

“The LORD, the Judge”
Judges 11:27
(Preached at Trinity, May 24, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've gone through the Book of Judges there is a consistent theme of God's righteous judgment upon sinful Israel. We've seen a consistent pattern. Israel would forget God and begin serving idols, God would raise up an oppressor in judgment, Israel would cry out in distress, God in His mercy would raise up a deliverer, Israel would enter into a season of rest, and then the process repeats.
2. But as we've gone through the book we've also come upon some passages that are full of rich meaning and stirring application. Such is the case with **Verse 27 of Chapter 11**.
3. Last time we looked at the sad account of Jephthah and his foolish vow that led to the sacrifice of his only child. Jephthah's problem was his unbelief; he did not trust God. God had made it clear that the human sacrifices of the pagans were abominable. Instead of confessing and repenting from his foolish vow he carried it out and murdered his daughter. Why? Because he did not trust God.
4. As I pointed out last time, Jephthah is a picture of the consequence of human depravity.
 - A. The problem isn't that fallen man does not know God. All men know God.
 - B. The problem is that in our fallen condition we can't know God as He is nor approach Him as He demands.
Knowing the judgment of God fallen man vainly seeks to approach God on his own terms.
 - C. Jephthah thought it a good idea to buy God's favor in his battle with the Ammonites
Judges 11:30-31 NAU - "Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, ³¹ then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."
 - a. Jephthah thought God could be bought; that God was like a mere man who could be bribed to act in our favor.
 - b. This is the nature of every false religion. They are all efforts to make God a debtor by our actions so that God will owe us His favor.
5. Jephthah's problem was not that he did not know God, it's that he didn't trust God. Fallen man can have a great respect for God without actually bowing in submission to God. Before we leave Jephthah I want us to notice his statement in **Verse 27**. For a man who failed to comprehend so much about the nature of God this is a statement of profound truth.

- A. Jephthah is having a dialogue with Ammonites whom God had raised up along with the Philistines to afflict Israel.
Judges 10:7-8 NAU - "The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon. ⁸ They afflicted and crushed the sons of Israel that year; for eighteen years they *afflicted* all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in Gilead in the land of the Amorites."
- B. Sadly, the Ammonites were actually distantly related to the Israelites.
Genesis 19:36-38 NAU - "Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷ The firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ As for the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day."
6. Jephthah reasons with the king of the sons of Ammon to show the error in his claim upon the land and the injustice of rising up to go to war against Israel:
- A. First of all, he says, at the time Israel possessed the land it wasn't Ammon's nor Moab's land. It was Amorite land. And if you feel so strongly that this is your land why have you waited 300 years before bringing it up.
Judges 11:21 NAU - "he LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country."
Judges 11:26 NAU - "While Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time?"
- B. Second, he uses the argument of pluralism. You have your god and we have ours. You have the right to what your god has given you and we have the right to what our God has given us.
Judges 11:24 NAU - "Do you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God has driven out before us, we will possess it."
7. But in **Verse 27** Jephthah makes the most powerful statement in this entire account. Whatever he thought of Chemosh, the Ammonite god, he declared clearly the identity of the Judge of all the earth:
Judges 11:27 NAU - "may the LORD, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon."
8. Jephthah has argued that Israel is the rightful owner of the land. He now appeals to the LORD, the Judge to provide righteous judgment. This is a high title for God – "The LORD, the Judge." It has several implications.
- I. First of all, it expresses God's sovereign dominion over all men
- A. Jephthah uses the name LORD - יהוה - the Hebrew verb of being
1. It is the great name of God – our best pronunciation would be Yahweh

2. It was the name God revealed to Moses
Exodus 3:13-15 NAU - "Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations."
 3. This great name describes God as self-existent. HE IS.
 He is eternal and unchanging.
 4. LBC 2:1 – “The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself . . .”
 LBC 2:2 – “God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creature which He hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifests His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, and He hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures. . .”
 5. God exists independently of all outside influences
 - a. God acts independently of all outside influences
 - b. God is sovereign in His actions – He receives counsel from none
- B. Jephthah declares this God to be the ultimate judge
1. He is talking to a pagan king who served pagan gods
 - a. Jephthah makes reference to Chemosh
Judges 11:24 NAU - "Do you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God has driven out before us, we will possess it."
 - b. Chemosh was actually the Moabite god. Many commentators make a big issue of this. The Ammonite god was Malcham
 - c. We may not know exactly why Jephthah referred to the wrong god but for our consideration the point is clear. Yahweh is LORD of all! He is the supreme Judge
Judges 11:27 NAU - "may the LORD, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon."
 - d. These pagan gods could not stand before the Righteous Judge. Chemosh or Malcham or any other false god is crushed beneath the sovereign authority of God.
 - e. And this pagan king, even though he did not acknowledge Yahweh, he would bow before Him.
 2. God rules over all of creation. His purposes stand. His ways are undisputed.
- II. Second of all, it expresses the perfection of God’s judgments
- A. Jephthah’s statement presupposes the infallible nature of God’s judgments
"may the LORD, the Judge, judge today"
 1. God is THE Judge. He is the only true judge. His determinations stand.

