

## **The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)**

Read together verses 18 through 24:

18 For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,

19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sounds of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.

20 For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned."

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. (Heb. 12:18–24 NASB)

Everything that we have covered in this passage so far has felt welcoming and encouraging and inviting and even exciting. We have looked at the new city, which is the city of the living God. What it means to dwell in and to be welcomed into that heavenly Jerusalem. We have talked about the angels who are in festive assembly that will greet us when we step into that royal city. And we have been encouraged by the fact that we are the firstborn of God, we belong to the church of the firstborn, and we will therefore receive an immeasurable and eternal inheritance.

All of this is warm and exciting and inviting and thrilling, contrasted with Sinai, which is described in verse 18 as being accompanied with a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and whirlwind and trumpets and sounds of words which struck terror in the hearts of people, so much so that even Moses was fearful and trembling before that. Moses, who had stood in the presence of God on hallowed ground at the burning bush; he was terrified by the prospect of what he saw at Sinai.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

And our response can only be that having been given all of these things and having been brought to all of these positive things and contrasting that with Sinai, our response can only be thankfulness, utter gratefulness, that we do not have the fear, that we do not have the command to not approach, to not draw near, to not be presumptuous. Instead, we are invited, we are welcomed to come into the presence of God. And we can only be thankful that God has opened a way like that. And we can feel invited, and we can feel welcomed and excited about that prospect.

And then we come in verse 23 to that phrase, “to God, the Judge of all.” And suddenly we're struck, I think, with the note of foreboding there again, all over again. It's interesting to me that the Judge of all, “to God, the Judge of all,” that that is mentioned down in what we have been brought to under the new covenant at Zion, and that He's not mentioned like that up with Sinai. It's in the reference to Sinai that you would expect him to say, “Moses was terrified because at Sinai the nation of Israel stood before the God who is the Judge of all.” We would expect terror in that context. We would expect God's judgment to be connected with Sinai because it was at Sinai that the law was given, the thunderings of the law—thou shalt not, thou shalt. All of that was laid out at Sinai. And God was presented as a God who judges sin and unrighteousness, who will not let the guilty go free. He will not leave the guilty unpunished. That was the foreboding element at Sinai. And yet God, the Judge of all, is not mentioned in connection with Sinai in verses 18 through 21. He's mentioned instead with Zion in verses 22 through 24.

Does that sound good to you: that you would come before God, who was the Judge of all? If you even have a cursory understanding of the depth of your sin and depravity, and you do not have a cover for that sin, then that should strike fear into your heart. God, the Judge of all. All means all, and I'm included in that all. And you're included in that all. God is not going to let the guilty go free. So is that good news that you will be brought before the God who is the Judge of all?

It should strike terror in our hearts, but it is not intended by the author to strike terror in our hearts. See, this is in the context of all of the good things to which we have been brought. He mentions the judgment of God in the context of what is far better for us. We don't come to Sinai. Yes, God is the Judge of all at Sinai. He's also the Judge of all at Zion. And you and I have been brought to that God, and yet the author's intention is not to terrify us by that prospect. It's not to strike fear into our hearts and to make us feel like I can't approach Zion, then, I have to stay away, like at Sinai. I can't come nigh or

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

draw near unto God. The author's intention is the exact opposite. In fact, I think that the author's intention here is to remind us that such is our welcome and such is our embrace, that we actually get to stand before the God who is in fact the Judge of all.

We're going to look at these two phrases in verse 23, "God, the Judge of all," as something we have been brought to, "and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect." I think that those two things are related. They are connected in the mind of the author—I mean, all of this is connected in the mind of the author—but these two things, for our purposes, really go together well, because God is a righteous Judge of all, and we have not only been brought to Him, but we've also been brought to the company of the righteous who are made perfect, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.

Let's look first at this phrase: God, who is the Judge of all, He's the righteous Judge of all. We would expect in this context for him to mention God, since he's already told us up in verse 22 that we have been brought to the city of the living God. And having been brought to the city of the living God, it is not as if we are brought into that city, that we have welcome and access and ease of approaching that city, and that we will never see God in that city, and so we might be in the city, but never see God. That's not the sentiment at all. Instead, it is impossible for you to come into this city and not see the God who is the Judge of all.

