

The Justice of God

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[0:00] The second epistle of Peter, in the third chapter, and I'll read the entire chapter in your hearing.! Please stand together with me for this reading from God's Holy Word.

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I've written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

First of all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, where is this coming He promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.

But they deliberately forget that long ago, by God's Word, the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also, the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

By the same Word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends.

[1:12] With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?

You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

But in keeping with His promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. Just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.

[2:23] His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures to their own destruction. Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard, so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Six weeks ago, before packed houses in Washington and New York, two men squared off in debates, one an atheist, the other a Christian. Their topic, atheism and Christianity. The atheist, Christopher Hitchens, blasted Christianity for promoting a God who supervises our every waking moment.

That can convict us of thought crimes. And that will continue to judge us and persecute us even after we are dead with everlasting punishments. Unless we accept a human sacrifice that took place before we were ever born.

He calls it one of, quote, one of the most wicked ideas ever preached. And one that has ruined the lives and the peace of mind of many, many children.

[3:50] Preached to them by vicious, child-hating old men and women. Unquote. Well, let me begin by saying, if there is no God, if there is no judge, if there's no day of judgment appointed for man, and no hell for unbelievers, then I agree with Mr. Hitchens.

judge and that nothing can be hidden from him. Indeed, that no one gets away with anything anywhere. That's just the fourth chapter. Then we come to the fifth chapter and it's a part of the genealogy of Adam's line. And we think, well, surely nothing here on judgment. And he lives so long and then he died and he lives so long and then he died and then he died and then he died. What is all this death? It is the wages of sin that a just God gives to sinners. For in the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.

[10 : 37] And the genealogy itself speaks of a judge and his sentence of death that's being carried out. Chapter six is six through nine finds the whole world underwater. Isn't this an amazing thing?

Why is it underwater? Because of the violence and wickedness of men. And God said enough. And he drowned the whole human population, minus eight people. He's a judge. And he judges men for sin.

Chapter 11 finds men in their arrogance, building a tower to the sky. And the Lord judged them by confusing their languages and scattering them over the face of the whole earth. And we're just 11 chapters in. What's God saying to us if it's not that he is a judge and judges men? Chapter 19, we find rain coming from the sky, but this morning it's fire and brimstone raining from the sky. What is this new thing? Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain are being judged by God for their sexual perversion.

That's Genesis. You go into Exodus and you find the 10 plagues of judgment upon Egypt for not letting God's people go. You read on through Exodus and numbers and you find dead bodies of a whole generation of Israelites in the desert. Why are they there? Because God judged them for their unbelief and idolatry.

On into Joshua and the conquest and the promised land, his judgment of the Canaanite nations whose sins had reached their full measure into the the historical books of first and second Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. What do we find his sub his his judgment of Israel for their idolatry and disobedience and for forgetting him? And we haven't even gotten to the prophets yet.

[12 : 41] You can't miss the obvious. God is judge. He is keeping track and he punished his people for their wrongdoing. Turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 32 and notice two things in this passage.

Deuteronomy 32 verses 3 and 4. It's interesting because just as we saw in Psalm 119 that God is good and and what he does is good. We see the same thing here only with his justice.

Deuteronomy 32. I'm going to read verses 3 and 4. I want you to notice that it teaches us that God is just and all his ways are just. See if you can't find that. Deuteronomy 32 3. I will proclaim the name of the Lord. I'm going to tell you what he's like.

Oh, praise the greatness of our God. He is the rock. His works are perfect and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong upright and just is he. God is just. And the reason his judgments fill the whole earth is because justice fills him. Justice is in him. It's something he is. It's not a bad mood that he gets in. No, rather justice is a part of his very nature. His justice is his unswerving commitment to the right. To reward each person according to what he's done to repay men and nations what they deserve.

It's his holy determination to punish sin wherever it's found. He cannot stand by and do nothing about sin and evil. I say he cannot. Why not? Because he is just. And his eyes are too pure to look on evil, to tolerate it. So he must judge evil. And when he acts in his judgments, as fierce as they may be, all his judgments are just and right. Psalm 7 and verse 11, God is a righteous judge. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Psalm 97 too. You sat on your throne judging righteously. Psalm 94. He will judge the world in righteousness and he will govern the peoples with justice. Psalm 98. He is just and all his ways are just.

