



God as the Judgment

THE WORD *JUDGMENT* has numerous related meanings:

1. a. The mental ability to perceive and distinguish relationships or alternatives; the critical faculty; discernment. b. The capacity to make reasonable decisions, especially in regard to the practical affairs of life; good sense; wisdom. c. The exercise of this capacity. 2. A formal decision, as of an arbiter in a contest. 3. A discriminating appraisal; authoritative opinion. 4. Estimation: *make a judgment of the distance*. 5. An assertion of something believed; idea; opinion; thought: *It's my judgment that we ought to leave soon*. 6. Criticism; censure. 7. *Law*. a. A determination of a court of law; a judicial decision. b. A court act creating or affirming an obligation, such as a debt. c. A writ in witness of such an act. . . .¹

In the English translation of the Old Testament (KJV), 10 Hebrew words are translated as “judgment.” The most frequent word is *mishpat*. In turn, the Hebrew *mishpat* is translated into 30 different English words, but the most frequent is “judgment.” In the King James Version of the New Testament, eight Greek words are translated as “judgment.” The most frequent is *krisis*. And the Greek *krisis* is then translated into four different English words — most often as “judgment.” Words in human languages thus cover a broad spectrum of meanings.²

However, the biblical centrality is that “judgment” constitutes authoritative and covenantal (relational) purposes, statements and actions. The ultimate authority is God himself. God as Word/Action with respect to “others” is the ultimate Covenant. Therefore, God himself constitutes the Judgment. In Hebrew tradition “a special significance was given by the rabbis to the tetragrammaton

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[*YHWH*] and to *Elohim*, the tetragrammaton denoting the attribute of mercy, and *Elohim* [plural], that of judgment (Gen. R. 33:3).”³

God as the Creative Judgment

“In the beginning” *Elohim*, as Father, constituted the Creative Judgment. He proposed, acted and accomplished the creation of the universe and thus inaugurated “otherness.” In doing this, God necessarily employed command, possession and power. Furthermore, he permitted the “free process” of nature and, ultimately, the “free will” of humanity. The consequences of these actions have been both positive and negative, both good and evil. That is why *Elohim* is quoted in Isaiah as stating, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things” (Isaiah 45:7). Furthermore, that is why God as *YHWH* (Mercy) recognized his alter ego as Satan (Adversary), etc.⁴

God as the Redemptive Judgment

Then God decided to terminate his reign of command, possession and power, to discard his alter ego, and to reveal his ultimate, self-emptying love to, for and with all others. Therefore,

the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth — John 1:14.

For the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. — John 5:22, 27.

At Calvary, Jesus Christ as God bore his alter ego with all its negativity and also bore the burden of Creation’s negativity, taking them all to the grave. Thus, in the life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God himself constituted the authoritative and covenantal Redemptive Judgment.

For two millennia God’s professed followers have perpetuated command, possession and power under “the banner of the cross.”

Now, for 2,000 years, God as the Redemptive Judgment has, in his self-emptying love, refrained from using command, possession and power. Furthermore, through his apparent absence he has refrained from submitting to command, possession and power. Meanwhile, for two millennia God’s professed followers have misunderstood, misrepresented or openly rejected his redemptive judgment and have perpetuated command, possession and power under “the banner of the cross.” Moreover, in this postmodern world religious fundamentalists are determined to launch the final

battle of Armageddon and thus terminate Creation and all “others.” With the convictions of the French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), they concur that “the other is my enemy and my ‘original sin.’”⁵ However, what they fail to realize or appreciate is that God’s redemptive judgment was and is irrevocable. The world and all “others” remain in God’s hands (John 3:35).

God as the Transformative Judgment

Now God is inviting human beings to acknowledge, accept and receive his judgmental gifts (Revelation 3:20; 22:17).

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. — James 1:17.

For . . . the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” — Romans 6:23.

Soon God as Holy Spirit will launch the third and final judgment. God himself, as the Transformative Judgment, will appear Parousaically enthroned (Second Coming).⁶ He will raise all who have died and gather them together with all who are alive. He will reveal himself to the understanding and acceptance of all humanity who are “willing.” He will then quietly, quickly and gloriously transform Creation for an eternity of “togetherness.”

God has already revealed himself as the Creative and Redemptive Judgments. Soon he will appear as the Transformative Judgment with the attendant renewal of the created order.

Since Name and Word were virtually synonymous, the judgment and the renewing of the creation are here shown to be the same process . . . ⁷

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Wise men, shepherds, and Simeon and Anna in the Temple, were representative witnesses at Christ’s First Coming (Matthew 2:1, 2; Luke 2:8-21, 25-38). Let us likewise be representative witnesses in anticipation of his promised Second Coming (*parousia*) (Acts 1:8; cf. Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1).

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. — Ephesians 5:14.

Endnotes

1. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1976), s.v. “judgment.”
2. See *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984).
3. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM ed. (1997), s.v. Yehosua M. Grintz, “God: In Talmudic Literature”; see *ibid.*, s.v. Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, “God, Names of.”
4. See “YHWH (Yahweh) and Satan (the Adversary),” at assemblyoftrueisrael.com/Documents/YahwehandSatan.html.
5. See John Zizioulas, “Communion and Otherness,” at ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jim_forest/Met-john.htm.
6. “From this, the most natural meaning for the word [*parousia*] as applied to Jesus would be something like ‘arrival on the scene,’ in the sense of ‘enthronement’” (N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996], p. 341).
7. Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), p. 109.

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