

## To Judge or Not To Judge

### Introduction

This is one of the more difficult (complex) subjects I have attempted to adequately write about. One significant reason for this is that the topic of “judging” is a doctrinal minefield strewn with both historical abuses as well as modern positions, which sadly – here in this western church era of skewed grace and neglected righteous living – are not Scripturally informed. So much of the contemporary church’s perspective on this and other topics (at least in North America) is based on what *feels* good or “right” rather than what YHWH actually says and what YHWH actually wants as revealed through His Word. Matt 12:50, Rom 8:8, Rom 12:2, Eph 5:17, 1 Thess 4:1-2, 2 Tim 2:4, and many other passages clearly establish the Biblical mandate for us to 1) understand what YHWH wants and what pleases Him; and 2) behave His Way while ceasing from behaviors that are contrary to His Way.

It’s far more popular to create a buffer of fleshly freedom under the defense of “don’t judge me and I won’t judge you” rather than – as Scripture teaches us we should do – living righteously according to YHWH’s perfect standard so that we are walking in a position of authority to judge (“plot a straight course”) based on what is right and what is wrong in Yah’s eyes and not man’s eyes. Therefore, it’s critical to bring the full counsel of Scripture to bear on the topic, and that is not easily (or quickly) done. It is a complex topic, however it can definitely also be understood with childlike simplicity. That being the case, we must still overcome some spiritual atrophy which is particularly acute on this topic and do more work than we might be accustomed to in order to reach truth on the matter.

My biggest challenge here is to simultaneously cover the topic adequately and distill it enough to aspire to that childlike simplicity of perspective critical for a Kingdom mindset while paradoxically attaining spiritual maturity in the meat of the Word.

### Definitions

Definitions for a topic are always critical. They establish a common foundational vocabulary to help eliminate assumptions and reduce the confusion that creeps in when words are interpreted differently among those sharing them. There is much confusion over what words like “judge” and “judging” and “judgment” mean from a Scriptural perspective. In my experience, these words are almost universally viewed as negative words – as something to be avoided and looked down upon – as something that we should have no part of at the human level.

However, as we will see from a Scriptural perspective, these are positive words. They can absolutely have a negative aspect in terms of the consequential outcomes required when wickedness is judged, but we will see how the act of judging is separately positive from potential negative outcome actions required by judgment decisions. This is because at the core, Biblically speaking, the words related to “judge” fundamentally mean “to set things right.”

It is never a net negative when things are set right. In order to set things right (in YHWH’s eyes, which is the only perspective that matters) that can also require actions that have consequences. Those who resist what is right in YHWH’s eyes will be repulsed by and adversarial towards righteous judgment. But those who love truth and what is right in YHWH’s eyes will embrace righteous judgment.

The Hebrew word for “to judge” is DYN “din” (Strong’s 1777). Ancient picture themes for each letter:

- D (dalet) = door / entrance
- Y (yod) = hand / action
- N (nun) = seed / life

Jeff Benner in his Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible provides this definition:

Combined these pictures mean "the door of life". The ancient Hebrew concept of a "judge" is one who restores life. The goal of one that rules or judges is to bring a pleasant and righteous life to the people. This can also mean a deliverer as one whom restores life to his people.

This definition based on the ancient Hebrew understanding and YHWH’s original intent for the function of this verb-role is critical to understanding every reference in Scripture dealing with the topic. To Benner’s definition I would also add how the Y (yod) represents the Hand to indicate action. Incorporating all of those concepts into a final working definition for use in this study, we arrive at a pretty good ancient Biblical definition for “to judge” = “to take action to restore life.”

Have you heard this taught from any pulpits or books? Everything must calibrate back to this. Without the compass of a correct Biblical definition, we are set up to badly misunderstand so many things.

There is another important Hebrew word that we need to look at and define, because many places in translations might also render it as “judge” or “judgment,” but the underlying Hebrew word is different than DYN. This other word is ShPhT (shaphat) – Strong’s 8199 – which is defined as “to judge, that is, pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication to vindicate or punish; by extension to govern; passively to litigate (literally or figuratively).” The ancient Hebrew pictograph themes are:

- Sh (shin) = 2 front teeth / sharp, press, eat, two
- Ph (pey) = mouth / blow, scatter, edge
- T (tav) = crossed sticks / mark, sign, signal, monument

We see a lot of thematic meanings in the interplay between the pictograph letters here. But a single unified concept also emerges. ShPhT = “to declare the outcome between 2 sides and set precedent”

Are these two Hebrew words interchangeable? They both certainly have interrelated and yet distinct implications. DYN carries a stronger action nature while ShPhT carries a stronger declaration nature. But a right pronouncement usually requires right action, and a judicial decision usually requires an enforcement action. Therefore, we see that these two words work together. It would be rare (if at all) that either of these would be operating in isolation. There are several verses where both words are used somewhat interchangeably and synonymously (although it’s not immediately obvious from the English):