If you go to the capital city of any country, it's very likely that you will never see the president of that nation, or the king of that country. It's not uncommon for somebody to come into a capital city and never see the person who rules the land. But in the New Jerusalem, that's impossible. You will not be able to come into the heavenly city, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, without seeing the King who dwells there. In fact, that will be the reason that you will come to this city, is to see that King. To be brought before that One who is the Judge of all. He's the Judge of all men. And yet, that is not, for us, a terrifying prospect.

This is the same Judge who thundered at Sinai. And the point of the author is not to suggest in this passage that the wrath of Sinai has been somehow muted simply by a God who is willing to wink at sin and to overlook our indiscretions for the sake of being loving and kind and perverting justice in doing so. That is not the point of the author. It's not to suggest that that God who thundered through the law at Sinai no longer exists, or that He is no longer wrathful against sin, or that He is no longer indignant toward our transgressions.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

There are some people who say that Jesus came and had to correct the misunderstanding that people had of the old covenant in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God was this thundering, wrathful God who was indignant against sin, and His anger burned all the time. He was an angry Father in Heaven. And Jesus came to show us that no, the Old Testament take on God, that was all wrong. He came to show us that God is not angry with our sin. That is not an uncommon perspective in Evangelicalism writ large unfortunately.

The point of the author is not to suggest that somehow God has changed. This is the same God who's thundered in His wrath against sin at Sinai. Same God. And you get to come before that God.

Though He is described as the Judge of all, that is not intended to strike fear into our hearts. To stand before Him at Sinai is to stand before Him guilty, condemned, under His wrath, before His indignation, an unholy creature, without any covering, without any shield, standing before a God whose holy, righteous anger burns with indignation toward the wicked each and every day. To come to God at Sinai with the law is death. It is condemnation. It is judgment. It is certain death because of guilt.

But to stand before God at Zion is life. That's the opposite. To stand before Him at Sinai is death. To stand before Him at Zion is life. In fact, in Revelation chapter 21, in the description of the heavenly city in the heavenly Jerusalem, God's dwelling with His people is presented in terms that strike us as, "Man, this is not only incredible, this is beautiful and this is welcoming." Revelation 21, verse 3: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.'" There's something that is repeated three times in that one verse; that God is among His people. Listen to it again. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men." The dwelling of God among men. "And He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them." That's Zion. To come there is to have life and to have life eternal. It is to dwell with God, to have God's presence, to have God's blessing, to have God's grace.

Sinai: death, condemnation, guilt. Zion: life, forgiveness, and grace. But yet it is the same God who is at Sinai and who is at Zion. A God who is unchanging. Who will not wink at sin. He will not ignore transgressions. He will not leave the guilty unpunished. God's new covenant has not altered His nature because judgment is still on the table. The judgment of the nations is still on His schedule. In fact, it is after the resurrection, the

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

coming of Christ, that Paul says in Acts chapter 17 that God “has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness” (v. 31). There is a day set on God's calendar, and it is fixed, and it is unalterable. An unalterable date. Nobody can change that. Nobody can reschedule it. God has fixed a day in which He will judge the whole world in righteousness because He is a God who is the Judge of all, and justice and righteousness are His very character, part of His nature.

Listen to Psalm 97, verse 2: “Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.” I love that verse. There's another one just like it we're going to read here in just a moment. “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.” God's rule, His authority, His sovereign handling of all things under the sun, of all of creation, everything He does is characterized by righteousness and justice. That lays the foundation for His throne. Not because His rule rests on something outside of Him, but because His rule and all of His sovereignty is characterized by righteousness and justice.

Psalm 45, verse 6: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.” A scepter was the rod that the king had by which he had authority and ruled his kingdom. “A scepter of uprightness [that's righteousness] is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows” (Ps. 45:6–7). And if you are familiar with Psalm 45, then you know that what is being described there is the Person of Christ—God, Your God, has anointed You with this. And it is Christ who loves righteousness, and it is Christ who rules in righteousness. His scepter is the scepter of uprightness, because His justice and righteousness are the foundation of His throne. Psalm 89, verse 14: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; lovingkindness and truth go before You.” Same God.

