men. Psalm 75 coming on the heels as it does of Psalm 74, is a declaration that God is not indifferent to attacks on his name. The Bible records his intervention in life. He delivers his people. He judges their enemies in time and space. This is not a mere abstraction, this is not a theory, this is not some kind of abstract philosophy that we're dealing with. It's not that God can do this if he wants to but he really doesn't, it's that God can do this and as a demonstration of the fact that he can do it, he has done it in time and space in the past in real historical events. In Old Testament days, they would look back again and again at the way that God rescued them from Egypt and they would see the point clearly. Each year as they celebrated the Passover, they would remember how God had delivered them in time and space, as Peter says, I believe it's in 2 Peter. It's so important for us to understand this. We do not follow cleverly devised tales. We are not grounding our lives in foolish myths that somebody has made up in order to control and manipulate others. We are grounding our life in the God, in the Christ who has manifested himself in history, revealed himself in the word, conquered sin and Satan and death at the cross of Calvary, and has risen from the dead on the third day, now ascended on high where he intercedes for his saints at the right hand of God. That's what we

ground our lives on so I ask you, do you believe that? Well, that has a lot of consequences, then, about the way that you view the world and the way that you view what happens to you in life.

Now, here in Psalm 75, the consequence is we give thanks, "We give thanks for all of these realities, O God, of who you are." Now, secondly, our second point for this evening is a word of assurance and warning from God. A word of assurance and warning from God. In the structure of this particular Psalm, God now responds to their praise with a word of assurance to the righteous and in light of how we have approached this here this evening and in the way of just saying is this what we believe, yes it is, we believe God is near, we trust in that, we believe in the coming of Christ once and the coming of Christ again, we believe in all of these things and there is an assurance that the word of God would offer to men and women of faith like that. God here responds to the faith and thanksgiving expressed in verse 1 as the Psalm turns to the first person singular and God himself speaks. Psalm 75:2,

2 "When I select an appointed time, It is I who judge with equity. 3 The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I who have firmly set its pillars. Selah.

In other words, think about what was just said in these past two verses. God says, "I judge with equity. It's me. No one else. I am the one who does this and," he says there in verse 3, when he brings his judgment, the power of this is stupendous; the assertion of sovereignty in this is magnificent. God says, "When I judge with equity, here's what happens, the earth and all who dwell in it melt. Just like the wax of a candle burns before the flame on top of it and is powerless to resist the heat brought to bear upon it, so the earth and all of its inhabitants can only disperse, can only yield to this God who is the God of judgment."

So God here emphatically affirms that it is he and he alone who judges and the great certainty that belongs alongside this is what he says at the open of verse 2 there, he says, "When I select an appointed time." This is awe-inspiring in the greatness of the sovereignty that God asserts and how it lifts this principle beyond the realm of time and places it in the realm of God's sovereign decisions, God's sovereign plan alone. God judges – watch this – God judges not in response to the immediate provocation of men. He does not judge in immediate response to the provocation of his enemies. God judges at the time that pleases him. When he thinks it's time to judge, he'll judge and no one will stand in his way when he does. The lofty nature of the power of this God of judgment is great beyond all human imagination.

You've probably seen as I have, interacted with people, I remember many many years ago being in some venue where witnessing was going on and there was some drunken fool that was in the place, heard what was going on and just began foully profaning the name of our precious Lord Jesus in our presence, and the sense as I recall it now today was as he was saying, "If your God is so great, let him judge me now. Let him strike me dead right now." Sinful people in their effort to mock the God of the Bible, profane his name

like that when their sin or their alcohol carries them away into the outer recesses of depravity and wickedness, and they think that if God was who he says he is, that he would judge them immediately as if they could provoke God to act against them, and if he doesn't, then it proves their point either that he doesn't exist or he doesn't care or he's not present or he's not powerful enough to deal with them, and they vaunt themselves against the holiness of God and point as proof that he didn't just judge them for their blasphemies that they had just uttered. This foolishness is a complete misunderstanding of who God is and how his judgment operates. God will judge you in time, sinner, mark it for certain, but he'll mark you in the time that he finds appropriate, not the one that you try to provoke him to. That's how great and how sovereign he is.

