

Title: JUDGMENT CAME AND JUDGMENT COMES, 1 KINGS 21.
(Chatham, NJ; 03/02/08, AM) [E – Topical, Deductive]

Theme: Divine retribution and judgment against evil are revealed in the episode of Naboth's Vineyard and are still present in the New Testament in the person of John the Baptist as well as the message of repentance in the preaching in Acts and letters of Paul.

Purpose: To affirm this message and to persuade the audience not only to repent for their own sake but also to proclaim that message to their friends and neighbors.

Introduction:

1. In Acts 2:40 and 3:17-26 Peter exhorts people to escape the coming wrath.
2. Perhaps we are ambivalent about it today.
3. Yet God's wrath remains for those who do not repent, Romans 2:4-8.
4. Jesus himself teaches us not to fear people but to fear God, Mt. 10:28.
5. Peter's pleas to his audience for repentance are founded on this healthy fear of God.
6. The Old Testament does not shy away from speaking of divine retribution, Prov. 13:21-22; 17:13; Psalm 1 assures us that the end of the unrighteous is death.
7. It is sometimes not readily apparent as Psalm 73 suggests, but nonetheless the psalmist can find that in the end justice will be served.
8. In many ways the Bible proclaims our need to repent.

I. The Episode of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21.

- A. Elijah: Payday is coming.
 1. Ahab desires Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth won't sell it.
 2. Jezebel gets it by perverting justice.
 3. This is an exercise in raw, callous power.
 4. Elijah pronounces judgment against Ahab and Jezebel.
 5. In 1 Kings 22:37-38 and 2 Kings 9:30-37 Elijah's pronouncements come true.
 6. They pay the price for their sins.
- B. Ahab's repentance (25-29) is significant, if not remarkable.
 1. Ahab must have been uncomfortable with Jezebel's plan.
 2. He behaves sorrowfully.
 3. God sees his sorrow and at least withholds disaster until after his death.
 4. It perplexes me that God could be kind to this man of evil, but this testifies to God's amazing kindness toward sinners.

II. John, the Baptist, the New Testament Elijah.

- A. Prepare the way for God to come.
 1. He preached repentance, Mt. 3:2.
 2. Repentance must result in a changed life (vs. 8).
 3. John accepted no veneer of righteousness in place of genuine change.
- B. The Gospel begins with the same call.
 1. Mark 1:15 – Jesus says repent.
 2. Acts 2:38 – Peter asserts the same message.
 3. Each plea comes with the promise of mercy.

III. A Significant Part of the Gospel Message.

A. The wrath of God still comes, Ephesians 5:6.

1. All the deceptive words about moral standards being entirely and individual matters are deceptive.
2. God has specific standards to judge behavior.
3. We are called to renounce the ways of darkness and the futility of thinking the way most people still behave, Ephesians 4:17ff.
4. Accepting the Gospel and the love of God demands accepting the call to a changed life.
5. When God accepts us the way we are, he does so with the demand that we not remain in a sinful lifestyle any longer.

B. God is still patient. (2 Peter 3)

1. Predictions of God's coming judgment.
2. Do not overlook the flood as some do, 5.
3. In particular we should not overlook the patience of God, 9.
4. God wants all people to repent and come to him.
5. This is why retribution often comes later than sooner.

Conclusion:

1. The judgment and retribution prevalent in the Old Testament have not vanished.
2. God still has set aside a day when all people will be judged.
3. Only those faithful to the Gospel and to the ways of righteousness inherent in it will pass into life everlasting.
4. There is still a chance though we don't know for how long.
5. Be one of those who pass into life everlasting by accepting the plea of the Gospel to repent and believe in Jesus who can wash away your sins.