

What is the purpose of God's judgment?

Introduction

In January 2024, our son Ondra died of a serious illness. He was twenty-six years old. While he was alive, we prayed with my wife and many believing friends, brothers and sisters, that God, our Father, would heal him. We could say that God did not answer our prayers, but within a few days we understood that it could have been the other way around. But the Father answered our prayers in a different way than we had hoped. I begged the Father to reveal to me more information about death and his judgment that is in his word, because I realized how little I knew about both. The result is this study. The loss of a loved one is always painful, and that pain will probably not go away until we meet that loved one again. This is the hope that is present throughout the Scriptures when we carefully read the word of God. The Law and the Prophets testify to this hope for everyone, even for the dead who were not believers or lived before the upcoming of the Messiah, because they testify to the originator of this hope, the son of God Jesus the Messiah (John 5:39). This hope, which Jesus / Yehoshua, the son of our heavenly Father, bought for us, is fortunately very real and absolutely trustworthy. It strengthened our trust in a just and merciful God. God is good and there can be no other, because He is the giver and preserver of life. God supports life in all circumstances, because the support of life is His fundamental creative purpose and the principle upon which all creation stands. We will show how death is related to this and how it is reflected in His judgment.

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Foreword

For centuries, God's judgment was a seriously taken warning of God's punishment, influencing the thinking of Christians to such an extent that many changed their minds about doing something wrong. God's judgment was often depicted by the churches in terrifying scenes full of suffering for sinners. Many such artistically masterful paintings were painted in the Middle Ages. Even church decorations sometimes seem threatening, making people fear God's judgment. But today, in Christian nations, most people are quite indifferent to God's judgment. Why? The reasons are the same as those that led to the loss of trust and authority of churches in historically Christian nations. Therefore, even church images of God's judgment are often seen only as an outdated legacy of church teaching, not as a serious warning. The question is whether God's judgment is really supposed to inspire terror, as the churches have propagated, and whether God's judgment is supposed to be as black and white as the churches usually portray it? Would such a judgment be consistent with God's justice, holiness, and His creative principle that everything God created should support life? And what about people who lived before Jesus Christ / Joshua the Messiah came to earth in human flesh?

We, who believe that God's word is true and that God is just and merciful at the same time, should try to understand the meaning of God's judgment and death, what it serves, what principles God's judgment is guided by, and let us not be afraid to want to know more about how it will take place and under what conditions. If we are to know this, the Father certainly had it written down for us in his word.

God's creative principle and God's justice

The fact that many people believe that order arose spontaneously from chaos is evidence of how blinded the minds of men are to the glory and power of God in His handiwork, which is the world in which we live (Romans 1:19-20). God revealed this to men, but they refused to acknowledge it. Today, men trust more in scientists who are only just discovering the fractional elements of creation and its laws, rather than seeking answers to their questions in the Creator Himself. Separation from the Creator allows God's adversary to deceive people and challenge the vital natural principles that have guided humanity throughout the ages. This deliberate attack on God's natural order, which has

no parallel, is intended, among other things, to lead humanity away from the Creator, who offers us the hope of returning to eternal life.

The basic creative principle

The basic creative principle upon which God's natural order is based can also be seen in God's Word. God provides us with everything we need to freely decide in life, about the path we want to take. There are only two. The broad and comfortable path leading to destruction (Greek word *apoleia*; Mt 7:13-14) and the narrow, difficult path leading to salvation and a return to eternal life.

This also applies to those who act as God's servants. In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus warns those who act in his name but do not follow God's will that "... *in that day...*" our Lord will reject them. Catholic doctrine to this day does not doubt that this is the Day of Judgment. It is clear from Scripture that judgment can be severe even for evil and unfaithful servants of God. God is a good Father and at the same time He is just. Every evil brings consequences that ultimately lead to death (Rom 6:23). But the mercy of God and Jesus opens up possibilities for every humility and repentance because both of these attitudes in the judgment give a great chance for salvation. The Father, our Creator, wants to use every opportunity to save the sinner (Ezek 18:21-23), because everything and His judgment serves to support life.

What is the purpose of God's and human judgment?

Let's start by looking at the court in general. First, we need to understand what any court is for. Why does it exist?