[15 : 22] Furthermore, the Lord is known by his justice. Psalm 9 and verse 16. Do you know people who are known for certain things?

They're famous for it. And so to think of what they're famous for is to think of them. You think of playing basketball for the Chicago Bulls and who who comes to mind, who is known for that? Well, you think of Michael Jordan. Well, when you think of justice, you think of God, the judge, the just one, he's known by his justice. He's famous for it. His reputation reaches far and wide. It's when God steps in and acts in justice that he often says in the prophets, then they will know that I am the Lord. Then they will know who I am, that I am the just judge of all the earth. He is known by his justice. But then again, he loves justice. The Bible says.

[16:29] I, the Lord, love justice. Isaiah 61.8. That means he's committed to it. With all that he is, his whole heart is in it. This business of justice isn't just some shady deal he does on the side. His whole heart is in it. He loves justice.

Just as much as he hates wickedness. Psalm 11, verses 6 and 7. On the wicked, he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur.

A scorching wind will be their lot for the Lord is righteous. He loves justice. Upright men will see his face. So it's something he loves.

Next, it's something he delights in. It's something he delights in. Jeremiah 9, that familiar passage, verses 23 and 24. Let not. This is what the Lord says. Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches. But let him who boasts boast about this, that he understands and knows me that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth.

For in these I delight, declares the Lord. He not only exercises kindness, but he also exercises justice and righteousness in the earth.

[17:59] And not only does he exercise it, he delights to do so. It is his delight. Because he is righteous. Now, when we come to the prophets, we've kind of gone on up.

We've skipped over the Psalms, but I've quoted many passages from the Psalms. The wisdom writing is full of this theme of judgment and justice. But then when we come into the prophets, what do we see?

We find that judgment is a dominant theme, don't we? We've read through the book of Jeremiah this past year. We're in chapter 51, about 52 weeks in a year.

What have we learned from a year of scripture readings in Jeremiah the prophet? Well, we've learned that God is a judge, haven't we?

And he judges people and he judges nations. He judges individuals. He judges groups of people for their sin, for their wickedness. We've seen judgment upon judgment upon judgment.

[19:03] And now what we saw again this morning, the judgment of Babylon, who God used to judge his own people. Do you think God is saying something important to us that he would say it so often to us?

Don't forget, I am a just judge. And if God says it over and over, it must be that we would have a propensity to forget it. And indeed, that's exactly what we find.

The prophets were sent by God to a sinning people to warn them of coming judgment. But it's not what the people wanted to hear, was it? So they turned a deaf ear to the prophet's message.

Now, let me tell you as a preacher that when you turn a deaf ear to a preacher, he notices that he senses that. Oh, they didn't like what I said.

And as prophets preach judgment, the judgment of God, they noticed that people didn't like that. And so some of the prophets changed their message.

[20:05] Instead of judgment and woe, peace, peace. When there was no peace, there was no ground of peace between God and man. And yet they said continual prosperity.

Shalom is going to keep flowing like a river to you. They gave them what their itching ears wanted to hear. It was a denial of the justice of God.

Reality is God is just and he's going to judge you. And they pushed it from them. But as you read on, what do you find? You find that for all the denials of his justice, for all the false prophets preaching peace.

None of it could keep judgment from happening. None of it could withstand judgment. None of their lies could change the course of God's justice in the world.

He is just and all his judgments are just. You see, you can only deny the judge and his judgment as long as it has not yet fallen.

[21:12] The false prophets only are in business until judgment day. But when judgment comes, then the people say, Psalm 58 and verse 11 records, surely there is a God who judges the earth.

Then they see. Then they know. As long as it hadn't rained, they could mock the message of judgment as Noah preached and pounded and preached judgment.

They could laugh at him. But as soon as the rains began to fall and the waters began to rise. They changed their tune and began to say, surely there is a God who judges the earth.

So all these judgments in history, they really happen. Kids, you're reading history at school. Well, this is God's history. And it's filled with these judgments.

They've really happened. It's real. God's playing for keeps. And all these judgments are just forewarnings of a bigger judgment that's coming. The day of judgment.

[22 : 22] The Bible speaks of the day of judgment. And yet people live on in present denial of that day of judgment that has not yet come.

Well, you say, John, you're it. You've been in the Old Testament a whole lot, haven't you? Let's come into the new. Well, this witness of God's judgment and justice doesn't stop once we reach the New Testament.