- **Ps 7:8** – “YHWH **judges** [DYN] the peoples; **Judge** [ShPhT] me, O YHWH, according to my righteousness, And according to my integrity within me.”
- **Ps 9:8** – “And He [YHWH] **judges** [ShPhT] the world in righteousness, He **judges** [DYN] the peoples in straightness.”
- **Prov 31:9** – “Open your mouth, **judge** [ShPhT] righteously, And **plead the cause** [DYN] of the poor and needy.”
- **Jer 5:28** – “They have become fat, they are sleek. They also overlook the deeds of the wrong. They did not **judge** [DYN] the cause of the fatherless, so that they prosper. And the right of the needy they did not **judge** [ShPhT].”

These fascinating examples reveal aspects of the relationships and meanings between these two main words. They are somewhat synonymous but also carry their own unique nuances as well. We also clearly see hints that both dimensions (DYN and ShPhT) are areas where both YHWH and mankind are scripturally expected to operate. We will explore this further in another section.

*And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my **judgments** (ShPhT), which if a man **DO**, he shall **LIVE** by them. (Ezekiel 20:11)*

One final Hebrew word to consider at the foundation of this study is very close to ShPhT and simply adds the prefix “mem” to the word to form MShPhT (mishphat) – Strong’s 4941 – which is defined as “From 8199; properly a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or (particularly) divine law, individual or collectively), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly justice, including a particular right, or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style: - + adversary, ceremony, charge, X crime, custom, desert, determination, discretion, disposing, due, fashion, form, to be judged, judgment, just (-ice, -ly), (manner of) law (-ful), manner, measure, (due) order, ordinance, right, sentence, use, X worthy, + wrong.”

As you can see, MShPhT can have a really wide variety of uses and applications, but while the core meaning of ShPhT is the action of pronouncing a verdict / decision / judgment, the core of this word MShPhT is the pronouncement / verdict / decision / judgment itself. This is why some translations render this word as “right-ruling(s)” in places and why others render it as “judgment(s).” Other common English translations for MShPhT can be ordinance(s), cause(s) [as in valid judicial “case(s)”], and manner [as in after the “manner” of]. But “right-rulings” or “judgments” or “righteous decrees” are the best translations of this word to communicate its essence.

## First Mention

The very first place the word DYN appears in the Hebrew text – which Biblical Scholarship understands as the law of first mention that lends a special weight of meaning – is Genesis 6:3 and is (ironically) not always even translated as “judge”:

*And YHWH said, “My Spirit shall not **strive** (DYN) with man forever **in his going astray**. He is flesh, and his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”*

With our proper, deeper understanding of the definition of DYN we see whole new layers of meaning emerge in this passage. It shows how profoundly rebellious the generations of Noah’s days were in rejecting YHWH’s attempts to restore a state of life on the earth. It conveys how far gone things were at that moment in history for YHWH to essentially want to start over. Conditions of death had grown so severe (“every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”) that extreme action (the Flood) was required in order to restore the earth to state where it could once again sustain life. We must think of “life” through YHWH’s eyes. “Life” does not just mean “biological life.” It means life across every dimension of existence: heart, soul, mind, and body (Deut 6:5, Matt 22:37, Mar 12:30, Luke 10:27).

## One More Example of New Depth

To further illustrate how profound (and important) it is to have proper linguistic and cultural based definitions for the Scriptural words we often throw around too carelessly, let's consider John 5:24 in light of what we now understand about the Hebraic understanding of DYN ("to judge") where Yahushua Messiah said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me possesses everlasting life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Now it's actually clear why judgment is not necessary for those who are truly in Messiah. Yes, the penalty for their sin has been canceled by the payment of Messiah's perfect blood. But more fundamentally, they are already in a state of life. There is no longer judgement – the action needed to restore to life – necessary, because in Messiah they are already in life. However, this also brings a sobering thought: how much more serious is it for vessels of life to participate in actions of death (sin)?

## Judgment Authority

Before we can examine the Scriptural answers to practical life application questions like: "is it ever ok to judge?" and "who can/should judge what/when/whom/how?" we need to understand how authority in YHWH's universe works. One of the big mistakes people make is assuming that all judgment is only exclusively executed by YHWH and YHWH alone... and/or maybe Yahushua too, but certainly not us humans, right?

It's important to remember that YHWH created his universe as a participatory enterprise – He designed it to inherently require the involvement of his creation, primarily mankind as a reflection of his image, through the delegation of his sovereign authority into spheres of human dominion. This is clearly seen in the dominion mandate given to Adam and Havvah in the Garden and is a pattern repeated throughout Scripture. In fact, authority is at the core of the ages of conflict instigated by Satan who, rather than operate within his original delegated sphere of authority, has sought to usurp all authority for himself (Is 14:13-14).