Since ancient times, the function of a judge has been associated with royal power. Kings judged publicly. One such royal court of Solomon is recorded in the Bible (1 Kings 3:16-28). Court is an instrument of justice, and justice brings peace (Isaiah 32:17). The role of the court (even human) is to ensure peace and tranquility. We see that the court is an instrument for supporting life. And one of the most important. Since ancient times, the function of a judge has been associated with royal power. Kings judged publicly. One such royal court of Solomon is recorded in the Bible (1 Kings 3:16-28). Court is an instrument of justice, and justice brings peace (Isaiah 32:17). The role of the court (even human) is to ensure peace and tranquility. We see that the court is an instrument for supporting life. And one of the most important. The court still

plays an irreplaceable role in kingdoms and states. The king was also the supreme judge, but even minor disputes were resolved by appointed judges or nobles on their estates. It was generally true that courts were always the prerogative of socially recognized and trusted authorities, because it was a very big responsibility.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many powerful works in your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”

Historical experience – lawlessness destroys empires

History is full of bad endings of empires, both large and small, that have collapsed, among other things, because courts and rulers have ceased to respect and apply the law. Without a fair trial, lawlessness and arbitrariness have grown. The feudal lords who ruled most European countries until the end of World War I are the latest such example. Even the Great French Revolution would not have been possible if the king and the nobility had not acted arbitrarily for a long time and committed great injustice against people who could not defend themselves. An even greater example of the importance of law and the consequences of its non-observance is the fall of the Roman Empire.

The influence of injustice on the loss of Rome's great power status was fundamental. Roman law was based on several principles, the first of which was customary law, which drew on the natural order of God. During late antiquity, various forms of corruption, injustice, and abuse of power emerged that undermined the basic principles of Roman society. The high level of corruption and abuse of power among politicians and officials led to the weakening of institutions and the loss of public trust. Growing economic inequality and the division of society into rich and poor contributed to social tension. Injustice towards the poor, such as frequent tax burdens, led to revolts and rebellions. The inability to fairly enforce laws and protect the rights of citizens led to the breakdown of the rule of law. Injustice thus reflected a general decline in moral values in society.

Growing lawlessness affected all state-forming components, which significantly contributed to the weakening of the stability and cohesion of the Roman Empire, leading to its gradual disintegration.

In such situations, the importance and responsibility of those who are supposed to oversee compliance with the law and its enforcement comes forth.

God's judgment is not only for condemning and punishing man

God's judgment is different from human judgment because it is not influenced by ignorance or subject to any human or other power. Moreover, God acts and judges in a timeless manner and knows the hidden causes of situations that are the subject of judgment. In the Bible, God's judgments are described most often in the book of Judges, in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, but the attentive reader will recognize God's sense of justice and his judgment in all the books of the Bible.

Some sources from which this information is drawn: The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon: A classic work that examines the causes of the fall of Rome, including political corruption and moral decay. The History of Rome by Titus Livius: Contains an analysis of the political and social changes in Rome that contributed to its decline.

An example of God's attitude and solution to reprehensible behavior is in God's conversation with Abraham (who was still called Abram at the time), when he prophetically informs Abram of the future of his descendants in Egyptian slavery. He literally says: "... Know for sure that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved and afflicted there four hundred years. But the nation they will serve will I judge, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ... In the fourth generation they will return here, because the iniquity of the Amorites will not yet be complete." (Genesis 15:14-16)

From this historical situation we can see that God does not judge or punish anyone without reason or arbitrarily. His judgment must be based on the completeness of all, not just partial evidence, and it also takes into account the state of society, not just the individual. This feature of God's judgment is key. It is one of the basic principles of God's final judgment at the end of all ages. God's judgment and punishment of every person must be fair in all aspects and contexts of life, including the invisible ones. God's judgment at the end of time must complete the just judgment of the entire life of every person, in all its contexts. Even that which could not be resolved during our short lives. For this, a simple summary of what each person did, said, or secretly thought during their life is not enough. Therefore, every dead person must be revived (not resurrected to life) in order to have a chance to manifest himself in conditions that are not influenced by Satan (Rev. 20:5-25). Therefore, Jesus says that it will

be easier for Sodom in judgment than for Capernaum, and he reasons that Sodom would still be standing today if it had seen the mighty works that Jesus did (Matt. 11:22-24; Luke 10:12).

God's, but also human, judgment serves not only to justly condemn and punish crimes, but also to lead to the correction of those who commit them. We will show that God's judgment plays a very important role in the education of man.