In the meantime, look at Psalm 2. What does God do in the meantime not just with drunken individuals mocking the Gospel being shared with them, this is God's attitude toward the nations. Psalm 2:1,

1 Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel
together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
3 "Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"

"We are the ones who are sovereign here. We mock, we reject the name of God. We will cast aside his yoke. Thus we have spoken. We are kings on the earth." What's God's response?

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.

He's not provoked by them as if they could make him act contrary to his timetable, as if he had to respond to their foolish words in the moment. He laughs at the arrogance and the foolish pride that animates them to think that they can rise up against the sovereign God. So he laughs at them, this is an absurdity, and his time of judgment will come when he is ready.

Go back to Psalm 75. It's a fearful thing to see these things. Really it is. Here in Psalm 75:3 God says, "The earth and all who dwell in it melt," and is if to prove his point, he says, "It is I who have firmly set its pillars." It's a metaphor for the fact that God is the Creator of the earth. God created this world on which these arrogant men walk. God gives them their breath even as they are voicing their blasphemies. God is the one who appointed the days of their existence, and the thought here is that since God had the power to create the earth, he certainly has the power to preserve and govern the earth and all who are within it. So from Psalm 74, the reviling of the enemy, you move into this new chamber in the revelation of God, if you want to put it that way, and realize that from this chamber of chaos that Psalm 74 describes, you're now in the realm of absolute control in the chamber of Psalm 75 and you realize that whatever it looked like in Psalm 74, it was not a sacrifice of the sovereignty of God, it was not that he had lost control, he's just accomplishing his purposes in ways that seem perplexing to the eyes of men. But he created the earth. He gives life to men. He rules over all. He's the God who is near and

therefore the fact that they revile his name in time cannot possibly be an indication that he's lost control or that somehow sinful men have the upper hand. "Perish the thought. Out on the suggestion," as Martyn Lloyd-Jones said in another context. The earth melts before the judgment of God because it cannot resist it.

Beloved, to say that God is near is a recognition that God is the one who sustains life. He guides all the events of human affairs and what may seem chaotic to us in the moment is simply unfolding according to the plan that God knows, that God sees, that God is directing, that God will culminate. This changes life. Don't ever let anyone tell you that theology doesn't matter. If your theology says that God is sovereign like this, it shapes the way that you think and respond to everything. If you think that God is just responding and playing a chess match with Satan, Satan made a move, "God, you're in check. Now what are you going to do?" "I don't know. I've got to figure this one out." Then you are going to have a completely different view of the world. If you think as charismatics are taught to think, if you think that your life is subject to some kind of an independent authority of Satan to inflict harm upon you at his will and you've got to bind him and chase him around in order to protect yourself, you're going to live in a completely different way than someone who understands that God is sovereign and he is sovereign even over Satan, and if Satan is at work in something, God is simply using him as a tool to accomplish his own purposes just like he did in Job 1:2, and the following 40 verses of that great book of the Bible. You see, this all matters. That's what I'm trying to get you to see. You see it, don't you, Larry? This all matters. This changes everything.

Having assured the righteous in verses 2 and 3 that he is still on his throne, God now turns his piercing gaze and his piercing words to the wicked. Look at verses 4 and 5 with me, and he gives them a warning as he says in verse 4, still speaking in the first person,

4 "I said to the boastful, 'Do not boast,' And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn; 5 Do not lift up your horn on high, Do not speak with insolent pride.'"

"Horn" here is a word picture. It's a metaphor of strength and pride. Wild the oxen will toss the horns on their head about in a show of strength. Their horns are weapons of battle for them, weapons of intimidation to them, and God uses that very vivid word picture to speak to the wicked about the tools of their trade: their boastful pride, their threats, their blasphemies, and in context God is warning them, God is telling them, "Stop! Submit. Do not try to resist my judgment which I have just described as that which the earth melts before." It's a call to repentance. It's an invitation to mercy. He calls them to silence in his presence because their human power cannot resist the Creator of the earth.

Sometimes I dream about places where I would really love to preach that will never happen, but I would love to preach something like that before the United Nations and all of the leaders of the world and just be a voice to articulate, be a tongue to speak these glories of God to men in power. God hasn't given that realm to me but he's given this realm to me and I'm grateful for that as I've already said. But just to declare on God's behalf a warning to people who despise, reject and test him, to warn them tinged with

mercy, "Stop! You are on a path of self-destruction. You are sealing your own doom with your unrepentant heart. You foolishly believe that you can prevail. Don't you realize that your life is but a vapor, a mist that will blow away in the next puff of wind that comes? Don't you realize that? Think about what you're doing and turn away from this path of destruction before it's too late. Still your horns of opposition and instead bow your neck, bow your horns before this great God who set the pillars on the earth, this God of judgment who is near while there is still time."

