

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Fifty-Eight - Responding Biblically To Unjust Legal Decisions By Civil Authorities (Psalm 58:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. As epitomized in the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion-on-demand, even American courts can render decisions that distort or strongly oppose Biblical righteousness.
- B. A debate exists on whether or not Christians should **respond** to such injustices by political activism. Randall Terry of Operation Rescue favors such activism, citing Old Testament Josiah's fighting against pagan homosexual priests and childkillers as an example, Dave Hunt, The Berean Call, Jan. '77, p. 2. Yet Dave Hunt, author of The Seduction of Christianity would reply: "*There is not any example or doctrinal teaching to support the idea that Christians ought to engage in political or social activism.*" (Ibid.)
- C. Psalm 58 is a **starting** point of addressing the issue. We examine it with other Scriptures for a solution:

II. Responding Biblically To Unjust Legal Decisions By Court Judges, Psalm 58:1-11.

- A. H. C. Leupold, a respected commentator believes that this psalm is David's lament of mistreatment at the hands of the unjust decisions by king Saul, the anointed of the Lord, Leupold, Psalms, p. 435.
- B. David denounced the unjust decisions by the established authorities in Psalm 58:1-5:
 - 1. He denounced their judgments as being unjust, Ps. 58:1.
 - 2. In fact, he denounced their **hearts** as being wicked so that they would **devise** such injustices, Ps. 58:2.
 - 3. These judges were corrupt from **birth**, indicating that they had original sin like other men, Ps. 58:3.
 - 4. In fact, when confronted by those who would seek to correct them as a charmer would in handling a serpent, they ignored correction and produced their evil, destructive decisions anyway , Ps. 58:4-5.
- C. David then called upon **God** to render just recompense on these evil authorities, Ps. 58:6-9.
- D. Anticipating God's recompense, David voiced the future fulfillment for the upright at the avenging of their wrongs and the resulting testimony that God is sovereign and fair over men, Ps. 58:10-11.

Lesson: *Since David had no **BIBLICAL** jurisdiction to correct Saul's court as Saul was anointed by the Lord (1 Sam. 24:6), he had no recourse even in the slaughter of a city of innocent priest families (1 Sam. 22:17-23) but to leave the vengeance with **GOD**, Ps. 58.*

Application: *(1) Since Scripture gives no jurisdiction to the Christian to take civil law into his own hands, but rather to subject himself to every ordinance of man for God's sake (Romans 13:1-8; 1 Peter 2:13), he must submit to injustices by secular magistrates **EXCEPT** when required by them personally to **DISOBEY** God, cf. Acts 5:29. (2) When there is a question as to **WHICH** authority to heed since magistrates may violate their **OWN** ordinances, 1 Peter 2:15 reveals this guiding principle: **OBEY THAT RECOGNIZED RULE THAT SILENCES CHARGES OF WATCHING UNBELIEVERS THAT WE ARE LAWLESS.** (3) Though there are numerous passages in the **OLD** Testament one might use to promote social or political activism, recall that the Old Testament dispensation of the Law provided Israel with a **THEOCRACY**, something the **CHURCH** does **NOT NOW** biblically possess, cf. John 18:33-38. The Church is a sojourning body whose jurisdiction on earth is yet **FUTURE** at Christ's **COMING!** Thus, we **CANNOT** use Old Testament examples as precedents for the Christian's jurisdiction -- only as standards of righteousness! (4) "*Neither Jesus nor his apostles nor the biblical early church **EVER** engaged in political or social activism, or ever advocated it,*" Ibid., Hunt. The Church's task is to change men by conversion, not by legalistic reformation! In **FACT**, when informed of Pilates' desecration of sacrifices by mingling human blood of Jews with their sacrifices, Jesus did **NOT** respond with activism against Pilate; He only warned His listeners that unless **THEY ALSO** repented, **THEY** would suffer the same fate! (Lk. 13:1-3).*