The fact that Satan asserts his authority over all the kingdoms of the world in Luke 4:6 and Yahushua does not contradict this assertion is a strong indication that one of the tragic outcomes of Adam's original sin was the transition (delegation) of some level of worldly governmental authority / dominion from YHWH's representative (Adam and mankind) to the usurper. It's very clear that authority can be (and is) delegated by YHWH to his creation, but still ALWAYS serves YHWH's purpose. Even Yah's enemy executing the authority delegated to him with the intention of overthrowing YHWH ultimately still serves YHWH's sovereign purpose.

This also raises the concept that there are different types of authority, and judgment authority is only one of them. Going back to the original definition helps understand judgment authority in simple terms: The authority to take necessary action for restoring life. And this type of authority is not only delegated by YHWH to his servants, but YHWH actually requires his servants to exercise it (as seen in Jer 5:28 above and to be explored more fully ahead). In other words, YHWH requires His people – believers in Messiah – to judge rightly according to His Ways.

We will explore this in more depth, but one of the reasons for this requirement is that the human lifetime is fundamentally about two things:

1. Being restored to intimate relationship with our Creator through Yahushua Messiah
2. Learning to live the character of our Creator NOW in preparation and training to rule and reign as priest-kings with Him on the earth during His physical Kingdom in the FUTURE (both of which – now and future – require the righteous operation of judgment authority)

## Delegation of Judgment Authority

Before we establish the critical Scriptural boundaries and parameters that are to govern the scope of our role in exercising judgment, let's verify and explore the mechanisms through which judgment authority is properly delegated.

The simple illustration of parents and children make it clear that there is at least some measure of delegated judgment authority operating and necessary at the human level. Every time a parent disciplines their child they are exercising YHWH-granted judgment authority. Of course, like every type of authority, we recognized that this can be abused. However, the abuses of authority do NOT mean that the authority doesn't exist or that YHWH hasn't delegated it or even that it should be taken away in a general sense. Every time a police officer abuses their authority, it does not mean we should have no law enforcement. It actually means that it's the responsibility of a higher authority to exercise judgement and restore life to that specific situation. In the example of parents – we who have children judge our children when we recognize behavior that will ultimately lead to death, because we want to protect and lead them on the path of life.

Why then do we have such a difficult time with the concept that we are also responsible to judge the actions of others? While the parent-child scope seems pretty self-evident, maybe it will help to explore and understand the mechanisms and scopes of delegation involved at other levels. After all, Scripture speaks about all these scopes just like it speaks about the parent-child scope.

In John 5:26-27 Yahushua said: "For as the Father possesses life in Himself, so He **gave** also to the Son to possess life in Himself, and He has **given** Him authority also to do judgment, because He is the Son of Adam."

Fascinating, eh? This consistent connection between LIFE and JUDGMENT. Have you seen that before? Let's look at other verses addressing the authority delegation from YHWH to Yahushua Messiah:

- **Acts 10:42** – "And He commanded us to proclaim to the people, and to witness that it is He [Yahushua] who was **appointed by Elohim to be Judge** of the living and the dead."
- **John 3:35** – "The Father loves the Son, and has **given all into His hand.**"
- **John 5:22** – "For the Father judges no one, but has **given all the judgment** to the Son..."
- **John 17:1-2** – "Yahushua said these words, and lifted up His eyes to the heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come. Esteem Your Son, so that Your Son also might esteem You, as You have **given Him authority over all flesh**, that He should **give** everlasting life to all whom You have **given** Him.'"
- **Rev 12:10** – "And I heard a loud voice saying in the heaven, 'Now have come the deliverance and the power and the reign of our Elohim, and the **authority of His Messiah**, for the accuser of our brothers, who accused them before our Elohim day and night, has been thrown down.'"

Does the delegation chain of authority – and specifically, judgment authority – end at Messiah? We see that there is certainly something special, something ultimate about the judgment authority held by Messiah. For example Matt 25:31-46, 2 Cor 5:10, 2 Tim 4:1-8 all convey the idea that Messiah holds final judgment authority with jurisdiction over **eternal** rewards and **eternal** punishments. This authority scope is indeed reserved for him and him alone.

That said, there are other aspects of judgment authority which are further delegated from Yahushua to his servants. In understanding these passages it's helpful to remember that the Scripture uses pictures to represent concepts like authority and judgment. Symbols like the "rod of iron," "scepter," and "throne" are representative of the concepts they convey including authority and judgment.

