

# Is God Judging America?

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ *Yeshua*:

Is God judging America? That is a good question, and the answer will depend on what you mean by judging. The definition of judgment is a divine sentence or decision, specifically a calamity held to be sent by God.<sup>i</sup> This leads us to another question: Why would God do this, assuming He is even doing it at all? The answer to this question will also vary depending on our view of God's character. Is God's character benevolent or malevolent, meaning, is He disposed towards doing good, or is He disposed towards doing things that are hateful?

The bible says, *"The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works"* (Psalm 145:9, NKJV).<sup>ii</sup> I think this scripture is clear—God's goodness is bestowed upon His whole creation, which confirms that God shows no partiality or favoritism,<sup>iii</sup> as it is written, *"for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matthew 5:45).

The theological term for this is called "common grace" (Reformed Calvinist theology) or "prevenient grace" (Arminian theology). Common or prevenient grace is what keeps all of humanity from descending into the morass of evil that would happen if the full expression of our fallen nature could have total free reign.<sup>iv</sup>

Common grace provides the balance in the universe between God's sovereignty as King, and His objective to create mankind in His image with the propensity to choose between right and wrong. *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live"* (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Free choice is not the same as free will. Free will implies that we are the master or god of our own soul and author of our eternal destiny. This is idolatry in its purest form, which is how Adam and Eve originally fell into deception (spiritual blindness) when the serpent lied to them, saying: *"For God knows that in the day you eat of it [the forbidden fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"* (Genesis 3:5).

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God made them blind because all sin leads to blindness, and this created a generational fall where mankind would now inherit their disobedient and sinful disposition to resist God as King. Therefore, their original sin was not exclusively that they

disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit. No, their original sin (of idolatry) was that they desired to become like God and establish independence from God as rulers of their own lives. For it is written, *“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise [like God], she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Genesis 3:6).*

And still, this would never be possible, because God is one, and no other gods can occupy His throne or displace His oneness either within or beyond His creation. God’s essence and being, which is called “the Infinite One” (*Ein Sof*), fills the whole earth temporally and spatially. Before creation, nothing existed other than God Himself, and after creation, we might erroneously conclude that there now exists something in addition to Him—you and me.

No, there can be no change in God at all, for God does not change.<sup>v</sup> Just as God was alone in His oneness before the creation of the world, so is He alone in His oneness after it was created. Why? Because creation added nothing to God’s knowledge or being. His knowledge self-existed before creation, and it is with this prior knowledge that He can know all His creation.<sup>vi</sup>

Since the world is completely nullified in its entirety in relation to Him,<sup>vii</sup> and can only be wholly united with Him *in Christ*, God is just as alone after the world was created as He was before its creation.<sup>viii</sup> Notice we are *in Christ*, meaning we are part of His essence, existing within His physical being, and not independently standing next to Christ occupying our own space that alone belongs to God. Therefore, anything that challenges God’s sovereignty or presence in the universe is considered idolatry because it presumes to constitute a change in God’s absolute unity over His creation.

Contrary to free will, free *choice* implies that God has given mankind the ability to pick between one of two paths: one that leads to eternal life in Him, and the other that leads to death and destruction. Free choice also establishes that we will always have one of two masters. Contrary to what some believe, we are not the gods of our souls. Either we submit to Christ who purchased us with His blood, or we will serve the prince of this world, who is called Satan,<sup>ix</sup> the one who deceived mankind into usurping our dominion so that he could rule the earth as king in place of God.

Satan is, therefore, God’s adversary who stands in opposition to God’s sovereignty.<sup>x</sup> And, mankind, created in the image of God, has the same adversary, for it is written, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).*

If free will were an option, God likely would have said something like this to Adam and Eve: “You decide if you want to serve me? If not, that’s okay; I will let you live forever and fulfill the selfish desires of your heart so that you can be your own master.” The Bible tells us something quite different: *“Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was*

taken" (Genesis 3:22-23). Death is, therefore, God's assurance that man would never become his own god.

Paul said it like this: *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [who is Satan], the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others"* (Ephesians 2:1-3). Notice the word used here is wrath, not judgment. We'll come back to that later.

And Yeshua spoke these strong words against the leaders of Israel who were trying to kill Him: *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it"* (John 8:44). This verse might sound anti-Semitic to some, but not so. Yeshua was simply acknowledging the evil intent of their hearts, that they wanted to murder an innocent man who spoke truth to them.