2. To call upon these other gods would be foolish for they have no being.
 3. Jephthah calls upon the LORD God to judge. God's judgments are always right and just.
- B. God's Justice is perfect in every way
1. Every man will receive exactly the judgment he deserves. All will receive justice.
 - a. Isaiah brought this message
Isaiah 3:10-11 NAU - "Say to the righteous that *it will go well with them*, For they will eat the fruit of their actions. ¹¹ Woe to the wicked! *It will go badly with him*, For what he deserves will be done to him."
 - b. Our Lord brought this message
Matthew 16:25-27 NAS - "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. ²⁶ "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."
 2. God's ways are perfect, He does all things according to His holiness
 - a. Job's words:
Job 8:3 NAS - "Does God pervert justice Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?"
Job 8:20 NAS - "Lo, God will not reject *a man of integrity*, Nor will He support the evildoers."
Job 34:10-12 NAS - "Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong. ¹¹ "For He pays a man according to his work, And makes him find it according to his way. ¹² "Surely, God will not act wickedly, And the Almighty will not pervert justice."
 - b. Moses wrote:
Deuteronomy 32:4 NAS - "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."
 - c. Abraham declared:
Genesis 18:25 NAU - "Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"
- III. The ultimate thing we need to understand from this verse is the universality of God's judgment. We will ALL stand before Him.
2 Corinthians 5:10 NAS - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."
- A. The truth is death is only the beginning of an endless eternity
1. All human beings are created with immortality – all of us survive beyond the grave. All of us will exist for eternity.

2. For some eternity will be spent in indescribable joys in the presence of Christ
 - a. Heaven is a place free from sin—free from trial and torment, free of suffering and sadness, free of disaster and destruction
 - b. Death will no longer threaten us – only eternal life
 - c. Most important, Heaven is the presence of Christ. For eternity we will glory in His infinite excellence. We will behold His beauty. Heaven is a place where we will know in full the love of Christ.
 - d. Christ has designed for us a place of everlasting joy
 3. For others eternity will be spent in the fires of hell
 - a. Hell is the ultimate expression of the wrath of God. It is a place where men will be eternally given over to their sin.
 - b. Hell is described as a lake of fire that will bring endless torment and suffering – heat that will singe the flesh, yet the flesh will never die.
 - c. It is described as a place of darkness – no beauty, no pleasures – only darkness
 - d. Those in hell will be surrounded by Satan and his demons who with their cruelty will only add to the torment
 - e. Those in hell will be completely void of love or compassion. Those in hell will spend eternity in the midst of bitter hatred and enmity
 - f. Those in hell will know no mercy. There will be no hope. They will cry in anguish yet their cries will go unheard by God.
- B. For all of us eternity will begin at the judgment seat of Christ where all will receive perfect justice.
1. The Bible says we must ALL appear before Christ
2 Timothy 4:1 – “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;”
 2. Every human being will stand trial before Christ the Judge – none will be exempt.
Romans 14:10-12 NAS - "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹² So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 3. There are some who hold that the Judgment Seat of Christ is only for Christians. This is an empty argument. The reality is Christ will sit in judgment over all men.
 4. We will stand before a Judge who knows all. No witnesses will be called. He knows every thought you have ever had and every deed you have ever done. The secret things of men will be revealed.

- C. The first thing we need to understand is that all have sinned against God
Romans 3:10-12 NAS - "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."
Romans 3:23 NAS - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
1. Every sin deserves the wrath of God – Justice demands that all stand condemned.
Romans 1:18 NAS - " For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"
 - a. God is holy, pure – no sin shall ever come into His presence. His anger is kindled against sin.
 - b. Heaven will be a place of perfection. No sin shall ever defile this place of perfect righteousness
 - c. Hell is a place God has prepared for Satan and all who sin. It is a place of just condemnation
Matthew 13:41-43 NAS - "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."
 2. As all men stand before Christ and are judged according to their works all will be found wanting. Our very best deeds are in the end self-serving and infinitely short of God's demand of perfection. Because of our sinful hearts all of our best efforts are still vile in the sight of an infinitely holy God.
 3. The great issue as men stand before Christ will be guilt versus innocence
 - a. In this great court of justice all men naturally stand guilty.
 - Have you sinned against God – Guilty as charged!
 - Have you broken His law – Guilty as charged!
 - You have hated God from birth – Guilty as charged!
 - b. Many will cry out, "But what of the good things I've done?"
They cannot discharge you of your guilt.
Your works cannot excuse you – they will only condemn you.
You are a sinner!
 - c. Only the perfect shall enter into heaven.
You may say, "Then that leaves me out." Exactly!
You are guilty! – Guilty as charged! Justly condemned before a just Judge.
- D. There will be a multitude in that solemn day who will hear the words, "Not Guilty!"
1. How can this be! No man can make this claim.
 2. Enter the wondrous work of Christ. Enter the glorious Gospel.
 3. God sent forth Christ to die for sinners. The perfect, holy, righteous Son of God took upon Himself the flesh of humanity. As a perfect sinless man He then gave Himself to be nailed to the cross.

4. As Jesus suffered God the Father laid upon Him the fullness of His wrath. The skies darkened, the ground shook – all of creation trembled at this spectacle as Jesus suffered the full punishment for the sins of His people. God's perfect justice was being accomplished. The perfect Judge was sitting at His bench handing out perfect justice
5. Jesus became our substitute.
Our sins became His sins as He became the Sin bearer
Our guilt became His guilt so that they could be redeemed from the curse of sin. Jesus Christ purchased their pardon with His own life.
6. There will be a great number on that Day of Judgment who will be declared NOT GUILTY not because of their goodness but because of the goodness of Christ.

Conclusion: Does that describe you? We all must rest upon the Gospel of Christ.