- **Rev 2:26-27** – "And he who overcomes, and guards My works until the end, to him I shall give **authority over the nations**, and he shall shepherd them with a **rod of iron**, as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces, as I also have received from My Father." [xref Ps 2:7-9]
- **Rev 3:21** – "To him who overcomes **I shall give** to sit with Me on My **throne**, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."
- **2 Cor 10:8** – "For even if I should boast somewhat more about **our authority**, which **the Master gave us** for **building up** [remember, judge = "action needed to restore life" or "build up"], and not for overthrowing you, I shall not be put to shame."
- **Deut 16:18** – "Appoint **judges** and officers within all your gates, which YHWH your Elohim is giving you, according to your tribes. And they shall **judge** the people with righteous right-ruling."
- **Exodus 18** – Moses delegates right-ruling authority to rulers over 1000s, rulers over 100s, and rulers over 10s who were to rightly **judge** the cases brought by the people.

Some of that delegation certainly has a future fulfillment (Rev 2:26-27, 3:21), and at the same time some of it requires present application to bring life and order in human spheres as well as provide practice for a future destiny (2 Cor 10:8, Deut 16:18, Ex 18). Here is where we see how the mandate and application in normal daily life serves the purpose of preparation, training, and proof of trustworthiness for a larger future responsibility in executing delegated authority.

To conclude this section, it's worth studying Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Pe 2:13-17 from the additional angle of delegated governmental (civil) authority and judgment which YHWH has given to mankind to execute righteous judgment in the civil sphere according to His standards for punishing evil and rewarding good. Human civil rulers are of course also vulnerable to corruption and violating YHWH's order by punishing good and rewarding evil. When this happens, a fair question to ask is to what extent aberrant authority should be obeyed / tolerated. Civil governmental authority and judgment is a complex matter to consider with many facets beyond the scope of this study. However, the main point relevant to this study is that there are in fact Scriptural mandates which require humans to judge righteously and act on behalf of what YHWH's moral standards require in the civil sphere (as well as all spheres). Proverbs 29:2 beautifully sums it all up: "When the **righteous** are in **authority** [*lit.* increase] the people rejoice, but when the **wicked rule** the people mourn."

So we see that there are 2 distinct possibilities: **righteous** execution of authority and judgment contrasted with **wicked** execution of authority and judgment. Each mode inherently and mutually exclusively contains either consistency with YHWH's instructions and delegation scopes or operation outside those parameters respectively. Through the discerning lens of YHWH's Word, we can categorize and understand "judgment" action according to the following possible scenarios and His revealed perspective on them:

- [right and good] – Executing judgment within delegated authority within proper scope and Biblical action according to YHWH’s instructions in Scripture.
- [wrong and bad] – Failing to execute judgment within delegated authority within proper scope and Biblical action according to YHWH’s instructions in Scripture.
- [wrong and bad] – Executing judgment without delegated authority and/or without proper scope and/or without Biblical action as defined by YHWH’s instructions in Scripture.

## Judging Rightly

How do we know what defines righteous judgment and what it should look like? Again, we’re only interested in YHWH’s perspective on it. He defines the very essence and separation between right and wrong (in every sense from moral distinctions to functional differences). These definitions, examples, and instructions on how we can apply them are found consistently throughout the whole of Scripture.

Scripture	Observations
Gen 18:19	YHWH Himself speaking, reveals that the purpose of Him <b>knowing</b> (c.f. Matt 7:23) Abraham was so that Abraham would raise up his children and household to guard the ways of YHWH and to exercise righteous judgment. Abraham is the father of many nations. Part of the YHWH-given role of fathers is to train their children to walk in YHWH’s ways and exercise YHWH’s judgments on the earth.
Ex 18:13-26	Shows the pattern of righteous delegation and the necessary role that Scripture-based judging among the people of Yah has at various levels of jurisdiction (10s, 50s, 100s and 1000s) with the ultimate purpose of making known the statutes and instructions of YHWH.
Num 25:4-13 & Ps 106:30-31	One of the most shocking situations and acts of judgment in the Scriptures by Phinehas, described in Psalms 106 (KJV) as “executing judgment” but introduces yet another Hebrew word PLL (palal) which means to judge / intervene / intercede and is usually translated as to “pray” or “plead” is rewarded by YHWH with a covenant of peace and an eternal priesthood for Phinehas and his descendants. This is a powerful lesson that the intervention / intercession of righteous judgment restores and produces the fruit of peace because it deals with & removes the unrepentant, rebellious evil incurring YHWH’s wrath.
Num 35:12, 24	The entire congregation of YHWH’s people had a role to play in judging between the accidental manslayer and the avenger of blood, illustrating another facet of delegation and individual responsibility to enforcing Yah’s Word
Deu 4:5-8 Deu 16:18-20	YHWH’s intention and design for Israel in the fallen world was to be the archetype of righteous government and authority structure at all levels of jurisdiction which required local, wise, appointed judges to carry out just rulings.
Judges 2:16-23	Shows the pattern and connection between righteous judgment and deliverance
1 Kings 3:9-11	Many remember Solomon famously asked YHWH for wisdom, but it is seldom remembered that the specific purpose of that request for wisdom was for the purpose of judging YHWH’s people rightly discerning between good and evil.
Prov 21:3	“To <b>do</b> justice and judgment is more acceptable to YHWH than sacrifice.”
Prov 31:9	Positive instruction to “Open your mouth, judge (ShPhT) righteously, and [plead the cause] (DYN) of the poor and needy.”
Is 1:16-17	YHWH pleading with His people to reject evil and seek / execute right judgment