Nahum chapter 1, which we read a few moments ago:

2 A jealous and avenging God is the Lord. The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies.

3 The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished [This the God of Sinai; it is also the God of Zion], in whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet.

4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither; the blossoms of Lebanon wither.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

5 Mountains quake because of Him and the hills dissolve; indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world and all the inhabitants in it.

6 Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him.  
(Nah. 1:2–6 NASB)

This the anger and the wrath of God against sin. This is the God to whom you have been brought. Terrifying prospect or welcoming prospect.

And you know, if you even have a cursory familiarity with the Old Testament, you know that I could multiply verses like this for the rest of our time together. I could just read to you for the next half hour passages that are like this. Psalms that describe this. In fact, I could fill a series of sermons on Psalms that describe the wrath of God and His judgment.

Isaiah 33, verse 14: “Sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling has seized the godless. ‘Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?’”

Just and righteous. Justice and righteousness are the foundation of His throne. And He is good. This is why justice and righteousness are the foundation of His throne, because He is good. A lot of sinners think that the goodness of God is going to get them off on the day of judgment. That if you're in a witnessing encounter and you walk somebody through the law and explain to them what God's justice means for them, they will say, some of them will say, “Yeah, but I just think that God is good and loving. And because He is good and loving, He's just going to let me in on that last day.” And ironically, the thing that sinners are counting on to get them off on the day of judgment is the very thing that is going to damn them on the day of judgment. It is the goodness of God that will see to their execution and the pouring out of wrath. It is because He is good. And you and I instinctively understand this, that we do not consider judges who let guilty criminals go free, we don't call them good. We call them incompetent. We call them wicked. We call them unqualified. We call them a whole bunch of things. But good is not among them. And because God is good, He will see to it that justice is done, that the demands of His law are met.

And He is omniscient. Which means that no sin that has ever been committed by any person in thought, word, or deed will escape His notice. Every deed that has ever been done in darkness, every thought that has ever been think by people in the world,

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

believer and unbeliever, every sin will be dealt with. Every crime against His law, every intentional crime against His law, every unintentional crime against His law, everything that He commanded that we do that we have not done, and everything that we have done that we were commanded not to do, every last one of those will be punished. And He is wise and knows how to mete out justice in a perfect way.

And because He is omnipotent, no sinner can escape His judgment. Because He can drag any sinner, no matter how powerful in this world, He can drag every sinner before His court of justice, and He will have His day with that sinner.

God can no more commit injustice than He can overthrow His own rule over all things. He will not pervert justice. There is no escape. There is no higher court. There is no court of appeal. There is no one who will escape the exacting perfection of His justice and the demands of His righteousness. For on the last day, God is going to be the arresting officer, the prosecuting attorney, the judge, the jury, and the executioner. And no sinner will be able to escape that. And no thought that they have ever had, no motive of their heart, no deed that they have ever done, even if it is before nobody else, will escape the piercing omniscience and the exacting justice of His holy wrath.

So how can you not be terrified by such a prospect?

Well, does it change the equation at all if the Judge is your Father. That changes the equation, doesn't it? Does it change the equation at all if the Judge is your Father and if all of your transgressions have been paid for and the justice against them has been completely satisfied so that when you stand before that God who is the Judge of all, you do not see His frown. You do not see His disapproval. But all you can ever expect to see is His smile, His approval, and His love and His grace and His willing embrace.

Does it change the equation at all if all of the accusations against you made at Sinai under the condemning features of the law, if all of those accusations have been wiped clean off your slate and every last crime has been forgiven, every last debt has been paid, every last debt that you have to justice has been completely satisfied? And that standing before that Judge who is the prosecuting attorney, the judge, the jury, the executioner, and the arresting officer, if He is your Father—in fact, even more so, if the prosecuting attorney in God's courtroom leaves His table and comes over to your table to make your defense in that courtroom, do you have anything to fear? And that as you're the defendant, as the defending attorney, He can stand there and say, “Your Honor, not only has this debt been completely paid but there are no crimes against this

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

person that can be brought, no accusation against him whatsoever because the debt has been completely cleared.”

