

# Judgement and Justice

The last two times I have had the opportunity of speaking here, we have spoken about the aspect of government, and the government of God. We started by looking at Isaiah chapters 9 and 11. We looked at the prophecy that Isaiah gave of Jesus Christ and His role in the government of God.

We looked at the fact that government was a responsibility that had to be carried. It was not something upon which one benefited for themselves, as so often people see government.

Paul uses the analogy of a nursing mother with a child to describe the relationship of he, as an apostle, to the Church, in terms of the government. The mother has within her hands the power to snuff out the life of a child, yet a truly loving mother gives her ENTIRE LIFE for the benefit of that little helpless child.

The Bible uses other methods to describe the relationship of the government of God. It talks about a shepherd and sheep. We, in the western world, are well removed from the agricultural society today, so that means nothing to us. We herd sheep with dogs. Sheep mean nothing to us in relationship to what they meant to the society when David was king over Israel. So it is perhaps an inappropriate thought for us, unless we rehearse the aspect of a shepherd and his sheep.

We could go to the Middle East today, and we would still find sheep and goats (which are herded together) have a very, very special place in the life of a family. They all have names and they all respond to those names. They are literally a member of the family.

I have a very striking memory of being in the country of Syria, travelling north of the Euphrates in the harvest season. Various nomadic tribes were coming down into the harvest areas to work. They were getting rides on the trucks that were being brought into the area. These people were bringing their livestock with them, because the livestock are a very essential part of the harvest process. The sheep get out in the fields and knock down all of the stubble. They dung the fields very nicely so they are ready for the next crop to be planted. They are very useful.

Where I came from, people would put the sheep in the back of the truck, and then they sat in the cab. Well, in Syria in this instance, the people were in the back of the truck WITH the sheep! In the pride of place on the dashboard of one great 18-wheel truck, in the sunshine, was a new-born lamb! This lamb had the best seat in the house!

This is indicative of the relationship that people have with their livestock. They will give for the benefit of their livestock, because ultimately speaking, those livestock are going to give back to them and repay them in so many ways.

God uses the aspect of a shepherd taking care of his sheep, in a way that western society today seldom sees and appreciates, because of the way in which we go about our farming practices.

The end result of God's government is a reign of peace. Yet it is not peace by compromise. It is a result of building the right relationships. There is another facet in Isaiah 9 that I would like to deal with today; one that is so easily overlooked.

***Isaiah 9: 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

***7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end...***

It is not going to be cut short because of a coup d'état. It is going to carry on. The peace is going to fill all of the world.

***7 ... Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.***

Isaiah is inspired to use an expression that it will be "ordered and established with judgement and justice". What does he mean by that? What is this judgement and justice of which Isaiah speaks?

We create problems for ourselves, because we use concordances, and they have limitations. We can look up one word at a time. But oftentimes when the Bible is making an expression, it uses more than one word. It couples them together.

In the New Testament we have faith, hope and charity. They become enshrined in the knowledge of people from 1st Corinthians 13:

***1 Corinthians 13: 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (godly love).***

We see the way in which James, Peter and John in their epistles, speak of faith, hope and charity. There is that connection provided there.

The Old Testament also uses such couplets and triplets. We talk of the widows, the fatherless and the stranger. In so doing, we are not JUST talking about the widows, the fatherless and the stranger. We are talking about anybody who suffers as a result of some disability in life. It is more than just those three. You might say the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The same is true with judgement and justice. Let me help you appreciate that. The difficulty is that, at times, translators find it very difficult to be consistent with the way in which they translate words. Words or concepts can be lost very easily, in reading through a standard translation.

Isaiah uses two words here. The word "judgement" comes from the Hebrew "mishpat". The word "justice" is a word you may recognise from the Hebrew: "ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah"; otherwise translated as "righteous" or "righteousness".