The day of judgment is the whole backdrop to the whole to all 27 books of the New Testament. And the last of the 27 books is filled with the most woes and judgments.

Men are warned of the coming judgment and none sounded the warning of the judgment of hell more than our Lord Jesus himself. You see, judgment and the justice of God is the very backdrop of the gospel.

It's the very reason. Jesus came in the first place. It's the reason God sent his son so that whoever believes in him should not what?

[23 : 34] Not perish. That's right. Under the wrath and judgment of a holy God. You see, that's the whole backdrop of the gospel. Take away the justice of God. And you have no reason for the son of God coming.

You have no reason for Calvary. You have no reason for the gospel. So don't expect that when you come into the New Testament, you find judgment falling off. And no more of this message of judgment and God's justice.

No, it's heightened. And Jesus makes more clear what's going to happen in that day of judgment. And what's going to happen to those who are found wanting in the day of judgment.

Now, all along the way, God was preparing people for the New Testament and the coming of Christ. And the Old Testament prophets prepared the way.

And they spoke of one who was coming who would be a judge. Yes, he would be a savior, but not just a savior. He would also be a judge.

[24 : 35] He would be a king, but not just a king. He'd be a judge. He'd be a prophet. And all those are fulfilled in Jesus. And so the Old Testament spoke about a coming judge.

And he would be different from the judges that Israel was plagued with. Many who did not uphold justice, who were preferential to their cronies and turned a blind eye to their evil deeds.

He said, no, this coming judge will judge in righteousness. And so the whole messianic hope was had as an element of it.

That judgment will once again be founded on righteousness. Psalm 94, 15. That messianic Psalm 45, 6. The scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom, Messiah.

Psalm 72, 2. He will judge your people in righteousness and your afflicted ones with justice. Psalm 110, 6. These are all messianic prophecies.

[25 : 37] He will judge the nations. We're coming up upon Christmas. And we love that passage in Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. And what does Isaiah have to say of this babe of Mary?

Of this son that was given, this child that was born? Well, he will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establish and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

And he goes on in chapter 11. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears. But with righteousness, he will judge the needy. With justice, he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. With the breath of his lips, he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt. Chapter 16.

In love, a throne will be established. In faithfulness, a man will sit on it. One from the house of David. One who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.

[26 : 45] All these prophecies talking of a coming judge that would judge in righteousness. Then we come into the New Testament. And it makes very clear to us that this judge is none other than Jesus.

The Lord Jesus himself says, The Father judges no one but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. And he's given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

John chapter 5. My judgment is just. And then he talked about this day of judgment. When all the living and the dead would appear before him.

All the nations, every human being that's ever lived would appear before him. And he would judge. And the outcome of his judgment would be eternal happiness or eternal punishments. Heaven or hell. This Jesus walking the dusty roads of Palestine. He says that men's eternal destinies will hinge on my judgments in that day.

[27 : 55] Yes, the judge has come. It is the Lord Jesus. He came the first time to save. He's coming the second time to judge. And Peter says to that household of Cornelius in Acts 10.42, He, Jesus, commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

God wants you to be very sure about this. Who's going to be the judge that I face in one day? It will be him, Jesus. And Paul says, God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.

And he's given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead. Who would that be? That would be the Lord Jesus. And he really has the power to execute his sentences.

He is that rider on the white horse at the end of our Bibles who's faithful and true. And with justice, he judges and makes war.

Yes, there is a department of justice in the universe. And his name is Jesus. He's judge. He is just. And all his judgments are just.

[29 : 13] Now, that's the resounding testimony of the Bible. What's man's response then to all of this evidence? Well, it's much the same today as it was in Jeremiah's day.

It's not what their itching ears want to hear. Sinful man does not like a supervising, convicting, and punishing judge. Just listen to Mr. Hitchens.

Man has an inborn hatred of the God of justice. It spoils the party. The party of sin. Ecclesiastes 11.9 Young man, follow the ways of your heart.

And whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things, God will bring you to judgment.

That's why men don't like the justice of God. It spoils the pleasures of sin.

You can't enjoy sin as you would like to, as long as you believe that you will be judged for your sins one day. It has a way of taking the edge off the pleasures, the momentary pleasures of sin.

[30 : 24] So, when Satan comes with his lie, you will not surely die. There is no judgment. No payday. Sinners are predisposed. They're already set up to believe the lie.