We can now summarize the following: God is good, and Satan is hateful. God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all,<sup>xi</sup> and Satan (who was created as an angel of light), is now the epitome of pure darkness.<sup>xii</sup> Everything I have talked about up to this point might seem like a rather long explanation of a rather simple question. However, unless we understand and believe that God is good,<sup>xiii</sup> then we will never fully understand or accept why God might bring upon any person (or nation) His divine sentence or judgment.

Let us now explore what God's judgment might look like, either individually, or corporately for the church or a nation. It is written, *"The thief [Satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. [In contrast] I [Yeshua] have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10). We can, therefore, conclude that Satan's judgments (which are evil) bring death and destruction, while God's judgments (which are good)<sup>xiv</sup> bring repentance and life.

Here is another way to examine God's motivation. Is Satan concerned for our eternal salvation? No. The Lord, on the other hand, is not willing that any should perish.<sup>xv</sup> We know that salvation is a gift from God that requires our repentance and turning completely away from our wicked ways. And, humility is the key to repentance. Therefore, we cannot repent unless we first humble ourselves and submit to the one true God who holds the keys of life in His hand, as it is written, *"And [Christ] having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"* (Hebrews 5:9).

God's judgments, hopefully, bring about our submission and obedience. If we are unwilling to yield of our own free choice, then God will either allow or create circumstances that destroy our pride and self-sufficiency, always revealing a path to return and draw close to Him so that we might escape our peril.

Listen to the prophet Zephaniah: *"Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, To the oppressing city! She has not obeyed His voice, She has not received correction; She has not trusted in the Lord, She has not drawn near to her God (Zephaniah 3:1-2). "Therefore wait for Me," says the Lord, Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms, To pour on them My indignation, All My fierce anger; All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him with one accord... I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people, And they shall trust in the name of the Lord"* (Zephaniah 3:9-12). This scripture demonstrates God's heart for Israel, and every nation for that matter—to bring all to repentance.

Scripture likens God's judgment to the kind of discipline a father gives his son, as it is written, *"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it"* (Hebrews 12:11). God's full wrath and indignation do eventually fall on all who refuse to repent. However, His heart is not to destroy, but to save.<sup>xvi</sup> Yeshua said, *"Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword [wrath] of My mouth"* (Revelation 2:16).

God's Judgments can come in many forms. For example, God can withhold His rain from the land,<sup>xvii</sup> or He can bring a natural disaster, or He can bring an invading army.<sup>xviii</sup> Nothing is withheld from Him, as it is written, *"He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasuries"* (Psalm 135:7). *"He also gave up their cattle to the hail, And their flocks to fiery lightning"* (Psalm 78:48). But the Lord also has another tool in His arsenal.

In the Second Book of Samuel and First Chronicles, we see an interesting story about God's judgment against Israel for her idolatry. It reads, *"Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He [the Lord] moved David against them to say, 'Go, number Israel and Judah'"* (2 Samuel 24:1).

In the parallel story, we read, *"Now Satan [the one who opposes God] stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel"* (1 Chronicles 21:1). These two stories might appear to contradict each other. Was it the Lord or Satan who moved on King David's heart to number Israel? Since God is sovereign over all creation, it was obviously the Lord.

Therefore, Satan is one of many created vessels that God can use to bring about His judgments. So, how are we to know if our tribulations are from God or the enemy? After all, Satan's wrath is handed out liberally to all mankind, especially to those who have been chosen by God—which is both Israel and the church. Satan desires to bring death and destruction.<sup>xix</sup> From this, we can begin to understand the Holocaust, and all the persecution against the Jewish people, including a future reign of Satan's terror prophesied in what is called the "time of Jacob's sorrow."<sup>xx</sup>

I often hear Christians blame every negative circumstance in their lives on Satan. However, on the flipside, since God is in control of everything, can we also erroneously blame everything on

God? You have probably heard someone say something like this: "If God is so good, then why do bad things happen to people?"

My father used to say: "Who told you God is good?" He understood that their statement was rhetorical because I have never heard anyone say, "If God is so bad, then how come good things happen to people?" You see, their baseline presumption is that "God is good."

The answer to why good or bad things happen to people is that we may not always know. For this reason, Yeshua comforted His disciples (the early church) about their future suffering when He said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

Sometimes, bad things happen to people who are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Yeshua spoke about a wall that fell on eighteen men at the tower of Siloam. The presumption of the Jewish leaders at that time was that if something bad happened to you, it was a result of sin in your life, and God's punishment for that sin.

However, Yeshua drove the point much deeper. He said, "Where these men worse sinners than all the other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? (Luke 13:4). No, we are all sinners deserving of death. The question should have been, why is there death in the world at all? I think we know the answer.

