

Will There be Justice?

A Family Tragedy

Mrs. Pali had worked hard to establish her gold-selling business. She and her daughter sold the jewelry while her son worked as the goldsmith.

She earned enough through this business to take care of her family and send her younger son to school. She was proud of how she had succeeded even though she was a widow.

Then one day robbers burst into her house in the middle of the day. They waved their guns and took all she had at gunpoint. No neighbors called for the police. They only tried to protect themselves. No one would help. Her son desperately chased after the robbers, calling for help. One robber turned and shot him down. He died on the street, with his mother and sister crying bitterly over him.

After the funeral was finished, Mrs. Pali was overwhelmed with worry. Her husband had died. Her son was murdered. All her possessions were gone. She kept wondering, "Why has all this trouble happened to me? I tried to do what was right. I have worked hard and lived wisely. Now I have received only bad for all my good!"

Mrs. Pali felt angry that nobody had helped her. She was upset that the police didn't catch the robbers. It seemed there was no justice. The wicked were free, but she was now trapped in poverty. Mrs. Pali beat her chest and cried out, "In this world will there ever be justice?"

Every Heart Cries for Justice

Not just Mrs. Pali, but many people these days ask the same question. In some countries, students who are poor may study

very hard day after day, but still fail their exams. The children of the wealthy may play all weekend and never study, but still pass their tests easily because their parents can afford to bribe the teacher. The poor cry out, "will there ever be justice?"

There are problems of injustice, corruption and oppression in every country. The poor and the rich, the good and the bad all feel the effects of evil desires and wrong actions. Together we wonder, "Will there ever be justice?"

Some people get so tired of injustice they give up doing what is right. The wicked lie, steal and murder as if there will never be a judgment for their misdeeds. They laugh at those who correct them and boast that they are not afraid. They hope their luck is good. Others, who are not so bold, secretly wonder if it is worth doing what is right and find themselves slipping away from good choices into bad.

Reasons Why there will be Justice

Should we give up and join them in their selfish pleasures and fun? Let's consider three reasons why we should be patient, do what is right and wait for justice.

1. Nature Teaches Justice.

If we look at nature we will see the truth of justice. The rice field teaches "Do good and receive good, do bad and receive bad." If we plant good rice seed we harvest good rice. If we plant sticky rice we will harvest sticky rice. If a fool plants thistles in his field will he have food for his family? Surely he will harvest only thistles. You cannot get a mango from a sugar palm

tree or sugar palm fruit from a coconut tree.

In the same way we know that no one can do wicked deeds and hope to receive good results from them. Sin always leads to suffering. The wicked cannot hope to escape their consequences forever. The Khmers have a saying, “Steal from others and we’ll have more, but when they catch us, we’ll have less than before.”

Nature also teaches us to patiently wait to see the results of actions. After we transplant the rice we cannot harvest it only a week later. We must wait several months. Some trees take many years to bear their first fruit. When the fruit finally comes it is delicious and worth the wait. What about the harvest of people’s actions? Some of the results also come quickly; some take many years and may only be known after death.

2. Our Hearts Teach Justice.

We all have a sense of justice. We feel hurt or angry when someone wrongs us. We demand to receive the good we deserve. If someone is sent to jail for murder, we say this is right—bad people must receive their punishment. Even a child wants justice. He is not happy when he sees his parents love his sister more than him. Children are hurt by favoritism. They know it is wrong.

Our hearts tell us clearly that justice is real and right. We may not understand how it all works, but we are quite sure that somehow, everything will be made right in time.

3. Religion Teaches Justice.

Is there any religion that does not teach this truth? If we examine Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam we will

find that each religion teaches something about justice and judgment. This means that millions of people in the world believe and trust that one day people will receive punishment for their wrong doing and reward for their right choices. This truth motivates people to do what is right and turn from the wrong.

If nature, our hearts and religion teach us to patiently do good, shall we plug our ears and run off to follow our desires? Will that bring us true joy or really help us escape from our sufferings?

Justice Needs a Just Judge

A big question many people have is, “Who is the one that will bring justice?” In this world it is very true that no justice happens unless there is a fair and wise judge. Many times the poor lose a court case because they could not afford to give the judge a bribe. Sometimes the judge wants to do what is right, but he is afraid of those who have power. He does not want to lose his position.

Khmers tell a story about an argument between a hermit and a tiger. The tiger threatened to eat the hermit. The hermit screamed for a cow to come, listen to both sides and decide who was right. After listening, the cow knew the hermit was right, but he still judged in the tiger’s favor. Why? He did not want to be the next one eaten!

If our common day problems need someone to be a fair and honest judge, what about the bigger problem of judgment and justice for the good and bad of the entire world? Who is keeping track of all the actions, thoughts and motives? Who is wise enough and just enough to do such a great work? No person is perfectly capable of judging other people. An earthly judge can only see the outside, not the inner thoughts.

