

Who is God?

Lesson 2: Our King, Judge, Savior

Vocabulary:

judge/to judge/judgment	standard	joint	sacrifice/to sacrifice
soul	Influenced <small>(adj)</small>	bone	mankind
savior	conscience	confidence	cross
authority	to examine	to value	grave
to approach	motive	underserved	to appear
throne	praise	sin/sinner	to condemn
crown	to reward	binding <small>(adj)</small>	obedient <small>(adj)</small>
worthy	to punish	eternal/eternally	gratitude
to rejoice	to reject	extreme	to climb into
to govern	guidance	effort	
justice	sharp/sharper	ritual	
faithfulness	sword	ceremony	

Discussion:

This study continues to explore titles and roles that the Bible uses to describe God. In Part 1, we learned that God is our Creator, Father, Protector, and Healer. While God is loving and kind, he is also the King over all people and situations. He alone is pure, perfect, righteous, and true, so he alone is the **Judge** over our lives and **souls**. Because of his great love for us, he is also our **Savior**. Only when we understand God's perfect love, as well as his **authority**, will we **approach** our Father with a humble heart. In humility, we not only welcome his love but also his direction and authority over our lives.

God is our King

In the Bible, the book of Revelation gives us a beautiful description of the **throne** of God in heaven. In the description, men of honor lay their **crowns** at the Lord's feet and give all glory to their King saying, "You are **worthy**, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11, NIV)

Why do these men of honor give their honor back to God? How do they see themselves before God?

When have you received glory, honor, or power in your life? What would it mean to give your crown – honor, glory, and power – back to God?

One way that we can give honor back to God is by using our talents, skills, and special traits that he has given us for his honor and glory instead of our own. What our talents, skills, and special traits has God given you?

What would it look like to give those to God?

God is our Judge

The Bible teaches us that God is our holy Judge: “Let all creation **rejoice** before the Lord, for he comes to judge and **govern** the earth! He [will] judge the world with righteousness and **justice** and the peoples with his **faithfulness** and truth.” (Psalm 96:13)

What words are used in this verse to describe God as our Judge?

As our holy and righteous Judge, God’s role is to teach us what is right, true, and just. While our world has many **standards** for what is right, true, and just, God has one standard: his righteous standard. Our personal standards for what is right can come from many places – television, the internet, our family, society, culture, experiences, and even our own minds. Since God’s standard is holy and is not **influenced** by any of these areas, our personal standards can be very different from God’s standard. In this verse, Paul, a follower of Jesus and leader in the early church, describes how our judgment is different from God’s:

⁴ My **conscience** is clear, but that doesn’t prove I’m right. It is the Lord himself who will **examine** me and decide. ⁵ So don’t make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will **reveal** our private **motives**. Then God will give to each one whatever **praise** is due. (1 Corinthians 4: 4-5, NLT)

How have your personal standards been formed?

Can you think of examples where your standards or judgements are not the same as God’s?

What are some examples of motives? Why are motives hard for us to see in ourselves and others?

The Bible teaches that there will be a Judgment Day, a time when God will judge all the people of this world. As a righteous Judge, God will **reward** people who have obeyed him and **punish** those who have **rejected** his love, **guidance**, and authority. Yet, we have a chance in this life to prepare for the Day when we meet God, and God desires to save us all on that Day. Since God is a faithful, just, and righteous Judge, he provides a way for us to be saved and gives us in writing the standard he will use for judging:

¹² God’s word is alive and working. It is **sharper** than a **sword** sharpened on both sides. It cuts all the way into us, where the soul and the spirit are joined. It cuts to the center of our **joints** and our **bones**. And God’s word judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. ¹³ Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. Everything is clear and lies open before him. And to him we must explain the way we have lived. (Hebrews 4:12-13, ICB)

Based on Hebrews 4:12, what standard will God use to judge us on Judgment Day? Describe God's standard. Where can we find this standard?

Thankfully, God will not use our family, society, culture, experiences, or any human standards to judge us on Judgment Day. He will use a standard that does not change and is not based on people's opinions, beliefs, power, or influences. In this way, we can know and trust God's standard for that Day and know now how he will judge our lives. When we place our trust and faith in his ways and not our own, we can have **confidence** and not fear on the Day of Judgment.

Why will God use his Word and not our thoughts, feelings, and standards on Judgment Day?

God is our Savior

Since God is a righteous, just, and loving God, he not only provided for us his faithful standard to follow through his Word in the Bible, but he also sent us a living example of his Word, showing us how to live and what to **value** most in our lives. In the book of John, we learn that God sent his Word, or standard, in the form of a man to show us the way to God: "The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son" (John 1:14, CEV).

Why do you think we need a living example of what it means to follow God?

Through this verse, we learn that God took his spoken Word, his teachings, his righteous truths, and placed them in a human body so we could experience God, know him better, see his Word in action, be physically touched by his Word, and come near to him. To us, God may seem far away and hard to understand. But through a living example of his Word, we can see God clearly. John calls God's living Word, God's Son. In Hebrew, the word "son," or *monogenés*, means "one and only" and is used to refer to an only son or daughter.¹

Why do you think God's Word was called God's only Son?

