

Seek the Delightful Judge

☆ Balance (vv.1-5)

☆ Peace (vv.6-10)

In the name of Christ our **Delightful Judge**, dearly redeemed in the light of God's truth:

How in the world can a **Judge** be **Delightful**? I'm glad you asked. Try this.

An ancient prophet named Elisha advised a widow and her son to find shelter in a foreign country until a famine passed. Seven years later as Elisha's servant was telling the king how Elisha had raised the woman's son from the dead, there she stood in the doorway of the king's court. *"This is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha brought back to life."* After talking with the woman, *the king appointed a high official to her case: "Return everything which is hers and all the produce of her fields, from the day she left the land until now."* (2 Kings 8:5f EHV) That's a **Delightful Judge**, but barely a flicker of the One we need: *"Seek the Lord while he may be found! Call on him while he is near! Let the wicked man abandon his way. Let an evil man abandon his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will show him mercy. Let him turn to our God because he will abundantly pardon."* (Isaiah 55:6f EHV) **Seek the Delightful Judge** for the big Day, Judgment Day. At last we will see true and lasting...

☆ Balance (vv.1-5)

Long ago in California the pioneer farmers attempted to create a natural disaster. They tried to clear the redwood forest. You'd have to see those centuries old giants to know the meaning of *huge*. You literally cannot see the top of the trees up in the clouds – fog notwithstanding. Why couldn't they clear the land? Because unlike other trees, redwoods keep growing back, and not just from the stumps. Camping there with family, we kids could hardly climb over the trunks of fallen trees. We were amazed how old redwood branches grow up into huge trees. Turns out, redwoods were nearly indestructible to pioneer machinery and legally protected from modern mayhem. The Creator wants **Balance** in His creation.

God's people in Isaiah's day were facing disaster. About 100 years later, in 586 B.C., the vicious Babylonians would burn the Lord's temple and destroy Jerusalem. Worst of all, the dynasty of King David, son of Jesse, would end with the last king of Judah. But God promised David an eternal kingdom!

Ah! *"A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit."* The **Branch** actually became a name for the Messiah Himself. When they cut down the Jesse-David royal family tree, it will shoot up out of the stump and even **bear fruit**. And, oh, what fruit it is!

"The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." The differences between just three of these **fruits** can be illustrated by skilled craftsmen better than by academics. Scientists developed **data** on alder wood, birch plywood and walnut stain for our attractive cabinets from Bill Barlow's shop. With **wisdom** an architect customer drew up some plans. The installation should have taken only a few hours at most. But that narrow stairway to the architect's second floor office meant breaking every joint in the long cabinet to jam it up through. We had to sand and refinish it on the architect's beautiful carpet. The Boss-builder was furious. He had the **understanding** to look at the tight space and build two boxes behind one face frame. "Never again!" he said, "will I do a job without personally visiting the site."

See the connection to Christ? With the Spirit of the Lord resting on Him, Christ came to be our

personal, onsite Builder with *understanding* skill and *wisdom* and *data* to rejoice our lives from grace to glory. ***“He will be delighted with the fear of the Lord.”*** There are two types of *fear of the Lord*, one good and one bad. Slavelike *fear* is afraid God will come; childlike *fear* is afraid He will go away.

Binary views; here’s the world in one sentence: ***There is no fear of God before their eyes.*** (Romans 3:18) Notice how so many advertisements these days are *Wicked Good, Wicked this/that* ? Yet the world means it. Ask a repentant gay man who is seeking **the Delightful Judge** to live God’s way in Christ. He fears God, but now his old friends persecute him for repenting. The wicked world says, “Be tolerant, but only our way!” Tyrants and fat cats often use their billions to oppress the poor, write laws and control the news narrative for their own passions and desires. But then we complain about God’s rule in our lives?

God’s **Delightful Judge** has a Day in store for all. ***“He will be delighted with the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, nor will he render decisions based on what he hears with his ears, but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and he will render fair decisions in favor of the oppressed on the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath from his lips he will put the wicked to death. Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his hips.”*** Finally true justice will find **Balance** in the court of God.

☆ Peace (vv.6-10)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.” (Isaiah 9:6f NIV84)

The Lord’s red-hot jealousy, His “angry love,” as Luther called it, accomplished great salvation. He destroyed His enemies of sin, death and hell; then gave us the *righteousness* He demands plus the faith to receive this gift. With all guilt atoned for, we have **Peace** with God through Christ, the **Branch**.

Bible believing dogmaticians have debated whether to take these words literally or as picture language. If the Lord means there will literally be animals in heaven, it may be that those creatures alive on the Last Day will be transformed for the new heaven and the new earth which God has promised to create. Or it may be that the Holy Spirit is simply describing in earthly language the glorious peace of heaven. The triumph of the saints in the glory of God’s new world sees creation ***“liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”*** (Romans 8:21)

When our children were young, someone came up with the bright idea to produce videos of animals hunting and killing each other. Children were crying when wolves devoured lambs, leopards wiped out goats, cows were mauled by bears, and snakes kept biting everywhere. It was too much gore. No one wanted more. You’d think everyone wants **Peace**, right? Yet even *The Brady Bunch* and “Andy Grippits” as our son called the sheriff of Mayberry – all need drama of some sort to sell.

At last, we will be free from our need for speed toward trouble and wickedness. Natural predators – animal and human – ***will not hurt or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*** Remember how good a bath feels in the hospital or after a long hunting or camping trip? That first shower feels like heaven. The verdict of **the Delightful Judge** goes deeper than our skin. His dear Holy Spirit uses Word and sacrament to cleanse us down deep in our souls – free from guilt, free from fear, all at **Peace** with God and each other. Guilt gone!

On that day the peoples will seek the Root of Jesse, who will be standing like a banner for the peoples, and his resting place will be glorious. A banner must be plain and simple, not like a QR code. Jesus said, *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”* (John 3:14f NIV84) **Delightful!** Amen.