

JUDGING GOD

Luke 19:21-23, 2 Kings 5:11-12

By Raymond White

When things go wrong it's an easy escape to blame God for our problems. And when we're looking for a reason to reject God's will for us, it's easy to point to the evils of the world and say, "If there is a loving God, he certainly would not have allowed that." Nevermind all the goodness in life, or the goodness of life itself, when we want someone to blame, too often we throw that blame on God, and that is about the most ungrateful thing we can possibly do. That we live at all is a debt to God we can never repay.

Garrison Keillor said it best: "Thank you, God, for this good life and forgive us if we do not love it enough." That's how we ought to feel about God and his great blessings. Here then are a few Bible stories of people who judged God.

2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. :12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went in a rage.

Naaman almost lost the blessing because of his pride. Fortunately for him, his servant dissuaded him with some good sense, and Naaman finally thought, "Oh why not? What have I got to lose?" That last second decision, as condescending as it was, saved him. Basically, Naaman tolerated God, and God accepted that.

Job 15:15 Behold, he putteth not trust in his saints [does not believe God's prophets] yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

Men think that what God says is wrong. There are many people who judge God. For example, homosexuals judge God believing that God has no right to judge them, and deride Christians calling them homophobes.

Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

God answers the prayers of those who keep at him. But one particularly interesting aspect of this story that is overlooked is that the widow didn't pass judgment on the judge. She didn't say, "He's a rotten guy, I don't want his help." That's exactly what many people say of God: "I can't believe in a god who allows evil." Well, okay. Let your pride and your snootiness lead you to destruction. I prefer, like this widow, to suspend judging the judge and to take help where I can get it. I have eternity to learn from God why he does what he does, I have only right now to get his help.

Luke 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. :22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou

knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: :23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

Let's recast this story in modern English:

(1) The servant accuses his Lord, "You're mean and this is unfair."

(2) The Lord examines the servant's claim, "Oh. So you think I'm mean, do you? Well, if that's the case, then why didn't you deposit my money in a bank and get interest? That would have at least been good service — minimal but acceptable — and would have demonstrated your sincerity with an honest effort.

(3) "The truth is, you weren't afraid of me at all, you're just plain lazy and have concocted this pretext to justify your laziness.

(4) "Therefore, I condemn you. Good-bye."

Many people deal with God in just this way, blaming God because life is tough. They don't stop to think, "Life is tough? Tougher than what?" And so they accuse God for allowing life to be unfair and use that as a pretext to reject him. They will one day discover that the God they rejected with so clever a justification will in fact reject them — their clever justification robbed them of their only hope for eternal life.

This also has a practical application for children. How mean and cruel children are who blame their parents for every hardship that life hands them. Shakespeare was entirely correct when he wrote in *King Lear*, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth is to have a thankless child." That applies as well to God as it does to parents.