Let us look at God's Word and let us see how these words are used. In the book of Genesis is the first occasion in which we find this expression. It is used in terms of Abraham. Abraham is described, by God, in terms of this expression, judgement and justice (mishpat and ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah).

Genesis 18 records the occasion in which the Eternal appeared to Abraham while he was on his way to see the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. He had heard the cry, the anguish of that city. He had come, Himself, to see whether that was correct.

So, having dined with Abraham, having promised a child to Sarah next year, he arises to go towards Sodom.

***Genesis 18: 16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.  
17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,***

"Shall I keep this to Myself?"

***18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?  
19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."***

I am reading from the New King James version. I think the old King James version translates it a little differently:

***19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment ...***

In this case the New King James translators have translated "justice" as "righteousness". That is another meaning or use of the word.

God knew that Abraham, as a person, was going to do judgement and justice, as Isaiah expresses it. God said, *"I know this man. He has a quality about him that I admire and respect, and through which I am going to be able to bless all humanity"*.

Later, Moses instructed the children of Israel on the plains of Moab, prior to crossing into the Promised Land:

***Deuteronomy 16: 18 "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.***

They are to judge the people with just judgement. That is to be the criteria on which this society is governed. That was to be the norm for this society. Did it happen? The answer is -- occasionally.

We find it in terms of David. We can understand a little of why David was regarded as a man after God's own heart:

***2 Samuel 8: 15 So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people.***

You might say that is a summary statement of David's reign; how God evaluated David's reign. He administered judgement and justice to all his people. God liked what He saw. He appreciated it. It was in harmony with what He seeks in terms of His government.

We find the same is said of Solomon, early in his reign, when God had granted him great wisdom, and when he still feared God.

The Queen of Sheba, having heard of the fame of Solomon, came to find out whether what she had heard was, in fact, the case.

***1 Kings 10: 1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.***

She came to find out about his wisdom.

***2 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.***

***3 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her.***

***4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,***

***5 the food on his table ...***

... and all the pertinences of his realm.

***6 Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.***

***7 "However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me ...***

"I did not understand how great this really was!"

***7 ... Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.***

***8 "Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom!***

"What a wonderful privilege it is to be a citizen of the nation of Israel."

Why?

**9 (King James Version) Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.**

"You were made king to exercise judgement and justice!" That is a quality of God, that Solomon, in the early part of his reign, performed and it brought results for the nation. The Queen of Sheba was able to look at it, appreciate and marvel at what had happened amongst that people.

Did it remain that way? Was it a permanent situation? Solomon saw the evil about him.

**Ecclesiastes 3: 16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.**

The very opposite of what God was looking for was found. That eventually brought the total demise of the two houses of Israel, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom.

Isaiah, speaking to the southern kingdom, talks of the sins of the people:

**Isaiah 59: 8 The way of peace they have not known ...**

This nation had come to the point where it did not know the way of peace.

**8 ... And there is no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.**

There is no peace to be had. Why?

**9 Therefore justice is far from us, Nor does righteousness overtake us; We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness!**

The essential ingredients that would bring about peace in the land were gone. There could not be any peace in this environment.

**14 Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off ...**

They are removed from us. They are not part of our thinking as a nation.

**14 ... For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.**

Truth is lost, because judgement and justice have been forsaken. The people had removed themselves from those things.

What happened to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah? They both went into captivity. These concepts were never exercised by those people, yet Jesus Christ is going to come and establish a kingdom in which they WILL be the hallmark.

There are many more Scriptures relating to judgement and justice in relation to the Kingdom of God, than to the rule of man. We, as human beings, have fallen short of the standard that God wants.

**Isaiah 32: 1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice.**

That is going to happen! A king will rule in righteousness, and princes with justice. You and I have the privilege of being a part of that; being party to it.

Talking of the throne of the Messiah, the throne that Jesus Christ is coming to occupy:

**Isaiah 16: 5 In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness."**

Seeking those same elements -- judgement and justice.