You see, there are two functions of a judge: Condemnation and vindication. Accusation and acquittal. And if the only thing that you are going to stand before Him for is to have your sentence against you pronounced innocent, not guilty, completely acquitted, then you have nothing to fear before the One who is the Judge of all. If in fact, the One who is the Judge of all is the very One who has paid your fine Himself, right? And therefore He can say to the Father, “The fine has been paid. No charges can be brought. This person is innocent. In fact, not only is this person innocent, this person has obeyed the law fully at every point. Well, actually not him, but I did it on his behalf.”

You see, that's complete righteousness. That's not just forgiveness. It's not just innocence, but righteousness. And to be clear, our record is clear and we are acquitted not because we have not committed any transgressions, but because One who committed no transgressions takes all of the wrath, all of the accusation, all of the guilt, all of the condemnation, all of the reproach, and it is laid upon Him so that He bears fully all of the wrath that is due to us for our sin. And not only that, but His complete obedience to all of the law is imputed and written to our slate. So that you and I stand before God not just having a clean slate, a white marker board with not a mark on it, pure white, but we actually have written across our slate complete obedience to the law for His entire life. No sin, no transgression, no evil thought, no impurity in thought, word, or deed; that is actually the record that is presented before the Judge on our behalf. Not because that is actually our record, but because that is actually the record of the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself is our defense attorney. So we get declared not just innocent but completely righteous. And therefore you and I can stand before the God who is the Judge of all.

And how do we get this? It is by faith and faith alone. Nothing you can do, nothing you can merit by keeping the law, no deeds of righteousness done by you. By the law, no flesh will be declared righteous in His sight, none whatsoever. This is what Paul means in Romans chapter 8 when he says this: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (v. 31) If the judge is smiling at you, and the judge is satisfied, and there's no prosecuting attorney there to bring any charges against you, and you have the Judge's own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is standing there pleading your case for you because His wounds have paid for your ransom, His life has brought your righteousness, and that is what is presented in the courtroom, and if God is for you,

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.



then who can be against you? Is there anybody in all of creation who can be against you if God is for you? No, the apostle Paul says. That's impossible. "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32)

See, you and I stand before the Judge of all, the righteous Judge of all. And this Judge has adopted us into His family. And imagine then that in the courtroom He is certifying your adoption papers, and He is transferring the entire inheritance into your account. You get it all. This Judge is not only pleased to adopt you into His family, but He is pleased to give you the kingdom, to give you the new creation, and to give you the entire inheritance. This is the One who is the Judge of all.

Paul says in verse 33 of Romans 8, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies." Who will bring a charge against you before God in His court? Who could do that? God is the one who justifies. If He declares you righteous, then who can possibly declare you unrighteous? Nobody can. There's no charge that can be brought against you. If the Judge Himself has already stamped your case file and said, "Righteous, innocent, acquitted, vindicated," then there's nothing that can come before Him that could cause you shame in His presence.

"Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Rom. 8:34). So you have the intercession of the Son, the justification of the Father, and because of Christ's death for us and His resurrection, and because He sits at the Father's right hand and intercedes for us, then there is no charge that can be brought against God's people.

In fact, as I said, there's two aspects of God's judgment or two things that a judge can do: vindicate and condemn, acquit or accuse. And not only are we not going to be accused, we are going to be acquitted and we're going to be vindicated and we're going to be rewarded. The Judge is going to reward us. So this just gets better. Not only does He say not guilty, but He says righteous. And then guess what He does on top of that? He rewards us. What criminal ever brought before a court, a human court, ever stood there in front of the judge with all of the crimes listed against him and was rewarded by the judge? And yet this is what the Father intends for us. Not just that we are declared innocent, but that we are justified and made righteous in His sight. And then He rewards us.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

This is what Paul says in 2 Timothy, chapter 4: “In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (v. 8). The righteous Judge is going to give us a reward. Not just innocent, not just righteous, but rewarded.