Scripture	Observations
Jer 7:5-7	Part of the inherent identity of YHWH's people from His perspective is to be able to rightly execute His judgment between neighbors.
Jer 22:1-3, 15-16	Here we clearly see that enacting righteous judgment is not intended by YHWH to be only for kings or government officials, but for all his people including: the "king... [his] servants, and [the] people that enter by these gates." And again the connection between judging rightly and <b>knowing</b> YHWH (c.f. Gen 18:19, Matt 7)
Ez 22:1-3 & Ez 23:36-45 & Mic 3:8-9	In these examples we see that executing right judgment isn't complicated. Sometimes (and probably often) it's as simple as declaring and standing for what is true and right from YHWH's perspective.
Amos 5:13-15	Even in an evil time, we're encouraged to "hate the evil and love the good and establish judgment in the gate" even when the judgment around us has been corrupted by bribes and wickedness.
Zeph 2:3	Defines the "meek of the earth" as ALL those who "have wrought [YHWH's] judgement"
Zech 7:8-11	This one is beautiful because it expresses the strong connection between true judgment and mercy / compassion. Righteous judgment is mercy and compassion to the humble but loathsome to the proud.

At this point in our study there might be some who would say, "ok, ok, but those are all Old Testament examples and Jesus came and changed all that." Let's, therefore, see if the New Testament indeed heads in a different direction or if it builds upon the foundation of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings consistently.

We will zoom in on Matt 7, because a tiny slice of Matt 7 gets all the attention – and it's usually out of context. Most people (even non-believers) have this part in verse 1 memorized: "Judge not, lest you be judged." And without a full review of all the Scriptures on the matter, so many false impressions and false doctrines have been built on this one cherry-picked verse. After dissecting Matt 7 in context, we'll then see what the rest of the later (New Testament) writings say.

If Matt 7:5 was the verse that everyone decided to like and cherry-pick and remember, the ultimate picture would be very different, and in fact this is the actual conclusion of that section:

"You Hypocrite! First **remove** the plank from *your own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to **remove** the splinter out of *your brother's* eye."

Yahushua is actually speaking to an audience whom he is correcting for how they were judging wickedly – judging in hypocrisy. The context makes it clear that he's upholding the righteous original standard of "measure for measure" which deals with properly handling false accusations in judgment (Deut 19:16:21). It's not a prohibition against judging – it's a correction against judging in hypocrisy and judging falsely. Yahushua here is actually giving a two-part positive command here, which is the opposite of "do not judge." He is saying:

1. First, get your life right with YHWH and deal with the areas where you struggle (receive YHWH's judgement and correction which restores life).
2. Then, righteously judge your brother in the areas where he struggles (be a vessel for YHWH's restoration of life)

Yahushua was actually saying the exact opposite of how most people interpret this. He was instructing us to judge rightly, but more importantly he was teaching something critical and fundamental about



delegated authority and jurisdiction and what characterizes righteous judgment verses wicked judgment.

How exactly do we remove the plank from our own eye?

- **Ps 7:8** – “YHWH judges the peoples; Judge me, O YHWH, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me.”
- **Ps 25:9** – “He guides the meek ones in judgment, and He teaches the meek ones His way.”
- **Ps 26:1-3** – “Judge me rightly, O YHWH, for I have walked in my integrity. And I have trusted in YHWH without wavering. Examine me, O YHWH, and prove me; try my kidneys and my heart. For your kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth.”
- **Ps 35:24** – “Judge me rightly, O YHWH my Elohim, according to Your righteousness; and let them [my enemies] not rejoice over me.”
- **1 Cor 11:31-32** – “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Master, so that we should not be condemned with the world.”

The problem with most modern interpretations of Matt 7 is that they attempt to define the word “judge” completely separate from the Biblical definition foundation which we’ve been careful to examine in this study first. Once we understand that proper Scriptural judgment produces life, it’s easy to understand how everything else fits. But without this correct understanding first, it leads to a gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation of “judgment” among those who promote the “do not judge” doctrine.

Almost invariably, they have misunderstood and confused Biblical, righteous judgment with: fleshly criticism, hypocritical or self-seeking judgement, and false accusations. They generally substitute those concepts into the picture and then construct most of their arguments to “prove” Scripture speaks against all forms of judgment on the human level. The root problem is that they have failed to properly understand Scriptural judgment from YHWH’s perspective and they have misunderstood Scripture as teaching against all judgment (both good and bad). This is dangerous, because as we’ve seen (and will see further) Scripture actually commands us to walk in right judgment according to YHWH’s desire. And we’ll also see – in the section surveying the Scriptures about examples of wicked judgment (or absence of righteous judgement) – how some of those verses are used in modern interpretations to teach against judging rightly when they are actually examples of judging wickedly.