Perhaps one here this evening who needs to hear that same word and invitation of warning, of repentance before it's too late. Rouse yourself out of your slumber and recognize that this God against whom you have been sinning, this God that you have been ignoring and resisting and treating as a casual matter, is the great God of judgment who is near who is not afraid to unveil the fury of his power when the time comes, but now in this brief season of opportunity, extends to you the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and appeals to you in mercy. Come to Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. The doors of mercy are open. You do not have to collapse into the pit. All of these things are invoked by what we see here in Psalm 75.

Well, thirdly, our final point for this evening is you see a word of trust from the people. In response to what God has said, the people now respond in faith. They confess their faith in verse 6. Now God has spoken about in the third person as opposed to being the one who is speaking in the first person. Verse 6,

6 For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation; 7 But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another.

Look at verse 7 again with me, "He puts down one and exalts another." These verses are a recognition that God is the one who disposes and orders the outworking of human affairs. If a man has power and authority, it is only because God has given it to him for a time. In any realm that you want to consider, God is the one who lifts a man up, God is the one who puts another man down. Haman in the book of Esther was second in charge to the king, was prepared to hang Mordecai and to exterminate the Jews, not realizing that the king's queen was a Jew herself, and he was exalted and he was prepared to hang Mordecai on a gallows that he had built, lifted up, and within 24 hours his own neck was sacrificed on the gallows. You can read that in the book of Esther. God lifts one up, casts another down. Time and circumstance are not a barrier to his ability to do that.

So from the sunrise in the east to the sunset in the west, anyway that you look under the realm under which moves under the orbit of the sun, you can find no ultimate strength in the world. There is no one to rise up out of a desert wilderness place to come and be the deliverer. So what God's people are saying here in this section of the Psalm, "God, we are not looking to the world for our strength, for answers to our problems, we are looking up to you alone who are the Judge because we understand as we've been going through this Psalm," the people of God are saying, "we understand that you alone are the Judge. You determine what stands therefore our eyes are fixed on you."

That theme was echoed by two women in the Bible. If you want to turn and we'll look at these quickly in 1 Samuel 2, these words were on the lips of Hannah, this theme was on her lips when this dear woman who had been barren had been given a son in response to her prayers by the sovereign Lord. And we don't have time to go through her entire song of thanksgiving but look at chapter 2, verse 7, 1 Samuel 2:7. He says,

7 "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. 8 He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them. 9 He keeps the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; For not by might shall a man prevail. 10 ... The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed."

In response to this magnificent answer to prayer that she had received, she goes to the same place that Psalm 75 echoes, "God, I exalt your name because you are the one who exalt men and cast them down. You alone are the Judge of the earth."

The mother of Jesus, Mary, had similar words on her lips. Just listen as I read for the sake of time. Luke 1:51. Mary had said, "My soul exalts the Lord, my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." And in verse 51 she says,

51 "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed."

Beloved, if we reflected more on the history that's recorded in the Bible, we would see how true that is, how God brings down the proud. The lives of Pharaoh in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, Herod in the days of Jesus, all testify to proud power leading to an inglorious, unmitigated defeat at the hand of God exercising his power. Wicked people especially in their prosperity, face a certain reversal. Judgment will come to them.

Look at verse 7 with me, "God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another." Verse 8,

8 For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

Again, another vivid word picture saying that the wicked, not only will the wicked not escape judgment, they will experience the full brunt of God's judgment. It is like a cup of wine and they will drink it to the last drop despite their present power. And notice here in

verse 8, that ultimately this Psalm is looking toward the culmination of time. This is magnificent. It's looking to the culmination of time. It's looking forward to the judgment that is still final to us, still ahead to us, I should say. Verse 8, "Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs." There is a time of judgment coming for all the wicked, for all who have rejected Christ. They are all going to face it and Revelation is an account of that in advance.

The final two verses here of Psalm 75 could be taken in a couple of different ways. It seems to be a testimony from an individual worshiper in response to this corporate testimony that has just been played out. Verse 9, he says,

9 But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. 10 And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, But the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.