The Psalms talk at length about it.

Speaking of the Millennium, the way in which the king is going to reign with justice and judgement:

***Psalm 72: 1 Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's Son.***

***2 He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice.***

***Psalm 89: 14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne ...***

It is the very FOUNDATION of the throne of God. Sometimes the translators have a field day trying to get the words right. The King James Version states:

***14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.***

God's throne is based upon justice and judgement. The challenge for those who have been called by God, is to live in harmony with that standard. Job knew a little about it. He understood this concept. He realised he had to do something with it in relation to himself:

***Job 29: 14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.***

"It was something in which I had to be clothed. I had to be "decked" with these elements."

That is something we have to look at and consider.

***Proverbs 1: 1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:***

In the early part of Solomon's reign, when he was subject to God, and seeking the wisdom of God, God granted him the privilege of being able to reign with judgement and justice, just as his father had. These truths were preserved for us.

***2 To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,***

... This aspect of knowing wisdom.

***3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity;***

What is the instruction of wisdom? Justice, judgement and equity. Equity is sometimes coupled with it. What does it do?

***4 To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion -***

***5 A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,***

***7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.***

Solomon starts to talk about wisdom, the wisdom that will provide justice and judgement, from which it is derived.

***Proverbs 2: 1 My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you,***

***2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom ...***

... if you seek godly wisdom ...

**2 ... And apply your heart to understanding;**  
**3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding,**  
**4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;**  
**5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.**  
**6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;**  
**7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;**  
**8 He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints.**  
**9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path.**

As a result of the pursuit of godly wisdom, you will THEN understand righteousness and judgement. It is not something that you can go down the road and buy. It is something that comes as a result of pursuit; a pursuit of those things that are godly. And at the same time you will learn equity and every good path.

The Bible oftentimes uses the term "equity" in terms of the application of the government of God. It is an interesting term. To us it is a legal concept, a philosophical concept. But the Hebrews were much more down to earth than that, because equity comes from a concept of a level path -- a smooth path, not something that is going uphill and down dales. It is just a smooth, easily trodden path. It is the same path for everybody. There is not one path for one person and another path for another. Everybody is treated in the same way, God's way. It is described in terms of "equity and every good path".

God says we have this privilege. It comes, not just because we want it, but because we seek for it. We look for it. It comes because of effort on our part.

In verse 4, Solomon says of wisdom:

***4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures ...***

We often forget what is involved in that. I have a relationship with California that you may not appreciate. One of my forbears walked from Nova Scotia to California. For what reason? Gold! And when he got flooded out here, he set sail for Victoria in Australia. When he didn't make his fortune there, he went to New Zealand and made his fortune in timber! It is amazing what people will do, the energy that people will give, the hardships they will subject themselves to, for physical treasure!

What would be involved in walking from the eastern seaboard, diagonally across the country? It would be easy today. There is a "McDonalds" every certain number of miles down the interstate!

Can we even conceptualise the hardships that would be involved in seeking physical treasure? I don't think so, yet that is the scenario that God gives that we have to embark upon in terms of seeking His wisdom, understanding what He has for us.

If we do this, if we give ourselves this way to God's ends, if we seek His purposes and goals:

***9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path.***

You will understand so much more about it.

A little later in the book of Proverbs we have another Scripture which deals with justice and judgement. This resonates in terms of other examples throughout the Old Testament.

***Proverbs 21: 3 To do justice and judgment (mishpat and ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah) is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.***

***Micah 6: 8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you ...***

It is not tens of thousands of sacrifices of lambs! It is not gallons upon gallons of the finest olive oil. It is not something you can buy. It is something that has to be sought for, as precious silver.

***8 ... But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?***

To do justice and judgement is more acceptable to the Eternal than sacrifice. Does it mean we do not need to be concerned about sacrifices? Does it mean that they are irrelevant? Not at all! But it highlights a problem that people have.