Continuing now with what the New Testament teaches about righteous judgement:

Scripture	Observations
John 7:24	Yahushua plainly instructs: “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” That’s quite different than most people think about “judge not, lest you be judged.”
Luke 17:3	One action that can accompany right judgment as an expression of that judgment is “rebuke” and we’ll see that theme surface several times. Here Yahushua instructs his followers to rebuke a brother who sins against you and then forgive if he repents. This rebuke first requires a judgment to be made that what the brother did was indeed sin and YHWH’s Word is the only authority that can define sin.

Scripture	Observations
John 5:30	Even Yahushua sets the example and definition for righteous judgment as being based only on the Father's desire.
John 8	The woman "caught" in adultery. Another common text used to try to defend the "do not judge" doctrine by claiming Yahushua changed the standard from punishment to grace. The truth is, the scribes and Pharisees were again – in this example – guilty of judging both falsely and hypocritically. The Torah requires that BOTH the man and the woman be stoned when caught in adultery (Lev 20:10). Where's the guilty man in this case? An entire half of the equation required to satisfy the conditions for righteous judgment is completely missing here. Even though the woman was guilty, it was rigged from the beginning.
Acts 5:3+	Peter discerns Ananias and Saphhira's deception, and pronounces judgment
Acts 13:10-11	Sha'ul discerns the nature of Elymas the sorcerer, and pronounces judgment
1 Cor 5:3-13 1 Tim 1:20	Sha'ul passes judgement over the fornicating member of the congregation of Corinth and instructs the group to deliver that man to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that his spirit might be saved (restoring life). [Even as Sha'ul did himself with Hymenaios and Alexander as recorded in 1 Tim 1:20] He also instructs that the church should purge out the leaven lest the whole lump be contaminated and that they should not eat with or even keep company with a so-called believer who is a fornicator, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, or extortioner. In order to walk in that we must make a judgment based on what we observe – the fruit of action and behavior in people's lives. Then Sha'ul in verse 12 makes a strong question statement: "Do you not judge those that are within [the fellowship]?" The point is clear – we are required to judge righteously within the Body of Messiah, and leave judgement on those outside the Body up to YHWH (verse 13). This is a crystal clear affirmation of the same delegated authority and jurisdiction for righteous judgment established in the Old Testament in the context of how YHWH intends for his Kingdom people to operate. The final statement is that the wicked (and by implication unrepentant) person is to be removed from the Body. This is the same pattern and for the same reasons to rightly deal with and prevent the consequences as seen in Num 16:23-33 and Josh 7.
1 Cor 6:1-5	Sha'ul teaches that the people of YHWH are being prepared to judge the world and even angels and therefore we should be able to judge small matters among the Body of Messiah and even more so the things that pertain to this life. It's shameful when we do not judge rightly among YHWH's people. This remains completely consistent with YHWH's instructions to his people to appoint judges among them, but applied to the context of the Body of Messiah.
1 Cor 11:3	Summarizes family authority structure: YHWH > Messiah > man > woman
2 Cor 10:6	"...being ready to <b>punish</b> all disobedience, when your obedience is complete."
1 Tim 5:8, 19-20	Clear standards for righteous judgments required in specific situations.
Titus 1:9-16 Titus 2:15	Clear instruction to reprove those opposing sound teaching and to rebuke false teachers.

**Acts 8:20-23** is a special example worth zooming in on and exploring the additional connections it raises. Along with the incorrect interpretation of Matt 7 which is generally twisted to mean "do not judge" there is also the popular idea that only YHWH and Yahushua know a person's heart and therefore only they can judge. Ps 44:21, Jer 17:9-10, John 5:22, 2 Cor 5:10, and other passages speak to this, and at the same time that is only part of the full picture.

However, Acts 8:21 clearly shows Peter righteously discerning and judging the **heart** of Simon. So, how is this possible? How was this “allowed” or proper or right? The whole counsel of Scripture reveals a bigger picture than the over-simplified view of “only YHWH knows the heart.” The heart can be self-evidently known because it cannot help but manifest its nature through action and behavior and speech (Matt 12:34-35, Matt 15:19, Luke 6:45). In fact this is the only way it makes any sense that Yahushua would instruct us to discern between good (righteous) people and evil (wicked) people by their fruit (Matt 7).

