

God Regains His Fear Through Judgments

by John Franklin

The antidote to moral decline is recapturing a proper fear of God, which God reestablishes through judgments against sin.

Scripture: Psalm 50:21

Topics: "Fear Of God", "Divine Judgment"

Description

John Franklin delves into the importance of regaining the fear of God as the antidote to the moral decline plaguing our nation and Christians, emphasizing that the loss of fear of God leads to the exaltation of man and a lack of accountability for sin. He highlights that God reestablishes fear by actively judging sin, as seen throughout Scripture in warnings to nations and His people. Franklin points out the signs of God's judgment on a nation, such as the deprivation of wisdom, and challenges the church to recognize earthly accountabilities for sin and seek repentance to avoid further judgment.

Transcript

In three previous articles I endeavored to answer the great question gripping our nation and more specifically Christians, "In the devastating plague of moral decline, what is the antidote of hope that will cure the infectious spread of evil?" For those who have read the previous articles, you will remember that I argued the antidote is recapturing a proper fear of God. In a nutshell, my logic is:

Whenever the fear of God is lost, you can be sure the greatness of God has been lost. And whenever man loses the greatness of God, he unfortunately finds the greatness of man. The more man finds his own greatness, the less he acknowledges God, until finally God becomes despised or lost to his consciousness. Once respect or God-consciousness is lost, man becomes ultimate. When man becomes ultimate, he loses any sense of accountability or ability to be convicted of sin. Conversely, whenever the greatness of God increases, man's awareness of his accountability to God increases and he departs from evil. Therefore the cure is to regain the fear of God.

If fear is the antidote, how does God reestablish fear? Precisely by doing the opposite of what caused man to lose it. Scripture exposes the reason men left to themselves despise God when Isaiah 57:11b asks, "Is it not because I have held My peace from of old that you do not fear Me?" Likewise after listing the sins of sinners God declares in Psalm 50:21, "These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes." Since men lose the fear of God when God withholds judgments against them on earth, then it logically follows that for God to

reestablish His fear, He must do it by actively judging sin in the earth (Ps. 58:11, Is. 26:9).

And that is precisely what you find throughout all of Scripture whether for nations or His people. Large portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Revelation warn nations of God's impending judgments against them. When His own people continued in sin, the same books warn them of judgment. Since God is the same yesterday, today and forever, He still reestablishes His fear by judging sin. This begs the question - if God reestablishes His fear by judging sin then what would that look like today? What would be the indication that a nation or His people are under judgment for sin?

Let's begin with a nation. Too many evidences exist for the brevity of this article, so please allow me to list the one I deem most serious. Job notes in 12:13-25 that God does as he pleases with the nations. He "makes them great and destroys them.(vs 23)" When God is destroying a nation, Job identifies which judgment of God He exercises, "He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth...(vs 24)" To Job the worst judgment God could inflict is the deprivation of wisdom. This holds true in other passages as well. In Isaiah 3:1-5 God begins to judge the nation of Israel by taking away everything that benefits them. Notice that the list includes, "the judge and the prophet...the honorable man" and "the counselor..." - in other words the people with wisdom. In Romans 1:18-32 Paul lists how the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness in a three-step progression of increasingly severe judgments - all of which relate to the understanding. To sum up the final state in verse 28, Paul notes the continual loss of wisdom eventually leading to a completely debased mind.

Is the Scripture clear? Whenever a nation begins to be deprived of wisdom, it ought to recognize it is under the judgment of God. This being the case, America ought to be quaking. Our understanding has already been darkened to the point of accepting homosexuality as a viable lifestyle, and with the rise of cultural violence we are not far off from the completely debased mind described in Romans 1:29-31. Evidently since we have not thought it worthy to retain a knowledge of God, He has righteously judged us unworthy of retaining knowledge and wisdom. This horribly severe judgment against our nation indicates that God has already begun the process of destroying us. Of course that process can be reversed by repentance, but the departure of wisdom evidenced by turning from God, family breakdown, broken relationships, and increasing violence ought to reawaken us to fear God so that we will repent and plead for His mercy before He renders a final judgment.

What about the church? Is she under judgments of God as well? Unfortunately many Christians' theology does not allow for this possibility because they limit the idea of judgment to end times and eternal destiny. However numerous passages in the Bible point to the reality that God's people have an earthly accountability for sin (Lev. 26, Deut. 28, 1 Cor. 11:27-34, Heb. 2:2-3, 10:30, and Rev. 2-3). Since this is an Old and New Testament reality, this begs the question, "How would the church in America know if she were under judgments from God?"

Scripture and history record that when God's people please Him, He answers their prayers affirmatively and grants them favor by transforming their culture. This happened in the Old Testament, the Roman Empire, Europe and America. When we displease God the converse happens just like it did in the Old Testament, Europe and America. This being the case, we ought to ask some questions. In America where we once had widespread respect, honor and influence, why have we now lost it? Why is sin advancing in our land? Why are we being turned over to immoral leadership in our nation (Job 34:29-30)? Why are our enemies succeeding (Lev. 26:17)? Why are great numbers of our youth being led astray? Why are Christians now the only politically correct group to bash? Why have we been praying for the abortion

decision to be overturned now for 27 years yet God has withheld His hand? Could it be that the main problem lies not in our culture, but in our relationship with God? In light of the fact that the majority who profess Christianity basically do the same things in the same proportions as the culture, does it not make logical sense to ask if God is righteously judging us because we no longer fear Him? Since we have not honored Him, could it be that He is no longer giving us honor in our society? Could the cultural antagonism against us be God-allowed because God is calling us to account for sin?

Do you see the implications of which conclusion you draw? If nothing is wrong then we should only intensify what we're already doing. However, if God Himself is judging us, if this withholding of His hand on our behalf is because we have displeased Him, then the solution demands that we stay before God until we identify where we have departed from Him and repent.

I contend that the signs indicate we are not right with God; therefore, we ought to ask what are the sins for which God is calling us to account. In the next article I will try to identify the main ones, but for now suffice it to say that our nation is under the severest judgment of God it can incur before final destruction, and that Christians by and large have departed from God and also are incurring judgments as evidenced by the fact that we are losing the battle. Both realities ought to be interpreted as God seeking to reestablish His fear because we have ignored His standard of holiness.

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