The Hebrew words related to judgment are דין= din; שפוט= shafat; משפט= mishpat; God as Lord and Ruler over Israel is also its Judge. His rule is manifested in his judicial office, which both ensures that the people stand in the covenant [Isa 5:15f] and helps his people in overcoming the dangers threatening them from without. God as judge is both a helper [Jdg 11:27; Ps 119:175] and a deliverer [Ex 6:6; 2Sa 18:31]. The Hebrew words related to judgment are דין= din; שפוט= shafat; משפט= mishpat; God as Lord and Ruler over Israel is also its Judge. His rule is manifested in his judicial office, which both ensures that the people stand in the covenant [Isa 5:15f] and helps his people in overcoming the dangers threatening them from without. God as judge is both a helper [Jdg 11:27; Ps 119:175] and a deliverer [Ex 6:6; 2Sa 18:31].

An example of God speaking as a judge is found in God's words to Abraham (then Abram), when he prophetically informs Abram of the future of his descendants in Egyptian slavery. He literally says: "*... Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved and afflicted there four hundred years. But the nation they will serve will I judge, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ... In the fourth generation they will return here, because the iniquity of the Amorites will not yet be complete.*" (Genesis 15:14-16)

From this historical situation we can see that God does not punish anyone arbitrarily. The judgment and punishment must be fair and justified. Every (even human) judgment serves not only to condemn and punish, but mainly for the fair resolution of controversial and dangerous situations that could threaten the order and peace that protect society from chaos, disintegration and extinction.

Moreover, God's judgment must also resolve what no human judgment can resolve. The fate of deceased people from Adam and Eve to the last

generation. This applies to all who have lived and are living on this earth, under this heaven (the present earth and heaven will be replaced by a new earth and

Taken from the Bible Dictionary of A. Novotný

God's judgment also takes place in heaven. See Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 4. John 16:11;

a new heaven Rev. 21:1). God's judgment must be, is and will be just, but at the same time it must serve to SUPPORT and PROTECT life, like all of God's creative work.

Questions that cannot be resolved yet

We are all mortal, but our short life and our death do not and cannot resolve (except for faithful servants of God) an important question. Could a deceased person have lived and acted in a way that is good in God's eyes if he had not been burdened by sin and had not been deceived and influenced by the servants of the Evil One? Even human courts take into account the gravity and circumstances of the crime. If there are mitigating circumstances, even human courts (if they are fair) try to give a milder punishment or a punishment that is intended to have an educational effect on the person's correction. For each crime, a range of severity of punishment is set so that mitigating circumstances can be taken into account.

The Mosaic Law also establishes various sacrifices and punishments for various offenses. The death penalty is only for particularly dangerous (for all people) actions. No current court (not even God's) can answer the above question, because the world is still ruled by God's adversary, the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). In order for God's righteous judgment to take place, God's adversary (Rev. 20), the originator and main culprit of the bad development of humanity (John 16:8-11), must first be condemned and punished. Therefore, the rest of the dead will not come to life before Satan is thrown into the lake of fire.

The question is also how to reliably determine who is worthy of being written in the book of life and who is not? How long would a person have to live to make it indisputable that he is or is not worthy of living forever (being written in the book of life). This will probably require a sufficient database of precedent situations with the help of which everyone will be judged. We can find a mention of it, for example, in Daniel 9:24, where the prophet writes: *“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the*

transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.”

The Hebrew word chatam (חָתַם), meaning “to finish, to close, to end” translated as “sealing” sins, is also translated by other translators as “fulfilling the measure of sins.” What is that measure of sins, if not the complete fulfillment of their types (today we would say a database of all sins) and their consequences, the polarity=severity on the scale of severity that they cause, will be taken into account in the final judgment. The word chatam “sealing” is here supplemented by the Hebrew word (תָּמַם) “tamam (táwmam)”, which can have, among other things, the meaning of coming to an end, of completing. It is as if we were to say of someone who repeatedly commits crimes until their measure is complete that he has sealed his fate with the last one. This is also true of the completion of the guilt of the Amorites in our historical example. In the second place, the word chatam is translated as “sealing,” because in that place it is about the completion, the closing of vision and prophecy. Until the measure (the completion of the database of sins and their precedent cases) of all sins is completed, completed = “sealed,” the righteous judgment of God cannot even occur.

First and second death

Miloš Pavlik's study translation translates the word נביא (naw-bee) as prophecy.

People usually do not like to talk or think about death, yet King Solomon, the author of the biblical books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, recommends that we not avoid the topic of death because it can help us become wise (Ecclesiastes 7:2-3). Sometimes we hear or read about people who remember their past lives. That is why some people believe in the so-called reincarnation, or rebirth of a person who has already died, and this rebirth can be repeated.