The other problem with practicing true Scriptural discernment is that most people don’t consider Yahushua’s definition of “fruit.” They apply the wicked world’s **WRONG** definition of “fruit” (success, signs, wonders, miracles, healings, good works, charity, large numbers, etc.) and therefore cannot discern properly. Yahushua said “a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.” By contrast in Matt 7:23-26 Yahushua reveals that his definition of “fruit” is obedience to his words – which are the same words as His Father – which is the same as YHWH’s instructions since the beginning. Obedience to YHWH is fruit. This is consistently repeated throughout Scripture (Ex 20:6, Deut 5:10, Deut 7:9, Deut 11:1, Neh 1:5, Dan 9:4, John 14:16, John 14:21, John 15:10, 1 John 2:7, 1 John 5:2-3, 2 John 1:6). There is no other Biblical definition of fruit, and there’s no other Biblical definition of what loving YHWH looks like. In fact, many deceivers have the false fruit of lying wonders, which they even perform in the name of Christ, but they have not received the love of the truth and they do not obey YHWH’s commands. This is how Matt 7:23 is possible – as strange as it seems that people could cast out demons and do “mighty works” in the name of Christ and not be known by Him – because they are lawless: without obedience, without torah.

Heb 4:12 also reveals that we can discern what is in someone’s heart because the Word of YHWH is “...able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” If we immerse ourselves in YHWH’s Word and it abides in us then that discernment is active. Does that mean we know everything about every heart? Of course not. But it’s part of the picture as to how Peter was able to discern Simon’s heart, the heart of Annanias and Sapphira before that, and how Sha’ul was able to discern that, “according to your hardness and your unrepentant heart” among his audience in Rom 2:5.

All the pieces have to fit. There is specific authority, delegation, and jurisdiction related to righteous judgment at different times, places, and contexts throughout history. YHWH expects our participation in many of those jurisdiction combinations and has also reserved some of them strictly for Yahushua. But as part of our destiny to rule and reign with him – which includes executing righteous judgment on his behalf in his Kingdom (Rev 2:26-27, Rev 20:4-6) – learning how and practicing righteous Scriptural judgment now is an important part of our preparation and training and testing, which 1 Cor 6 makes so clear as does Luke 19:12-27. It’s actually harmful and contrary to our Kingdom destiny training in Messiah to take a posture of “do not judge” during this life. It’s akin to burying our talents and neglecting to exercise / invest them (Matt 25:24-26).

Time and time again in most of the examples above, we see that YHWH has delegated righteous judgment to manifest among mankind through his people who are willing to uphold the ways of His Word. Not only has He delegated thus, but He requires His servants to implement his righteous judgments on the earth as part of his Kingdom operations. Notwithstanding, this must all be exercised within the boundaries of His delegation and instructions. Wicked judgment seeks to usurp authority, deviate from Scriptural jurisdictions, and apply actions which are not sanctioned by YHWH’s Word. This is the prideful posture at Satan’s core and in all those who imitate his usurping nature knowingly (driven by worship of the fallen rebel) or unknowingly (driven by the dictates of self).

## Judging Wickedly

So, at this point we see from Scripture that it's not really a question of whether or not to judge at all. It's a question of: is jurisdiction authority in place and how does YHWH want judgment applied in a particular case consistent with His Word?

Now that we properly understand that we are required to judge rightly, we can start to understand the full context of apparent prohibitions against judging and why those prohibitions apply to:

- Judgment without jurisdiction
- Judgment without delegation of authority
- Judgment outside of YHWH's prescribed response
- Judgment withheld or avoided when it should be extended

We group all these together as examples of judging wickedly – including the act of withholding righteous judgment when it should be provided.

Passages	Observations
1 Kings 20:42	The seriousness of failure to execute YHWH's righteous judgment
Jer 5:25-28	Failure to rightly judge the wrong, the cause of the fatherless, and the needy
Ez 20:20-25	We see that one of the consequences for NOT executing right judgments and Not obeying YHWH's ways is being turned over by him to "statutes that are not good and judgments by which they cannot live." Failing to execute YHWH's right-rulings creates a condition in which harmful ways are pursued and the purpose of right judgment to restore life is corrupted into bad judgment by which there's no restoration of life.
Matt 23:23	Here Yahushua excoriates the scribes and Pharisees for neglecting righteous judgment, compassion, and belief. Here again we see the connection between hypocritical behavior and blindness characterized by focusing on tiny aspects while neglecting more important things.
Rom 1:28 - 2:5	The context is the same as Matt 7 – that those who are practicing all manner of evil deeds are disqualified from judging because they are just reaping condemnation on themselves.
Rom 14:1-13	This is dealing specifically with the prohibition against trying to judge matters which are NOT restricted or instructed against by YHWH's Word. Everything in the context is outside what the Scriptures regulate. It's talking about judging preferences – it's NOT about judging something which is sinful or against YHWH's Word.
James 4:11-12	This is specifically dealing with false slander / false accusation which is against Torah and therefore not practicing righteous judgment according to Torah.

