

## THE LORD'S JUDGMENT

In Exodus 34:6-7, we read a description of the LORD that he himself spoke, "*The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands (ESV footnote = to the thousandth generation), forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation (ESV).*"

We like to focus on the positive (at least what we would consider positive) and not think about the negative aspects of those two verses. It is difficult for people to reconcile God's love with God's anger, his mercy with his judgment, or his deliverance with his discipline. People want to flatten God into a one-dimensional thing instead of the multi-faceted being he is. After all, we are made in his likeness and look how complex humans are.

I wanted to go through this thought exercise to give us a framework on which to build an understanding of Psalm 18:31-45. We are in the midst of a study through this poem, the fourth longest in the psalter, taking it a section at a time. I encourage you to read the psalm in its entirety several times meditating on it as a whole.

This is still a hard section, especially for modern readers. I think it helps to remember that God has chosen from the beginning to partner with humans within his creation. So when we think about God pronouncing judgment on people and whole nations as well, he could do it himself in a supernatural way (e.g. Sodom and Gomorrah; Nadab and Abihu), but, more often, he would use an individual, group, or nation of his choosing to bring about his judgment.

The LORD also was being faithful to his covenant promises he made with the nation of Israel and to David specifically. So what would appear as the LORD's protection and deliverance of David would simultaneously appear like judgment and condemnation and discipline on other peoples and nations.

Meditate on God's justice and judgment. Those in a covenant relationship with him need not fear his judgment. Those with no relationship should tremble at the mention of a holy and righteous God who will one day bring all things to account and pronounce everlasting judgment.

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