This is responding to everything that Psalm 75 has taught. The revelation of this God of judgment calls forth praise. He's responding to what's been said in the first eight verses. He says, "And I'll declare it forever. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob." That is the believing response to the recognition that God is a God of judgment, not to question his righteousness, not to ask feeble questions, "Well, what about those who have never heard the Gospel?" Not to go there and diminish and question his righteousness, rather to respond with a sense of praise of unmitigated, submissive, joyful praise, "God, this is who you are and in response for me and myself, I'll worship you. I recognize your glory. You are the Creator. You are the Judge. You are my God. You are my Savior. You are the one who is near. I will worship in response to who you are."

You know, there's a whole other dimension of glory. There's a whole other dimension of the glory of God that is revealed in this statement here in verses 9 and 10. Here you have – think about this with me. I'm almost done. Stay with me. We've seen the glory of God revealed in his willingness to judge, his sovereign care, his sovereign majesty. That's what we've been talking about for the past 60 minutes, but what you have here in verse 9 is a completely different realm of a whole other manifestation of his unmitigated glory. Here you see this God who is the Judge receiving the praise and the regard and the humble offer of faithful worship from one who is lowly. Isn't that sweet, that one like you and one like me in all of our weakness, all of our frailty, all of our complete insignificance in the eyes of the world, you and I can approach this God through the Lord Jesus Christ, offer him our praise and he will receive it as a pleasing aroma in his sight. "High and lofty and yet you receive praise from me? I should have regard for you and, Lord, you had regard for me in my sin and now you have regard for my praise? I'm lost," in this sense as we sing in the hymn, "I am lost in wonder of who you are. I am lost in awe of who you are. I am lost in wonder, joy and praise at who you are, O God. Sovereign over the wicked, high and lofty, set the pillars of the earth and yet you had regard to save my wicked soul and now you receive my completely inadequate praise."

It ends on that word of promise in verse 10, "all the horns of the wicked He will cut off." All their power will be cut off, "But the horns of the righteous," representing our lives,

our love for God, our love for Christ, it "will be lifted up." Those who trust the God of the Bible, those who trust Jesus Christ, will be lifted up in the end. The God who just as surely put down Herod, Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh, by his power cast those men of stature down to the worms, is the same God who lifts up the lowly in faith, the weak and trembling believer, the one just like you.

So what can we do except circle back to where it began in verse 1. Now we see the complete unfolding of it. Now with more informed faith, we say, "We give thanks to You, O God. We give thanks." James Montgomery Boice said and I close with this, "God's way of ruling the universe is often puzzling to us and his judgments often seem delayed, but God nevertheless is near. His judgments are timely and the wicked will eventually be punished in full for the evil they have done." To which I would only add: and those declared righteous by faith in Christ will be lifted up and will find that their trust in Christ, their confidence in the ultimate outcome as revealed in Scripture, was not in vain.

Let's pray together.

O God of judgment and God of grace, we're lost in the wonder, the glory and the majesty of who you are. We take comfort, we proclaim, we trust in the fact that your name is near. You see the wicked, Father, you'll judge them in your time therefore we are not afraid, we are not intimidated because we look to you. And Lord, you see the humblest of believers in Christ, you see the dear sweet ones in foreign lands that name the name of Jesus and trust in him with a like precious faith, perhaps with meager means in so many different ways but they look to you in faith and, Lord, you see them and you will lift them up. Dear people in lands as far-flung as Indonesia and Malaysia and Singapore, in Mongolia, in the inner recesses of Africa, in the outback of Australia, in the remote wilderness where Eskimos dwell in the land of Alaska, Father, everywhere where your name is named, everywhere that Christ is called on by faith, you see those ones. In lands of affliction where believers dwell under the harsh reign of Islamic totalitarianism, Father, you see those dear ones. You care for them. You protect them and you will lift their horn up in time and they will walk the streets of gold with all of the rest who have known you, all of the rest that Christ has saved. Not one lost. God, how majestic you are, how majestic your plan, how majestic your goodness to your people. What can we do except in complete inadequacy of word, in feebleness of heart and lip, do anything other than say these revealed words, "We give thanks to You, O God. We give thanks for Your name is near." And we join with those men throughout the ages and throughout the world now who declare your wondrous works. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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