They'd like to believe that message. But we can't just blame it all on Satan and his lies. The fallen mind of man has all sorts of ways of its own to dismiss the just judgments of God.

So as to not have their peace of mind always destroyed by it. One common way is by totally misreading the patience of God.

How is it that men set aside the judgment of God? By misreading the patience of God. Psalm 50.

Would you turn there? Psalm 50. God was being patient with the wicked.

And they interpreted his patience as being soft on sin. And so God says to these worshipping wicked.

[31 : 31] In Psalm 50. And verse 16. To the wicked God says. What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?

You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. When you see a thief, you join with him.

You throw in your lot with adulterers. You use your mouth for evil.

And harness your tongue to evil. You speak continually against your brother. And slander your own mother's sons. If you hear the Ten Commandments echoing in that. That's because that is what he's talking about.

He's talking about murder and adultery. And thievery. And lying. And slander. You dismiss my commands. Cast my words behind you.

Verse 21. These things you have done. And I kept silent. What is God saying? I didn't come with an immediate hammer.

[32 : 28] You did all these things. And there wasn't a bolt of lightning out of heaven that fell. And a booming thunder of warning that came to you. You did all these things.

And I kept silent. And how did they interpret that silence? You thought I was altogether like you.

God was silent. God was being patient. And they interpreted it as if God was like them. Lenient.

Tolerant of sin. God who doesn't really mind all of my little piccadillo sins here.

He doesn't get bothered by them at all. He's lenient. He's really not going to judge me for that. It was a denial of his justice. They made a God of their own liking who was soft on sin.

And that's a mistake. Just because God doesn't punish at once. Don't think that he will not punish at all. We see from this text that God cares what we think about him.

[33 : 35] These things you have done and I kept silent. And you thought. He's accusing them for their thoughts about him. They thought that he was not a God of justice. And he accused them for that.

But I will rebuke you. I will accuse you to your face. Consider this you who forget God. Or I will tear you to pieces with none to rescue. And you'll learn the hard way that I am a God of justice.

And I'm not soft on sin. And so men sin. And because God doesn't immediately strike them dead. Or stop the pleasures of sin.

And cause their life to be turned upside down. They think he doesn't care. He's an easy judge. He's tolerant of my wickedness.

One fall an atheist farmer wrote into a Christian newspaper. To prove that there is no moral governor in the universe. And he pointed at his bumper crop. I plowed on Sunday.

[34 : 37] I planted on Sunday. I cultivated on Sunday. And I harvested on Sunday. And I've had the largest crop ever. There.

That proves that God is no judge. Of lawbreakers. And no regard at all. For the Lord's Sabbath day. For the next day the editor printed a one sentence reply.

God does not settle all his accounts in the fall of this year. But that's men's propensity. You did all these things.

And I was silent. And you thought I was just like you. Soft on sin. You're wrong. You're wrong. That's a dangerous misreading of the patience and the goodness of God. The faithful prophets were given visions. That's one way that the revelation came from God.

[35 : 35] That they were to pronounce to men. They had a vision. Sometimes a dream. And in those visions the word of God came. And it was a vision of judgment. As it was needed because the people were sinning.

And so they came and they announced. The Lord's judgment seen in their vision. But because the judgments did not fall all at once. They thought it would never come.

And that sentiment was so prevalent in the land. That it became a proverb in Israel. Here was the proverb. The days go by and every vision comes to nothing.

Ezekiel 12.22. The days go by and every vision comes to nothing. So here comes Isaiah and Jeremiah. And they're prophesying judgment. And the people said the days go by.

And every vision comes to nothing. So Amos. Other prophets. Micah. Warn of coming judgment. And the people.

[36 : 33] Wait. And say the days go by. And every vision comes to nothing. Ezekiel is prophesying gloom and doom. The days go by. And every vision comes to nothing.

And finally God is sick of it. Finally his patience runs out. And he says I am going to put an end to this proverb. So that it will no longer be quoted in Israel. Because the days are near.

When every vision will be fulfilled. Ezekiel 12.23. That's the proverb. That fallen man.

Has instinctively bred in him. I'm getting on okay. I'm making money. I'm healthy. We're doing fine. Every vision comes to nothing.

These visions of judgment. These warnings of judgment. They come to nothing. They amount to nothing. Oh but when God comes to put an end to the proverb.