You see, you haven't come to God, who is the Judge of all, at Sinai, where the justice of the law calls for your blood. Instead, you have come before the Judge at Zion, and He has declared you innocent, He has declared you righteous, and He has declared you a reward. He is going to give you a reward. And the One who is doing this judgment is the very One who died in our stead Himself. This is what Jesus said in John chapter 5:

22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,

23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:22–24 NASB)

He has fixed a day—quoting again Acts chapter 17, verse 31: “Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” So the Father has appointed the Son to be the Judge of all men, and the Father has fixed a day for that judgment to take place. And then the Father has raised that Judge from the dead as proof that all judgment has been given to Him. Because Jesus said the Father does not do the judging, He has committed all judgment to the Son. And now the Son, having died to bear the sins of His people, will now stand as an advocate for His people. And the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore the sin, bore our sin in His own body on the cross, is not going to then turn around on judgment day and say, “He's worthy of condemnation,” because He has paid the penalty for that. So the very One who is the instrument of God's judgment for all men is the One who died in your place and rose again in your stead. The One who is the Judge of all is the One who has paid your price.

We have been made righteous by this Judge. We have been declared innocent by this Judge. Our fine has been paid by this Judge. And this Judge will bring no accusation

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

against us because we have been given, granted by faith, a righteousness to our account, which is given on the basis of faith. Imputed righteousness.

This is why there are people who are righteous in His presence, and this brings us to the second thing to which we have been brought: “to the spirits of the righteous made perfect” (Heb. 12:23). We have come to be part of this company known as the righteous. They're described here. I think this is Old Testament saints. I think this includes New Testament saints. I think this is a generic way of describing all of those who have been given righteousness by faith, all of those in Hebrews chapter 11, church history, New Testament saints, or I should say saints after the coming of Christ, saints before the coming of Christ. This is just all of those who have been made righteous.

Now because Scripture says, “There is none righteous, not even one” (Rom. 3:10), anybody who is called righteous is righteous not because they have kept the law, and not because they have avoided sin, and not because they have done any deeds in themselves worthy of righteousness, but only because they have been declared righteous. And the righteousness given to Old Testament saints and to New Testament saints is the righteousness purchased by Christ. So get that clear. Old Testament saints were not made righteous by keeping the law or because of the animal sacrifices. Those things pointed forward to the thing which would purchase their righteousness, namely the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. So all who are righteous are imputed or credited righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. So we all have the same righteousness.

But in God's presence there is a company of people who are the righteous. And notice how they are described in verse 23. They are “spirits of the righteous made perfect,” meaning that even now those who have gone before us in Heaven do not have physical bodies. They are the spirits of the righteous made perfect. We have been gathered together to those spirits. They are the spirits of those who are already righteous. And they have been made perfect.

But now the question comes up: in what sense are they made perfect? Because if they're spirits, then they don't have physical bodies, which is ultimately what they're going to get. They're going to get resurrected physical bodies. And they haven't received the kingdom yet, they haven't received the inheritance yet, they haven't received the new creation yet. So in what sense are they perfect? The word *perfect* here is a word that describes something made complete or brought to an end, something that has reached its designed intention. In what sense have they been made perfect? They have

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

been made perfect in two senses. Number one, in that they have already finished their race. In Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1–2, do you remember the race analogy that we spent a couple of weeks on? We're to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. There is One who perfects, who completes, who brings to an end, brings to maturity, brings to its final state, our faith. And that One has already run His race, and He has sat down at the Father's right hand. And we are to fix our eyes on that One who perfects our faith and ultimately will perfect us, bring us to completion.

So those who have gone before, who are now spirits in the presence of this Judge of all, they are righteous. And they are righteous and in their spirits they have been made perfect because they have finished their race. So they have entered into their rest. They have crossed their finish line, and this is what you and I are called to do. That is, by the way, a further motivation, another way for the author to motivate us to endure well, knowing that having been declared righteous, that eventually you and I will cross our finish line and we also will be made perfect in our spirits. I don't think that this is describing a physical perfection because they don't have their physical bodies yet.