Zephaniah prophesied that God would humble the nation of Israel and leave in her midst a meek and humble people, so we, the church must also accept that we will not always understand God's underlying plan. God is working out His eternal plans with each human being, and we, the church, are to be a meek and humble people who do not question God's motives but trust Him explicitly in everything He does or allows. That is called *faith*.

Paul said it like this, *"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And we know that all things [good and bad] work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:26-28).

Now, back to our original question: Is God judging America? I believe He is. Why? Because I also believe He loves this nation, and I know He desires to bring all to repentance and ultimately, to salvation. It is written, *"With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments are in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"* (Isiah 26:9). Is Satan also trying to destroy this nation because of all the good that is being done through God's people, including our protection of Israel and our support of the Jewish people? Absolutely, yes.

Satan, who is also called the Prince of the power of the air,<sup>xxi</sup> has been given a degree of authority over the atmosphere. We can see how he stirred up a tempest against Jesus in the Book of Matthew. *"But He [Yeshua] said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm"* (Matthew 8:26). Look at

all the hurricanes that have hit our country over the past several years. These should serve as a warning or wakeup call.

A meek and humble people do not ignore Satan's power and authority, but in *faith* trust that Yeshua, our Lord, is greater than our enemy. We need to pray and humbly ask that the Lord of the wind and sea calm every storm the enemy brings against us. Even if we believe this nation is deserving of judgment, we should always pray for God's mercy, because we know that it brings no pleasure for the Lord to destroy the wicked,<sup>xxii</sup> and the Lord desires mercy and not sacrifice.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Jonah got a lesson in God's mercy when Nineveh repented and was spared God's judgment,<sup>xxiv</sup> and so did Yeshua's disciples when they asked Him: *"Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did? But He [Yeshua] turned and rebuked them, and said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them"* (Luke 9:54-56).

The Lord likens His protection to a wall or hedge of protection.<sup>xxv</sup> *"And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down"* (Isaiah 5:5). When a nation sins against the Lord, His protection is lifted, and the enemy has access to destroy our cities. We need that wall of protection restored to our nation. A concrete wall along our borders will not protect us unless we also have God's spiritual wall of protection.

It is imperative in this coming season, of both God's discipline and Satan's destructive wrath against America, that we pray earnestly for the Lord's protective hand to cover us. Individually, as God's people, we also need to wear His protective armor,<sup>xxvi</sup> ensuring we are repentant of our (old nature) wicked ways, and confessing our sins when we fall short of God's glory.<sup>xxvii</sup>

We must pick up our cross daily and crucify our flesh, which means giving up the selfish nature that desires to become our own god.<sup>xxviii</sup> And, we must fully submit—in willful desire—our obedience to the Lord, who alone orders our footsteps.<sup>xxix</sup>

Our Lord has instructed us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.<sup>xxx</sup> Yes, and let us also pray for the peace of our cities and this nation, for it is written, *"Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace"* (Jeremiah 29:7).

*"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence"* (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Yes, quiet and peaceable lives so that we may continue to worship our Lord and Savior and share the good news of the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth.<sup>xxxi</sup>

Amen!

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- i Merriam-Webster Dictionary.
- ii All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.
- iii Acts 10:34.
- iv MacArthur, John. Grace to You.
- v Hebrews 13:8.
- vi Jeremiah 1:5.
- vii Isaiah 40:15.
- viii The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Elucidated by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg. Translated from Yiddish by Rabbi Levy Wineberg and Rabbi Sholom B. Wineberg. Edited by Uri Kaploun. Published and copyright by Kehot Publication Society.
- ix Genesis 1:26, Matthew 4:9.
- x Zechariah 3:1.
- xi 1 John 1:5.
- xii 2 Corinthians 11:14.
- xiii Matthew 19:7.
- xiv Revelation 16:7, 19:2.
- xv 2 Peter 3:9.
- xvi Ezekiel 33:11.
- xvii Amos 4:7.
- xviii Deuteronomy 7:1-5.
- xix John 10:10.
- xx Jeremiah 30:7.
- xxi Ephesians 2:2.
- xxii Ezekiel 18:23, 33:11.
- xxiii Hosea 6:6.
- xxiv The Book of Jonah.
- xxv Proverbs 25:28. Isaiah 5:5. Job 1:10.
- xxvi Ephesians 6:10-18.
- xxvii 1 John 1:9.
- xxviii Luke 9:23. Galatians 5:24.
- xxix Psalm 37:23.
- xxx Psalm 122:6.
- xxxi Acts 1:8.