[37 : 34] How will he stop men from saying that? Because God hasn't judged. He never will judge. How will he get that out of their system? He will do it by judgment. And when judgment comes. Then they will say.

Surely there is a God. Who judges the earth. Now we had read for us. 2 Peter 3. Turn there. Briefly. 2 Peter 3.

As we conclude. Because Peter talks about the same thing happening in the last days. That the unbelieving scoffers. Who have heard about the prophecies of the Lord's coming in judgment. At the end of the world. And they're scoffing. And following their own evil desires. Well if you're following your own evil desires. You've got to scoff at judgment. You can't believe in judgment and follow your own evil desires.

You wouldn't enjoy them as much. So you want your evil desires. Then you've got to do something with judgment. Well they scoffed at judgment. Scoffed at judgment day. Verse 4. Where is this coming he promised.

[38 : 33] Ever since our fathers died. Everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. Every warning vision comes to nothing. That's what they're saying. Their thought is.

Because the Lord hasn't come. That he never will come. And all things continue on as they have from the beginning. But they are deliberately forgetting something.

Peter says. Scripture talks about what they're forgetting. The fossil record points to what they're forgetting. That there was a global flood one day. That everything hasn't just gone on. As usual from the beginning of time.

No God interrupted with judgment upon the whole earth. And just as he did it in with water. Once he's going to do it again with fire. Verse 7. By the same word.

The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire. Being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Delay of judgment is not an indication.

[39 : 29] That the judge is not coming. It's rather an indication of his patience. Verse 9. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise. As some understand slowness.

He's patient with you. Not wanting anyone to perish. But everyone to come to repentance. So don't think that. His patience is an abandoning of just.

Of his justice. No it's just delaying his justice. Out of his kindness to you. That you might repent. But the day of the Lord will come.

Be sure of that he says in verse 10. The heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything in it laid bare. And then they will find that there is no justice.

Like the justice. Of abuse justice. When men abuse the mercy. And the goodness. Kindness of God. And dismiss the judgment of God.

[40 : 27] Do you think you will escape God's judgment? Paul asks in Romans 2. Do you show contempt for the riches of God's kindness. And tolerance and patience. Not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance.

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart. You are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath. When his righteous judgment will be revealed.

And then God will give to each person according to what he has done. Romans 2. Don't ever make the mistake that because God is patient.

He must therefore lack justice. He won't punish me for my sin. What's the answer?

Unbeliever? The answer is clear. Repent. That's why judgment hasn't fallen. That's why you're not in hell. He's given you space to repent. Then repent.

[41 : 27] And repent now. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. And don't twist that to your own destruction like so many people do.

Twisting the patience of God to their own destruction. That's why in Acts 17. Paul says God commands all people everywhere to repent.

Because he set a day for judgment. The word for you is repent. Repent. Turn from your own evil way. Turn to the Savior. He's the only one that can save you from the coming judgment of God. Believer? What's the application for you of the justice of God? Well, the justice of God means it does matter how you live. And you ought to live a holy life.

Verse 11 of 2 Peter 3. Since everything will be destroyed in this way. Since God is going to judge this earth. What kind of people ought you to be? Well, you ought to live holy and godly lives.

[42 : 29] As you look forward to the day of God. And speed its coming. Verse 14. So then, dear friends. Since you are looking forward to this. Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless.

And at peace with him. You know what Peter is saying? He is saying that thoughts of God's judgment are to affect the way you live. That that day is to affect this day for you.

That you are to speak and act. As James 2.12 says. Speak and act. Live. What is living? A lot of it is speaking and acting. And James says. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged.

Live as you wish you had lived. When you meet your judge. Some people seem to feel. And some Christians seem to feel. That thoughts of God's justice.

Are somehow unworthy. Unworthy motivations. In the heart of the New Testament believer. Oh sure. The sinner needs to think about the judgment of God. But surely not the Christian.

[43 : 31] Not the one washed in the blood of Christ. Well the Lord Jesus didn't think of it that way. He spoke of judgment often to his own disciples.