Let us read Amos 5 in terms of what we have just read in Proverbs. Amos was from the southern kingdom, talking to the people from the northern kingdom:

***Amos 5: 4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live;***

Amos plays upon the word which is translated into the English, "seek". But, in fact, in Amos, two separate Hebrew words are used. Sometimes we can lose sight of what is being said. This particular seeking is seeking the things of God. The other seeking that people do is for physical things.

God says, "*Seek for the things of God, and you will live*".

***5 But do not seek Bethel, Nor enter Gilgal, Nor pass over to Beersheba ...***

In those days, people placed a lot of emphasis in the physical locations where the patriarchs had been. The reason Jeroboam set up shrines in Dan and Bethel, was because the patriarchs had been there. The people were pursuing something physical. God said they were seeking the wrong way. They were supposed to be seeking spiritual things.

***5 But do not seek Bethel, Nor enter Gilgal, Nor pass over to Beersheba; For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, And Bethel shall come to nothing.***

***6 Seek the LORD and live, Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, And devour it, With no one to quench it in Bethel -***

Why would God do this?

***7 You who turn justice to wormwood, And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"***

You have buried it! You are so disinterested in the things of God, that you have disposed of them.

Yet what are these people doing?

***21 "I hate, I despise your feast days ...***

We know they kept feast days in the wrong month. We know they kept the Feast of Tabernacles in the 8th month. They probably kept the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement in that month too. God said He despised their feast days ...

***21 ... And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.***

***22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.***

***23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.***

***24 But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.***

The English translation loses some of the Hebrew meaning. In Hebrew, it means righteousness is "to run like a wadi in flood". Those of you who have been to Israel have probably been along a road where there are signs saying "*Do not venture into this wadi during rain*". Why? Because when it rains in the Judean desert, it comes down with such a torrent that it will remove a loaded bus from the road; the bus will just be swept before the torrent!

God said, "*I want justice to run down like water. I want righteousness to be like a wadi in flood, taking everything in front of it, without any restraint. You people have missed the point of what I am looking for*".

Are we saying the law is done away with? Not at all! We'll come back to that in a moment.

Jeremiah, in chapter 33, talks about the covenant that God desires to enter into with His people. He has talked about the New Covenant, and God's Law being written within the heart of the people.

***Jeremiah 33: 14 'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:***

***15 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.***

He will execute "mishpat and ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah" in all the earth! All of the earth is going to be part of it. You and I can have a part in that, through being in a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ, and with the Father.

***16 In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD [Eternal] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'***

What does God mean when He speaks of "mishpat and ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah"? We can look at these words individually, and we can derive a meaning from them.

"Mishpat" is a noun that is derived from the verb "shaphat", which means "to judge". When it is translated as "judgement", that is appropriate.

But judging, to God, is different from our society. In our society, we have a separation of duties. We have a judiciary as opposed to a legislature, as opposed to an executive. The judiciary has a responsibility to interpret and apply the laws as they exist. The judiciary is not supposed to create laws.

Yet in the Bible, to judge means both to rule AND to judge -- as in the case of the judges of Israel, or Samuel specifically. They fulfilled the role of both a ruler and a judge at the same time.

You might say one of these days we are promised the opportunity of being kings and priests, and as such, we will have the opportunity of judgement being entrusted to us. We will have to both be able to rule and to judge at the same time -- administer the law and judge in terms of the law. A judge was called upon to interpret and apply the law of God to the situation in hand, and, if necessary, hand out a sentence, if a sentence was called for.

When one considers the concept of being a judge in the Hebrew world, it carried another concept that never enters into our thinking today. It is a thought that is very close to God -- and that is of the RESTORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS. So often, when we judge today, we just write a person off. We wish they were dead. God says that is not of Him! He wants people to live -- His way. The problem is that everyone wants to live THEIR WAY!