While we are all children of God, a true Son of God must be holy and free of sin, since God the Father is holy and perfect. For this reason, God's Word in human form is called God's Son, one who belongs to God and shows us his glory and righteousness. John tells us the name of God's Son when he says, "...Jesus Christ brought us **undeserved** kindness and truth."¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like" (John 1:17-18, CEV).

Through Jesus, we see that God is holy and that his true children must also be holy. Since we are **sinner**s, how then can we ever become God's true children? How can God as a loving Father bring unholy children into his arms to care for them? Bringing us into a **binding** relationship with him as sinners would make God unholy. For God to remain holy, his only choice would be to stay **eternally** separated from the children he loves and created. While eternal separation to us may seem **extreme** by our standards, God is holy and eternal separation from sin is the only way for God to stay holy. And since God is a perfect and holy Judge, he must punish sin by his holy standards, not ours. For these reasons, our loving Father

is faced with a difficult problem: He must remain eternally separated from his unholy children *and* punish them for their sins. What would a loving Father do?

If you were God, a perfect and holy Judge, what would you do if all your children had sinned, must be punished, and could never be close to you because they are unholy?

We could try to design many solutions to God's problem: What if God separated himself from us while we each paid the full price for our sins? Could paying for our sins ever *make us holy*? What if we made every **effort** to follow God perfectly, performed good actions, and desired more than anything to be saved? Would that ever *make us holy*? No matter how hard we try, we still sin. What about a **ritual** or **ceremony**? We know that all the bathing and ceremonies in the world cannot take away our sin and *make us holy*. The water would become dirty the moment we stepped into it!

As a holy Judge, God must punish our sins and find a way to make us holy. Since we cannot make ourselves holy, even by punishment, then God would have to find someone *already holy* to be punished for our sins. But who could God use, since all men and animals are imperfect? An imperfect man or animal would have to be **sacrificed** day after day eternally to pay the price for the sins of all **mankind**. Even if God created a perfect animal or person to be sacrificed, what would happen when that animal or person died? Whoever paid the price for our sins would have to be both holy and eternal, one who had never sinned and would never die. The writer of Psalm 49 explains:

⁷ No one can pay for the life of anyone else. No one can give God what that would cost.

⁸ The price for a life is very high. No payment is ever enough...¹⁵ But God will save me from the place of the dead. He will certainly take me to himself. (Psalm 49:7-15, NIRV)

Discuss these verses. Who alone can pay the price for our sins? Who alone can make us holy?

To understand the sacrifice that God made for us, Paul wrote, "Jesus was given to die for our sins. And he was raised from death to make us right with God" (Romans 4:45, NIRV). John teaches us that Jesus is God's living Word who became a human, God's perfect Son. God's Word not only *came from* God, but God's Word *is* God; the two cannot be separated (John 1:1). In this way, God himself through his living Word Jesus was punished for our sins by dying on a **cross**. Yet, Jesus's body did not stay in the **grave**. Jesus rose from the grave and **appeared** to many people after he had died. Since Jesus is God's living Word, we can be certain that he lives forever, for Jesus said: "...my words will never disappear" (Luke 21:33, ISV).

How can Jesus be the perfect sacrifice for our sins? How is he able to make us holy? (Reread John 1:14 and Psalm 49:7-15)

When Jesus was raised from death to life, the Bible teaches us that Jesus sat at the "right hand of God" (Mark 16:19, Luke 22:69, NIV), a term that means the governing seat² of God. We should not be surprised that the Word of God is now the Judge, for we know that God's Word is his standard for judgement! As our Savior, Jesus spoke these words about Judgment Day:

⁴⁷ “If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will **condemn** them at the last day. (John 12:47-48, NIV)

According to verse John 12:48, what standard will God use to judge us? What role will Jesus have in helping us?

How does Jesus’s words agree with Hebrews 4:12-13 about Judgment Day?

For this reason, when we accept Jesus’s sacrifice, puts our trust in Jesus as the only One who can save us from sin and make us holy, and commit our lives to obeying to God’s Word, God promises to save us on Judgment Day. This is Great News! In this way, we do not obey Jesus *to be* saved – we could never be **obedient** enough! Rather we obey Jesus to show love and **gratitude** to our loving Father who paid for our sins through his one and only Son. We realize that God’s standard is the truth, and in our hearts, we desire to obey his truth, instead of our own ideas about what is true. Since God himself makes us holy, we become God’s true children and can come near to him our Father, **climb into** his arms, his protection, his healing, his love, and live forever with him under his guidance and authority for our lives.

How do you want to respond to what God has done for you through Jesus?

What would it mean for your life to truly follow Jesus? How will this change your life?

Compared to all other people, activities, and responsibilities in your life, how important is knowing God to you now that you have finished this study? (on a scale of 1-10)

This Week:

1. Take a minute to complete these sentences:

Because God is my King, I want to _____

Because God is my Judge, I want to _____

Because God is my Savior, I want to _____

Because Jesus is the Living Word and His Words will be my Judge, I want to _____

2. Make a list of 3 ways this week that you want to show God that you love him.

¹ “3439. monogenés,” Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, electronic database (Biblesoft, 2011), <https://biblehub.com/greek/3439.htm>.

² “1188.dexios,” Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, electronic database (Biblesoft, 2011), <https://biblehub.com/greek/1188.htm>.