

Psalm 82 • The judges of men stand before the Judge of all the Earth

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Psalm chapter 82. This is an interesting Psalm because it's a picture of God's judgment upon the people who judge. This is a Psalm from the God who is the Judge of all mankind, to those who are judges. Okay? This is a Psalm written to judges, people who judge.

And it starts off this way.

It says,

"¹ God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods (notice the small g and the plural "in the midst of the gods) he holds judgment:" (ESV)

Now what's interesting about that first verse, is that the word in the Hebrew for God, and the word for god's plural, small g is the same Hebrew word. And that's the word, Elohim. And frankly, this word is used throughout this entire psalm, it's used in every reference to God or gods. And it can be... It's one of these words that can be translated a myriad of ways.

In fact, let me put on the screen for you that the... This is from the New American Standard Bible and their exhaustive concordance.

God (2326),	goddess (2),
gods (204),	godly (1),
divine (1),	great (2),
divine being (1),	judges (3),
exceedingly (1),	mighty (2),
god (45),	rulers (1),
God's (14),	shrine* (1).

— *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*

Now you'll notice that the vast majority of the time it is a reference to, God Almighty. And so, in your Bible, it is capitalized and put in that form so that you can see that it's referring to **God**. But it's still the word, Elohim.

Now, you'll notice that it can also mean, **gods**, which we see also in this verse. 204 times it speaks of like pagan deities or other gods. It can also mean, **judges** or judge. It can just refer to those who are **mighty**. It can refer to a generic **divine being**. It can be translated **great, rulers**.

At the very bottom on the right there, you see that in one particular instance in the NASB, it's even translated, **shrine**. Which is like, wow! Elohim? That's the vast kind of distance that we can go with this single Hebrew word.

And because this word can be translated judge or judges, verse 1 could be read this way. God has taken His place in the divine council; in the midst of the judges, he holds judgment. Because, when he refers to other gods, again, we know that there are no other gods, there's only one God. And so, he's referring to those who judge. And we get that from the context of the passage.

Here's what the Lord says about those who judge men.

Verse 2,

"How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?"

3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. (That's what God put judges there to do.)

4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Now we can see from this passage that God puts responsibility on judges to do what's right and He's going to hold them to that responsibility. The Bible talks about those who are teachers of the Bible. And it says that there is a responsibility for teachers to teach what is true and to speak in accordance with that truth always in your teaching. (James 3:1)

Well, so the same with judges. There is a responsibility to judge fairly and not to succumb to the fleshly impulse to show favoritism and special preference. But, and it happens all the time, doesn't it?

And I don't know about you, but I... One of the things I hate hearing in the news is how some judge somewhere made a ruling and it's just about as ungodly as

the day is long. And they're supporting some kind of ridiculous humanistic, atheistic, sort of a belief and upholding it in the laws and that sort of thing. And I just, I hate hearing about those things.

But I have to tell you that I'm comforted by this Psalm because I know that those judges are going to stand before the Judge one day, and they're going to give an account for the judgments that they've made.

It says in verse 5, and this again is about these human judges. He says,

"They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness;"

And that... Isn't that interesting. We were just talking in the last Psalm about Psalm or Proverbs, excuse me. Romans chapter 1, where Paul talks about people being given over to their darkness and to their futility and so forth. And here he says, these judges are walking around in darkness.

And then, notice what he says, metaphorically, *"all the foundations of the earth are shaken."* Why does he say that? Well, he says it because justice is a foundation upon which God created all things. Because God is just, it is a foundation upon which the earth was, literally, made.

And so when men pervert justice, it's as if the foundations of earth are shaken. Okay. This Psalm is reminding us who's really in charge.

Look at verse 6.

"I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you;

7 nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince."

And this is a powerful verse. And it needs to be understood correctly.

If it was God Himself, who referred to these men, these judges, as Elohim, speaking of their role; speaking of what they were to do; they were to make proper judgments. So, God called them Elohim.

He says, and that's what He says here. You are Elohim says the Most High, all of you. But what does He say now because they've perverted justice? He says,

Even though I referred to you as Elohim, you're going to die like men. You're going to die like mere men because of what you have done to My justice.

And that's the problem, isn't it, with judges today, they forget. They're serving by divine appointment. They forget that. And they forget that they're accountable to the ultimate Judge.

And so, the final cry to the Lord, from the psalmist is,

"Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!"

The final cry of the heart of God's people is, *"Arise, O God, and judge the earth."* And in our hearts we long for justice, don't we?

I mean, that's why the Spirit and the bride cry out and say, come, come Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:17, 20) We want Jesus to come.

We want Him to return because we know that the world that we live in is unjust and it's been perverted. And we long for the Lord to come back and restore sound judgment.