He told them. Don't fear those who can kill the body. And after that can do no more. I'll tell you who to fear. Fear him. Who can cast both soul and body. Into hell. Fear him.
If anyone is ashamed of me and my words. In this adulterous and sinful generation. The son of God will be ashamed of him. When he comes in his father's glory. With all his angels with him.
That day of judgment. Needs to weigh in on you. When you are being tempted to be ashamed of Jesus. In this wicked and adulterous generation. And if you have any trouble with hatred.
Rising up in your hearts. Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says. You're in danger. Fear of the judgment. And if you have any trouble with. Looking on a woman to lust after her.
[44 : 33] Jesus says it would be better to pluck out your eye. And to go through life without one of its members. Than to enter into hell. With both eyes. This is Jesus.

Teaching. And reminding us that. That day of judgment. Is to weigh in on how we mortify sin. And on how we live our lives.

What we say. What we do. Beware of those. Who are so spiritual. As to not need Jesus' words on judgment. Jesus' words on hell.

Indeed Peter got it. And he says in his first letter. Chapter 1 and verse 17. The whole context is one. And be holy as I am holy. Holiness is the context.

And he says in 1.17. Since you call on a father who judges each man's work without partiality. Live your lives as strangers here. In reverent fear.

[45 : 29] Remembering that you are going to be judged by the father without partiality. Should move you. To live in reverent fear. Not slavish fear.

But reverent fear. That fear. That is the beginning of wisdom. The beginning of wise living. That regards pleasing God. Is the utmost. I must please him.

I shall not displease my God. That's the reverent fear. That the day of judgment. The thought of judgment. Ought to stir in your own heart.

The psalmist had it. Psalm 101. I will sing of your love and justice. Isn't that something? I will sing of your love. And we say. Oh sure.

Amazing love. I will sing of your love and justice. In the same song. He's singing of both. I will be careful to lead a blameless life.

[46 : 24] I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing. As I sing about your love and your justice. You see there are motivations for living the Christian life flowing from both.

His love and his justice. And they're found in the one and the same heart of David. As he's worshipping his God. He finds as a response to his love and justice. This desire to live a blameless. A holy life. Yes. The reality of God's judgment ought to move us all.

If we're outside of Christ. To come to Christ. To repent of our sin. And to come to him. To wash our sins away. If we're in Christ. It ought to motivate us to live unto him.

To be mortifying our sin. To live holy and godly lives. As we'll wish we'd lived in the day of judgment. And then it ought to move us believers to persuade men.

[47 : 21] Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord. We persuade men. Are you convinced of judgment day? More on that later.

But I'm convinced that I'm only half convinced. Or I'd be warning others more. Knowing. Knowing the terror of the Lord.

We persuade men. If you knew a bridge was out. And men were falling off of that cliff. In the darkness of the night. Would you not go and shout at the top of your voice.

The warning. The bridge is out. And you mean to tell me that you know. That there is a hell that men are posting onward to. Every day closer. Just a breath away from hell.

And we are not shouting. We are not raising our voice. We're not getting in their face. In love. And saying. Oh dear friend. There is a judge. There is a heaven.

[48 : 17] There is a hell. Every minute over 100 people go to meet their judge. So over this past hour.

You do the math. Over 6,000 people. Have gone to meet the judge. Were they ready? Were they ready? Were they in Christ? Again.

There is only one place to find refuge in the day of judgment. It is in the Lord Jesus. And again. Mr. Hitchens has done his homework well. You must trust in the human sacrifice.

That was made before you were ever born. The God man. Dying in the place of sinners. For Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. By becoming a curse for us.

While I draw this fleeting breath. When my eyes shall close in death. When I soar to worlds unknown. See thee on thy judgment throne.

[49 : 15] Rock of ages. Cleft for me. Let me hide myself. In thee. Amen. Let's pray. Lord God.

Lift us to a fitting response. To the reality of who you are. God of justice. Thank you for not hiding it from us.

Thank you for filling the Bible with it. Filling history with it. And indeed filling our own conscience with it. That we might not be surprised in the end. But might now while the day of grace is still upon us.

Seek the Lord Jesus and find refuge in him. Oh please change us then. Because of your justice.

Remind us of it often. Change the way we live and think and speak.

May it be that this truth about you would have its imprint upon our lives today. And until we see you seated on your judgment throne.

[50 : 21] We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Whether the justice of God is good news or bad news to you my friend today. Depends on your relationship to Jesus Christ.

Is he just your judge? The justice of God is bad news. But if he is your judge and your savior. The justice of God is good news. Because your judgment is in the hands of the son of God.

Who undertook to pay for all your sins. And to assure you of everlasting life. Get to Christ. And prepare to meet him. Amen.