Reincarnation is an important part of Eastern religions. However, there is no mention in God's Word that would confirm or refute reincarnation. However, the Bible does mention the first and second deaths. Let us use God's Word to find out what both terms mean, because they are very closely related to understanding God's judgment and its purposes.

First death

The name first death indicates that it is the first death since a person was born. It was not possible for him to die before that, because he had never lived before. King Solomon writes about the first death in the book of Ecclesiastes:

“And I praised the dead who have long since died more than the living who are still alive. But better than both of them is he who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 4:2-3;

And elsewhere he says: *“A good name is better than good oil, and the day of death than the day of birth.”* Ecclesiastes 7:1;

“For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, nor do they any longer have a reward, because the memory of them has been forgotten.” Ecclesiastes 9:5;

According to Ecclesiastes, the first death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person. On the day of death, a person can no longer add anything good or add anything bad to or take away from their sins. The words of Ecclesiastes are completed by Jesus, who said: *“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. I will show you whom you should fear. Fear him who, after killing, has authority to throw you into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”* Luke 12:4-5; (Jesus Christ is not talking here about the fear of Adamic death, but about death by the violent hand of God’s enemies)

And the apostle Paul writes: *“hand such a man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”* 1Cor 5:5;

Moreover, in Paul’s words there is great hope concerning God’s judgment. Even a person with great sin can be forgiven, or rather, he will be allowed to humble himself, acknowledge his guilt, and correct himself.

Jesus even says that even blasphemy against him can be forgiven: *“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”* (Matthew 12:31-32;)

Many things can be forgiven in the judgment. Even those that we consider to be great sins.

Death, as presented by the man in linen, is not a threat when he tells Daniel at the end of their conversation: *“You will come to the end and rest, and you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.”* Da 12:13; Death is represented here by the Hebrew word נָח= noó-akh to rest.

In the light of the cited texts, even the death to which we are subject seems less tragic than it usually appears to people. No text suggests that the first death is definitive and that a person who dies the first death suffers. The Word of God here describes the first death as a state in which the human soul is unconscious.

All of the texts mentioned, however, strongly testify to how important it is how we live, so that we rather accumulate treasure in heaven and avoid the threat of the second death.

Second death

“The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, ... And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And whoever was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:6; 14-15;

The Bible does not hide anything important from us. On the contrary, our Creator wants us to be able to make decisions and act on the basis of correct and truthful information. Let us recall once again Jesus' words: *“Fear him who after killing has authority to throw you into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”* The second death, unlike the first death, is a harsh and consciously experienced punishment, when the dead condemned in this way perceive their condition. Let us recall Jesus' parable "The Rich Man and Lazarus" in Luke 16:19-31;. Among other things, it is clear from it that the second death does not mean unconscious, but consciously experienced suffering. This is how it differs from the first death.

In the text (Rev 20:6; 14-15) the words “did not live” and “resurrection” occur. The word “did not live” is the Greek word ἀναζάω [anazaó] and means (again) to come to life, to return to life (also transl.) with the negative “ού” at the beginning it means did not live. The word resurrection is the Greek word ἀνάστασις, εως, ή [anastasis] 1. rising 2. resurrection, resurrection.

These are two different words with different meanings. Why are they not the same? Because resurrection (anastasis = rising to life) is used in connection

with permanent, never-ending life. Reviving (anazaó / returning to life) is used in connection with God's judgment, which will only decide the further fate and possible correction of the resurrected people. Only then will it be known whether their return to life is for eternal life or for casting into the lake of fire. Jesus explained the difference clearly to his disciples. *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out; those who have done good will rise to life, and those who have done evil will rise to judgment."* John 5:28-29;

The key is that the others are resurrected for judgment, which does not automatically mean that the judgment will end immediately in the lake of fire. Some will have an easier time in judgment than others. In God's words, we can find many indications that God's judgment is not just a formal condemnation with the result of the second death. That it is not a formal process is evidenced, for example, by Jesus' words about Sodom and Gomorrah, that they will have an easier time in judgment than Capernaum or the cities that rejected and did not accept the message about the kingdom of God (Matthew 10:15; 11:23; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12).