So God, when He talks of judging, is making the aspect of the restoration of relationships very important. Consider that when you pass judgement on another person. Think, "*Hold on. How often do I really seek to resolve a relationship difficulty that exists?*"

That is what God really wants! I know some are intractable. Some are very difficult to resolve. But do I see that as a goal, when I am faced with a judgement that has to be made? Do I seek to heal that relationship?

Where does the judgement come from? It comes from God's law - and from His law alone.

You might say that mishpat, in many ways, refers to the letter or the application of the law; what the law says, what the law requires.

What about "ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah"? We have all heard the term "righteousness". By itself, "tsidqâh" (the masculine form of the feminine "ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah") speaks of a righteousness, or a CORRECTNESS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, and hence with the rest of creation. It deals with equity, and above all else, it deals with well-being. It feeds peace in the sense of well-being.

When "ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah" is coupled with "mishpat", it deals with the PURPOSE of God's law, not just the letter of the law - - what we might refer to as the SPIRIT of the law.

We can start to see the application of this in terms of what we have looked at already:



***1 Timothy 1: 5 Now the end (Greek "telios") of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:***

If you want to look at a Greek word that has had a lot written about it, here is one to study. "Telios" means "the end". But is it the end in terms of the COMPLETION, or is it the end in terms of the PURPOSE? The purpose!

The spirit of God's law is not just a law in itself. It is to produce something! It is not just to produce sacrifices. The law of God exists to bring about a change in our mentality, to bring about a change in our understanding -- the understanding coming from the very mind of God!

God's law was given so that we can start to plumb the very mind of God. We can see how God looks at circumstances. Paul said the purpose of the commandment, the end of the commandment, is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith.

It does not just exist in the letter. There is a spiritual application of it. It has to be sought and understood.

Let us look at an example that God has provided for us, an example from the reign of David, of this aspect of "mishpat and ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah" being applied.

David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, and caused Uriah to die in battle. God was not going to leave this relationship marred the way it was. It was an aspect of judgement.

***2 Samuel 12: 1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.***

***2 "The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.***

***3 "But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.***

Most of us may think that is strange to have a little ewe lamb like that as part of the family. We could perhaps think of a cat or dog today. People make them part of their family. They share their lives together.

We used to watch the "Crufts Dog Show" in England. At one time it was the premier dog show in the world. I thought it was amazing how often people looked like their dog! I don't know who became part of which family!

Sometimes reading a comment like the prophet, Nathan's, we may think it is strange. It is not part of our lifestyle, but it is part of the lifestyle of many people these days. That is the way in which they treat their animals.

So here we have this wonderful relationship of a man with one little ewe lamb, which was literally part of his family. It was treated as one of his children. It grew up with the children.

***2 Samuel 12: 4 "And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."***

***5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!***

***6 "And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."***

What did the letter of God's law require? He had to restore four-fold.

***Exodus 22: 1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.***

David knew this. It is interesting that here God is dealing with a human problem, and he is talking about animals! It is so easy to pass off God's law as being so agrarian, and so unrelated to us. We can read Exodus 22:1 and think it just refers to animals: "if someone takes from me, they can restore four-fold". We can pass over it very easily.

The apostle Paul talked about the ox treading out the corn ...

***1 Corinthians 9: 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?***

No, the ox was simply a way in which God was expressing the way in which we are to relate to one another, and to learn lessons from it.

The letter of the law was that four-fold was to be repaid, but David, knowing what justice should be, and knowing what was right, said, *"That is not even going to hurt that man. He is not going to miss four sheep."*

The man was a very rich man. He had many flocks and herds. Even if he gave them four sheep, what is to guarantee that these are going to blend into the family the way the previous little one had? This man has to restore four sheep. Humanly, what is he going to do? He is going to find the four oldest nags he can find that are still staggering around with the flock, and give the man those.

