

A Psalm by Asaph.

PSALM 82: 1 God presides in the great assembly. He judges among the gods.

A warning to corrupt judges, Psa 82:1, Psa 82:2; an exhortation to them to dispense justice without respect of person, Psa 82:3-5; they are threatened with the judgments of the Lord, Psa 82:6-8.

This Psalm, which, in the title, is attributed to Asaph, was probably composed in the time when Jehoshaphat reformed the courts of justice throughout his states; see 2Chr 19:6, 2Chr 19:7, where he uses nearly the same words as in the beginning of this Psalm.

Verse 1

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty - The Hebrew should be translated, "God standeth in the assembly of God." God is among his people; and he presides especially in those courts of justice which himself has established. The Court of King's Bench is properly the place where the king presides, and where he is supposed to be always present. But the kings of England seldom make their appearance there. King James I sometimes attended: at such times it might be said, "The king is in the king's court." I believe the case above to be similar. Judges! beware what you do! God is in his court, and in the midst (of the assembly) God will judge. See Parkhurst under אלה.

PSALM 82: 2 "How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?"

Selah.

Verse 2

Accept the persons of the wicked? - "Lift up their faces," encourage them in their oppressions.

Selah - "Mark this:" ye do it, and sorely shall ye suffer for it.

PSALM 82: 3 "Defend the weak, the poor, and the fatherless. Maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Verse 3

Defend the poor - You are their natural protectors under God. They are oppressed: punish their oppressors, however rich or powerful: and deliver them.

PSALM 82: 4 Rescue the weak and needy. Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked."

PSALM 82: 5 They don't know, neither do they understand. They walk back and forth in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are shaken.

 Verse 5

They know not - The judges are not acquainted with the law of God, on which all their decisions should be founded.

Neither will they understand - They are ignorant and do not wish to be instructed. They will not learn; they cannot teach. Happy England! How different from Judea, even in the days of Jehoshaphat! All thy judges are learned, righteous, and impartial. Never did greater men in their profession dignify any land or country - (1822).

All the foundations of the earth - "All the civil institutions of the land totter." Justice is at the head of all the institutions in a well regulated state: when that gets poisoned or perverted, every evil, political and domestic, must prevail; even religion itself ceases to have any influence.

PSALM 82: 6 I said, "You are gods, all of you are sons of the Most High.

Verse 6

Ye are gods - Or, with the prefix of כ ke, the particle of similitude, כאלהים keelohim, "like God." Ye are my representatives, and are clothed with my power and authority to dispense judgment and justice, therefore all of them are said to be children of the Most High.

PSALM 82: 7 Nevertheless you shall die like men, and fall like one of the rulers."

Verse 7

But ye shall die like men - כדאדם keadam, "ye shall die like Adam," who fell from his high perfection and dignity as ye have done. Your high office cannot secure you an immortality.

And fall like one of the princes - Justice shall pursue you, and judgment shall overtake you; and you shall be executed like public state criminals. You shall not, in the course of nature, fall into the grave; but your life shall be brought to an end by a legal sentence, or a particular judgment of God.

PSALM 82: 8 Arise, God, judge the earth, for you inherit all of the nations.

Verse 8

Arise, O God, judge the earth - Justice is perverted in the land: take the scepter, and rule thyself.

For thou shalt inherit all nations - Does not this last verse contain a prophecy of our Lord, the calling of the Gentiles, and the prevalence of Christianity over the earth? Thus several of the fathers have understood the passage. It is only by the universal spread of Christianity over the world, that the

reign of righteousness and justice is to be established: and of whom can it be said that he shall inherit all nations, but of Jesus Christ?