

Psalms 82:0 ¶ A Psalm of Asaph.

Asaph was recognized along with David as one of the primary songwriters in Israel.

2 Chronicles 29:30 “Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

Psalms 82:1 ¶ God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

Psalms 82:2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

“gods” = “gods in the ordinary sense...occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates....”

I am showing a partial definition from Strong’s in light of the context of the passage. I agree with many translations in concluding that the context is referencing those who are acting as judges among the Jewish people. Though they may have the authority to make judgments among the people, they need to remember that they are accountable to Almighty God as they do so.

What assessment does the psalmist make as he looks through the eyes of God according to what is right as revealed in His word? He has determined that the judges are unjust; they are ruling on behalf of the wicked—obviously, it would seem to me, for personal profit.

Though the judicial system is not yet totally corrupt in America, I believe that judicial activism is on the rise and that biblical principles are no longer accepted as the standard for determining right and wrong.

Psalms 82:3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Psalms 82:4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.

I am reminded that Asaph is identified as a seer, “a beholder in vision...a prophet.” I believe he is speaking as God’s prophet as he calls out for the judges to repent of their ways and judge righteously. In particular he points out that they should judge righteously on behalf of those who are most helpless—the poor, afflicted and needy. They should act to rescue them from abuse by the wicked, those who are lacking in morals (according to God’s word I think is implied). Scripture is clear in declaring God’s heart toward the helpless.

Deuteronomy 10:17–18 “For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.”

Deuteronomy 27:19 "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow."

Psalms 68:5 "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."

James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Psalms 82:5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

"They" – I believe is a reference to the unjust judges

I liked the New Living Translation of this verse: *"But these oppressors know nothing; they are so ignorant! And because they are in darkness, the whole world is shaken to the core."*

I believe that the fact that they "know not, neither will they understand" is a reflection of personal choices. God's word was available; but like the multitudes today, they have chosen to act according to their own wisdom. Scripture is clear in declaring that wisdom begins with fearing the LORD and that the wisdom of man is but foolishness.

Psalms 111:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

Proverbs 2:6 "For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

1 Corinthians 3:19 "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Psalms 82:6 ¶ I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

Psalms 82:7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Asaph boldly declares that although these wicked judges may consider themselves as "gods," they are but men of Israel, God's chosen people. They will die just as surely as those of earthly royalty.

Psalms 82:8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

The psalmist then calls out for Almighty God to judge the earth now. He knows that God is sovereign over all.

As I read this verse I thought of the words of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 1:2–4 “O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.”

Both these prophets despised the evil that surrounded them and desired God’s judgment upon the wicked. I too connect with their heart cry. Even as I make that connection, my heart trembles at the thought of how the answer to that prayer is going to culminate. Our newspaper headlines today seem to jump right from scripture, and I believe proclaim the “signs of the times”—that God’s wrath will soon commence against the wicked as He seeks to purify a remnant from Israel in preparation for the return of Lord Jesus as King of kings to establish His kingdom.