David looked at the loss of one man as opposed to the abundance of the other man. He said the law of God is not just about "four for one". It is about equity. It is about relationships, and this rich man has destroyed a relationship. There is only one penalty that fits the destruction of this relationship, and that is the death penalty. Little did he know that the parable was being said about him!

He understood the mishpat that was required, but he also understood the ts<sup>c</sup>dâqah that was required; the rightness that was required. He said the sin of this man was so egregious that he should not continue to live. So, having pronounced that, you can imagine his alarm when ...

***2 Samuel 12: 7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.'***

I gave you everything you needed.

***9 'Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.'***

... the enemies of God.

***10 'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'***

***11 "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.'***

***12 'For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'"***

There was a penalty to pay.

David repented, and the Eternal said he would not die. God said, *"The judgement that you pronounced is not going to be given in this case, as fitting as it may be. You are not going to be subjected to it, because you have repented."*

***14 "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."***

The child did die.

As we turn over the pages of the Bible, what do we find? In the next chapter, David's son, Amnon dies. That makes two. Then a few chapters later, Absalom dies. That is three.

In 1st Kings chapter 2 we find that Adonijah dies! Four lives were given for that life of Uriah. David lost four of his sons for the sin that he conducted. God exacted the penalty in terms of David's offspring, for what he had done. He suffered. He saw that.

Maybe that was one of the reasons why David came to appreciate this aspect, and why God could say of him that he ruled Israel with justice and judgement. He realised that there was a penalty for sin. He also realised that sin can lead to giving occasion to the enemies of God. Sin is not just sin in itself. It does something to others. It provides ammunition whereby God's name can be ridiculed.

So we have a real challenge to bear that in mind.

The gravity of the sin that David involved himself in, was such that restitution was not adequate to address the problem. A whole relationship had been destroyed, and God wanted David to understand the gravity of what he had done to Uriah and Bathsheba's family.

Talking about the future and the relationship that God desires with us, He says:

***Hosea 2: 19 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice ...***

"You are going to be betrothed to me in mishpat and ts<sup>e</sup>dâqah. The basis of our relationship is going to be upon an understanding of My law, and of the real intent of My law -- not just the letter of the law by itself, but the real intent of what My law is all about -- the proper application of it."

***19 ... In lovingkindness and mercy;  
20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the LORD.***

Jesus Christ spoke to those who considered themselves to be the people of God, the religious people, those who considered that they knew the Word and the Law of God, the scribes and the Pharisees. He upbraided them because of what they did to the relationships of people; the way in which they went about exercising destructive policies on the relationships of people. They devoured widows' houses. They made proselytes. They were hypocrites.

He went on and derided them because of their misunderstanding of God's Law.

***Matthew 23: 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin ...***

"That is right. That is good and proper, but you have neglected the PURPOSE of God's Law. You get involved in the miniature of tithing on some of the smallest of seeds, but you have missed the big picture of what it is all about! You don't understand judgement and justice yet. You have missed the picture. You have ...

***23 ... neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.***

It is a lesson for us. We always have to keep our minds very focused upon what is the purpose of God's law?

There are those we know who have never learned that lesson. They ended up seeing God's law as being redundant because they never saw it as LEADING to something else. They never saw what was behind it, and what God intended with His law.

You and I have the privilege of learning that, and making it part and parcel of our lives, so that we, with Jesus Christ, can be involved in the government of God. We will not govern according to what we think is appropriate! We will govern according to the judgement and justice that God has established -- based upon the law and the goal of the Almighty God, not upon what may seem right or appropriate to us at any point in time.

What does it require? It requires the knowledge of God's Law. But it requires a lot of diligence in seeing the application of God's law, asking, "*How does it apply to me?*".

As James said, it is the wisdom that is from above, the wisdom that we have to seek from God, that we have the opportunity to have access to, through God's Holy Spirit.

As Solomon said, if we seek it, we will be able to have it. Justice and judgement will be part of us, along with equity and every good path!

*...Peter Nathan*

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