

Meditation 5, Psalms 9 & 10

“God is the Judge of the Nations”

"Let not men have power; let the nations be judged in Your presence. Strike fear into them, O LORD; let the nations know they are only men." "The Lord is king forever and ever; the nations will perish from His land... You will incline Your ear to champion the orphan and the downtrodden, that men who are of the earth tyrannize no more." (Psalm 9:21, 10:16-18)

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) wrote in his great book Democracy in America "in a democracy, people get the type of government they deserve." In all probability he was thinking of ancient Athens which, beautiful as she was, failed miserably to exercise wisdom and justice towards other states, engaged in wars of aggression against neighbors and through incredible acts of hubris, lost an empire. We moderns view the fall of Athens as tragic but in her day the demise of Athens as a great power was viewed by neighbors as the justice of the gods.

The Psalmist agreed with his Greek contemporaries that the collapse of a nation is the work of God. He was convinced that God judges nations and will judge ALL nations, irrespective of their form of government or ethnic makeup.

Twice, perhaps three times God has judged his covenant people Israel. In the experience of mankind, how many nations has He reduced to nothing? We do not know. What we do know is the LORD looks down from heaven, sees arrogance, injustice and idolatry at the national scale and eventually reaches out his hand to chastise nations. Rough justice perhaps, but justice executed as a work of grace. Grace to avenge the weak and defeated upon whose backs the nations of this world are built, grace to deliver the weak and downtrodden from the strong and mighty.

Prayer: "Lord, let not my confidence be fixed upon human government but rather let it be fixed upon the righteous kingdom you are seeking to establish in human hearts and in your soon return."

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