Solomon writes about God's judgment without spreading terror

Between the first and second deaths there is a space and time in which what King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 takes place: *"The conclusion of the matter, everything having been said, is: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil."*

"I saw again under the sun that in the place of justice there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness there was wickedness. I said in my heart, 'God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every purpose and for every work.' Then I said in my heart concerning the sons of men, that God tests them, that they may see that they are like animals." Ecclesiastes 3:16-18;

From Solomon's words emerges a picture of a judgment that will deal with everything a person does during their lifetime. Jesus says: *"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."* Matthew 12:36-37; Our brain is capable of remembering every moment of life

in all its dimensions, as we perceive it with all our senses. Jesus' words confirm this. Why would the Creator go to such lengths to create the human brain to record and store everything about our lives if it didn't matter? Everything a person does for good increases his chances of not ultimately being affected by the second death in the lake of fire. The goal of God's judgment is to save life, not to destroy it.

God's judgments

"... When your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa 26:9;

The prophet Isaiah (v 11:2-4) writes about how judgment will be done in God's kingdom: "And the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. *He will delight in the fear of the Lord, and will not judge by what his eyes see, nor decide by what his ears hear, but he will judge the poor with righteousness, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the ungodly.*"

The final judgment of God will certainly proceed on the same principle. God's judgments have been and are proceeding throughout human history, without most people realizing it. Let us recall the example of the Amorites, Sodom and Gomorrah, but also the flood. These divine interventions are also a manifestation of God's judgments. All of these judgments of God are only partial. As Jesus said, even Sodom and Gomorrah will face God's final judgment. Yet even these partial judgments are instructive for us. They can teach us about God's justice. For God's people, there is a recorded period when God ruled and judged them directly. This period is recorded in the books of Exodus through Samuel.

We must be born again

Jesus spoke these words to Nicodemus, a respected man among the Jews. He explained to him that whoever wants to live in the kingdom of God must be born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:1-8). That is, figuratively speaking, the flesh must die and be born again by the Spirit who gives life. The apostle Paul writes about the body in his first letter to the Corinthians (verse 15:44): *"It*

is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If it is a natural body, it is also a spiritual body." Paul explains that man undergoes a development from carnal thinking to spiritual thinking. Both Jesus and Paul speak of rebirth from the carnal man to the spiritual man. Both also say that after the resurrection people are different (Matthew 22:30; 1 Corinthians 15:41-44). This is further information pointing to God's purpose to lead man to immortality. If Jesus says that those who did good will be resurrected to life and those who did evil will be resurrected to judgment, what is the purpose of the judgment? So that everyone will eventually end up in the lake of fire, or so that God's judgment will lead them to correction, after which they too will be allowed to live forever? Since God is good and supports life, his judgment must also support correction leading to eternal life. This is related to the rebirth that must occur for everyone who wants to live permanently in the kingdom of God. This transformation from a carnal-minded person to a spiritual person must occur.

Prayer

In prayer we turn to the Father, as children turn to their parents. In this context, Jesus says: *"Which of you is there who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"* (Mt 7:9-11). In prayer, we turn to our good Father, who is in heaven, yet not far from us (Acts 17:27). Each of us has experienced that our prayer was not answered at first glance. It can be especially painful when we pray for the healing of a loved one and he or she does not get well and sometimes even dies. We ask why God did not hear us? It is never that God does not hear our prayers.

A prayer uttered with good intentions, as a request for help for other people, always has great value, even if it is not fulfilled. All prayers go to the person for whom they were offered to God and Jesus Christ. It is not excluded that they can also have great importance in God's court as intercessions. At the same time, they also bear witness to the one who prays. For both parties, good prayer striving for the good of others is of great benefit. No prayer, even one that is seemingly not answered, is in vain. Its fruit can only be revealed at God's judgment.

Conclusion

When we see how thorough the preparation of God's judgment is, we can rightly believe that God's judgment will be just in a way that no human judgment can be. We already know that God's judgment is not only just, but like all of God's creation, it serves life.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God's grace is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23;

"For judgment without mercy is to him who has not shown mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment." James 2:13;

All these words testify that God's judgment does not serve to send everyone who has fallen victim to God's adversary, Satan, and his slaves, to the lake of fire. And our transience, which ends in death, is not final. Even God's final judgment is for the salvation of everyone who is capable of salvation. Let us remember the kind and wise words of Ecclesiastes:

"Rejoice, young man, in your childhood, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment."

And our Lord Jesus adds: *"There is one good, God. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments!"* Matthew 19:17;

Let us trust in our good God, the Father, and his son Jesus, who gave his own life for us so that we could be saved, that everything he does is for good and life, not only for the present, but especially for eternal life.