

Names of God from the Bible

37 – Judge of all the earth

All God's Names are eternal names – so He is still Judge of all the Earth for us today.

Reading: Genesis 18:16-33

“Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

What a wonderful question! Even as I write this, I have a sense of joy, excitement and peace permeating my body. But who asked the question and what was the context?

It was Abraham. He had just received a visit from three men. They had come to tell Abraham and Sarah that Sarah would have a son within the next twelve months. Sarah couldn't believe her ears and laughed at the thought, since she was well passed normal child-bearing age (being about 90 years old then).

The Lord chided her for her reaction and then asked one of the most despair-shattering rhetorical questions ever asked, *“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”* The only realistic response was *“Of course, not!”* Into Abraham and Sarah's hopeless state of barrenness and heartache, God spoke hope and the assurance of a miracle, their own baby son.

After repeating the promise, the men got up to leave. The Lord decided to share His immediate plans with Abraham. God was going down to Sodom and Gomorrah to confirm the level of wickedness of the people living there. God said that He would discuss it with Abraham, in view of Abraham's future. God had chosen to bless Abraham so Abraham would, in turn, be a blessing to the nations. God also wanted Abraham to learn about righteousness and justice directly from Him.

God disclosed to Abraham what He had planned: the destruction of both Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was shocked, particularly as he knew his nephew, Lot, and his family lived very close by. In utter desperation, Abraham asked God if He would destroy righteous people with the wicked. Abraham speculated that there were fifty righteous people living in the city and asked if God would destroy them with the rest of the wicked people. Abraham couldn't conceive God doing such a thing.

Abraham pressed on and said, *“Far be it from you to do such a thing – to kill the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*

We remember God's response. He would spare the whole city if fifty righteous people could be found. Abraham had second thoughts and started reducing the number of people by five as he petitioned God. In fact, he kept reducing the number until he reached ten. Each time God responded that He would not destroy the city if that number of righteous people were found.

Sadly, the men kept walking towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and history records that the cities were destroyed. However, not before Lot, his wife and daughters were dragged away. Even after that demonstration of God's mercy, Lot's wife rebelliously looked back towards the city and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Yes, God is the Judge of all the earth and yes, God will do right. God demonstrated both aspects of His character, which have been recorded for us in history. As God said, He showed Abraham what a righteous Judge does. God also showed Abraham how He wanted Abraham to live.

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What did God reveal to Abraham?

1. There is an ultimate Authority and He is God.
2. God is the Judge of all the earth. God's judgements are righteous.
3. God will destroy wickedness but He did not destroy the righteous with the wicked.
4. God is merciful. He told Lot and his family to leave but when they hesitated, God dragged them out in order to save them.
5. God does not override our free will. Lot's wife was allowed to look back, but suffered the consequences. Lot's daughters were allowed to commit incest.
6. Righteous living pleases God.

Has God the right to judge us? Yes, He made us, created us and has our best interests at heart. He has an awesome plan for each of us to fulfil. It's up to us to follow His plan.

We must never confuse mercy and grace with impotence. God has earned the right to judge through Jesus Christ dying on the Cross.

What does that name mean for us today

We are accountable for how we live our lives. What we do and say will be judged. We should therefore be very careful how we live.

Prayer

Thank You, Father, for being a righteous Judge. Thank You that we can fully trust You to make righteous judgements about everyone who has ever lived. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 2
- Matthew 12:30-37
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Questions

1. What is your reaction to the idea that God is our Judge?
2. Do you think God judges people in different ways? If so, what is the difference?
3. How does Jesus fulfil that name?