And then they're perfected in a second sense, and that is that their sins have been forgiven. They have been brought to God, which is the goal of our redemption. Peter says that Christ died in the flesh in order that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. 3:18), and that is ultimately the goal of this salvation. So when one is brought into the presence of God because their spirit has finally been perfected and made complete, then they have reached the end, the telos of their redemption, the purpose for which Christ has died.

It is this sense of perfection that is included in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 14, when it says, “By one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” You have been perfected already. Your spirit has been perfected in the sense that you have been made complete already in the plan of God. Your salvation has been purchased, your security has been secured, and your ultimate reward is guaranteed. You are standing before Him secured because of what the Son has done, what the Judge has done.

And so you are perfected in the sense that your spirit has been perfected. The sin has been removed—I should say the spirits in Heaven, they are perfect in the sense that their spirits have been perfected. The sin has been removed. There are no more hindrances to their holy affections given to them by their sinful nature, that sinful nature, that flesh taken out of the way. Now they stand in spirit perfected before God, and they await now the resurrection of their body.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

The instant that a believer passes out of this life, they enter a state of spiritual perfection. There is no more moral improvement that needs to be done to those who have already died in Christ. They need no more perfecting. They don't go now to a place of purgatory where their sins are burned off and they are made more perfect and more pure so that they can go into the presence of God. They are already perfected. In fact, the minute that they die, their holy affections are fully expressed, and the sinfulness of their flesh is taken out of the way and removed, and their spirits are perfected. Their spirits will never get any better than they are at the moment that they die and they step into God's presence. They are the righteous, the spirits of the righteous, made perfect.

And so we can follow the command of Scripture in Hebrews chapter 4 that we draw nigh unto God in full assurance of faith, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience. We are made acceptable to Him. We come freely. We come without shame and guilt. And such is the sense of our acceptance before God that though He is the Judge of all, you and I who have committed innumerable crimes can stand before Him in His presence without any fear of reproach, without any fear of judgment. Because another has taken our judgment in our place. And we have been given a holiness without which no one will see the Lord. And the very One who is the Judge of all is our Father who has committed that judgment to the Son who died in our stead.

So His righteousness is not a terror to us, but it is a comfort. It is because God is righteous that you will never fear His condemnation if you are in Christ. Because it would be unrighteous for Him to punish His Son in your place and then to punish you for a single sin. That would be unrighteous. That would be unjust. And justice and righteousness are the foundation of His throne. So if Christ has borne your sin, you'll never see the frown of God. You'll never stand in His presence and see Him frown upon you because in His place, in His eyes before Him, you are as righteous as Christ is righteous. And because He is righteous, every sinner who trusts in Him is given eternal life, is given access and entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem.

It will be a terror and misery for every unbeliever to be brought before the God who is the Judge of all, terror and misery for every unbeliever, because it will signal their sure condemnation and damnation, because He is righteous and just, and righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. But it will be the joy and the glory and the eternal delight and life for every believer to be brought before the One who is the Judge of all because it will mean our vindication and ultimately our reward. Not because of anything we have done, but because of what Christ has done.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

"The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)" by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at: <https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.

So if you're sitting here today and you have never trusted Christ for salvation, I don't know what else I could possibly say to convince you that you are a guilty sinner before God. That right now you stand before Sinai, justly condemned before a God who is indignant toward the wicked each and every day, and His anger burns at you even right now if you are outside of Christ.

But there is a refuge. There is a God to whom you can turn. There is a righteous One who died in the place of sinners. And if you will turn from your sin, repent, and believe upon Him and trust what Scripture says, that the one who comes to Him He will not cast out, and the one who comes to Him passes from death into life, if you will believe that and come to the Savior who died in the place of sinners and rose again so that you could be declared innocent and righteous and be given an eternal reward, if you come to Him, He will forgive your sins. He will acquit your case. He will vindicate you on the final day. And you also will be brought into the presence of the God who is the Judge of all and to the company of the righteous spirits made perfect.

Copyright © 2024 by Kootenai Community Church

“The Righteous Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23)” by Jim Osman, pastor/teacher. Available online at:

<https://kootenaichurch.org>

You may reproduce this content as is for noncommercial purposes. You may not create or use edited versions of this publication without permission.