Who will be the judge for us when we die?

A God of Justice

Let's look at the ancient scriptures to see what they say. We have already seen that these scriptures are full of wisdom for our lives. What do they say about a just judge? Many years ago there was a prophet in the Middle East whose many predictions regarding world empires came true. His name Daniel means "God is the Judge." He had a vision and described it in these words,

"As I looked thrones were set in place and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9-10).

This ancient scripture describes a judgment in which a great and mighty God sits down on a throne high above anything in this world. He is known as the One who sees and knows all things. He says, "I search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve" (Jeremiah 17:10).

Thousands upon thousands of angels help in this judgment. The books that are opened are where the angels have recorded the peoples' actions and thoughts. The angels have seen everything people did secretly. Nothing is hidden. Even the thoughts of the heart like hatred, envy, lust and desire are recorded there.

In the vision, Daniel described this God as perfectly holy,

without any sin, deceit or desire for bribes. He described God as extremely powerful and all knowing. Those who lied, cheated and stole will not be able to use their money to bribe God to be free from this judgment. God will judge with righteousness. He will not have favoritism towards anyone.

Running in Fear

Some people become very afraid when they hear this story of a judgment. They feel they have made so many mistakes. They know that even when their actions were good, their thoughts and motives were selfish. Some feel so discouraged that they think there is no purpose or hope in trying to do what is right. After being warned about judgment, some run off to sin in even greater ways than before.

This is a big mistake. It is like the lion of Africa. When the pack of lions finds some zebras and deer, the females creep around to the other side of the prey. Then the male lion shakes his mane and roars. The frightened creatures run for safety—right into the claws of the female lions.

We must not make the same mistake and let our fear of the judgment make us run and do evil. Let us stop and think clearly. We can be smarter than deer and zebras! If there truly will be a judgment, what should we do? There are at least two very important actions we can take: 1. Seek to do right. 2. Learn more about the Just Judge.

1. Seek to Do Right

No matter how much evil a person has done, there is no need to continue in that way. More evil will only bring greater suffering. If you accidentally cut yourself, would you keep on cutting just because you are bleeding? Of course not. You would quickly grab a bandage and be more careful with the

knife. This is true for our lives. Turning to what is right will bring relief and renewed hope.

Whenever we are discouraged and feel like giving up on doing what is right, let us take time to consider the truths in nature, our hearts and religion. These will clearly remind us that there will be a judgment. Let us think long about the benefits of speaking kindly to our neighbors, caring for our families and living honest, helpful lives. Let us reflect on the pain and suffering that comes whenever we follow our desires.

2. Learn more about the Just Judge

There is a unique courtroom in a certain country. The criminals who are tried there have been arrested because of using or selling drugs. The judge and the attorneys have agreed to do everything they can to help these people become free from their habits and find reputable work.

When a man is convicted of having sold drugs, he is sentenced to jail. However, the judge rules that he shall be taught a new skill. The judge cooperates with social agencies to help the criminal's wife and children have adequate food and education. Counseling is provided to help the man make changes in his thinking and behavior.

If you were that man, wouldn't you be glad you were sent to that courtroom? This is an unusual story about an unusual judge. What about the God who is described as the Just Judge? Does He provide any help to those who face His judgment?

The very scriptures we've been examining are full of helpful counsel that can prepare us for this judgment. There are many proverbs and stories with examples of how to live and how not to live. These scriptures tell more about this Just

Judge and His ways of helping people face the judgment. It makes sense to begin learning more about Him, doesn't it?

Points to Remember

- * All people need justice.
- * "Do good and you will receive good. Do bad and you will receive bad."
- * Nature, our hearts and religion teaches that there will be a judgment.
- * If there is not a just judge there will not be justice.
- * There is a Just Judge who has provided counsel in the scriptures on how to prepare for the judgment.

Questions

1. Underline the sentences that are correct.

Bad people were afraid of Mrs. Pali because she was a rich person.

Mrs. Pali didn't need justice because she had money.

Mrs. Pali wondered why she received bad when she had done what was good.

2. Write T before the true statements and F before the false statements.

_____ Many people feel the need for justice.

_____ Most religions don't teach about judgment.

_____ It takes time to see the fruits of our good and bad deeds.

3. Put an X before the one answer that is correct.

_____ We can hide our secret bad thoughts forever.

_____ The scriptures teach there is a Just Judge who sees and knows all things.

_____ Those who have done wrong should just give up and continue doing bad.

_____ We should be afraid of this Judge and not learn from Him.

4. Put an X before the answer. When will good deeds and bad deeds be rewarded?

_____ Right away

_____ Always in this life

_____ In the judgment

5. If this statement is true of your choice today, check it:

_____ I will choose to do justly and honestly, seeking to be compassionate and helpful because I know these things will bring a good harvest.

_____ I will learn more about the Just Judge and His counsel in the scripture on how to prepare for the judgment.