## Examining Examples of Modern Misinterpretation

These examples are all taken from [How to Stop the Pain](#) by James B. Richards. I'm using ebook location numbers for reference rather than page numbers. First a quick note before we explore the quotes.

I realize there is a high risk of being misunderstood here by closely scrutinizing the work of a believer who has invested a lot of effort and vulnerability through taking his own personal experiences and sincerely combining them with his best understanding of Scripture to try to help other believers experience freedom. I share his core desire to see people free from the bondages of bitterness and unforgiveness. At the same time we're all responsible to rightly handle the Word of Truth (2 Tim 2:15) as best we're able. I cannot agree with the ways in which he has misinterpreted the nature and purpose of Scriptural judgment, and I think his perspective is fairly representative of the majority popular trend in modern interpretation on this and related topics. This is not in any way intended as a criticism of him personally or his intentions or motives. However, I want to as objectively as possible examine his doctrinal positions and definitions against Scripture, since so many doctrines today sound good, and yet we've been warned that "there shall be a time when they shall not bear sound teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves teachers tickling the ear and they shall indeed turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to myths." (2 Tim 4:4)

From the very beginning of the book it is clear that Richards does not have a solid foundation for the correct Scriptural definition of judgement. The confusion this causes throughout this book is extensive. Here are some specific, prime examples of how the author is starting from and basing his conclusions on incorrect (un-Biblical) definitions of "judgment."

- **@ loc 52** he equates vengeance and punishment and retaliation as the exact same thing as judgment, quoting Romans 12:19. Through this confusion, he misapplies the Scriptures teaching us to not take our own revenge onto the topic of judgment. Revenge and Judgement are very different things Biblically speaking. There is no revenge or self-seeking vengeance component at all in righteous judgment. They are completely different things. Enforcing judgment consequences is even a different matter than revenge or vengeance.
- **@ loc 104** he uses judgment and criticism as interchangeable synonyms in the context of Matt 7 – judgment and criticism are very different Biblically speaking. Most of what this book tries to deal with – and most of its intent seems to be to address the dangers of criticism and false accusations. Those are indeed damaging sins to be avoided. But those unfortunately get lumped in with judgment, which creates a lot of confusion in the book's handling of the overall topic.
- **@ loc 123** he defines "when we assume to know *why* a person did what he did" as entering into judgement. But this is not the Biblical understanding. Righteous judgment is not inherently based on WHY – either by assumption or by discovery – it's based primarily on WHAT was done. Sha'ul didn't tell the Corinthians to figure out why the rebellious member was fornicating. Actions have consequences. Righteous judgement also factors in grace and repentance. But when we assume to know why a person did what they did, that is a different thing than judgment as defined by Scripture.
- **@ loc 244** he equates judgement to "the main act of fear" (in a negative sense). This is contradictory to Scripture which by contrast equates keeping YHWH's judgments as a manifestation of love (Deut 11:1) and perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18)
- **@ loc 485** he uses judgment and control interchangeably as having the same effect of setting oneself up as god. Biblical judgment and control are radically different.
- **@ loc 494** "Judgment is always a part of the process of control." Not true. Richards frequently speaks in superlatives like "always," "never," "any" etc. and creates a lot of error that way.

And here are examples of how those incorrect definitions have led to incorrect conclusions and applications:

**@ loc 52** – *“The determination to punish belongs solely to the One who has the right to judge. Judgment belongs to God.”* This is blatantly contradicted by 2 Cor 10:6 which instructs us to be “ready to punish all disobedience, when [our] obedience is complete” as well as all the other Scriptures we looked at above. Yes, judgment does belong to YHWH, but/and He has delegated a lot of it to operate at the human level through His servants in order to sustain the righteous order on the earth we have seen.

**@ loc 53** – *“The first step on this journey requires that you surrender the ‘right’ to judge.”* This is not the Biblical way to think about it. Again, he is defining ‘right to judge’ in this context as ‘right to revenge’ which is a totally different thing.

**@ loc 71** – *“In order for God to even consider blessing us as a result of our efforts, He would have to completely deny the finished work of His Son.”* This statement originates from a very sloppy doctrinal inheritance prevalent in the modern western church that equates salvation with blessing and undermines our role and responsibility in the consequences of our actions. Biblically speaking, salvation and blessing are different things and they are obtained through different mechanisms. It’s beyond the scope of this study to explore that, but it’s sufficient to say that blessings are NOT (generally) the free gift of YHWH’s grace in the same way that salvation through Messiah is. The following passages are in blatant contradiction to Richards’ claim and illustrate from Scripture the nature of blessings as being dependent upon our actions and distinctly different than the free gift of salvation through grace: Deut 11:26-28; Deut 30:19; 1 Pe 3:8-14; Rev 22:7, 14; Rev 16:15; Rev 1:3; James 1:12; Luke 11:28; Matt 6:1-4

**@ loc 74** - *“We are free from every curse of the law because we are in Him.”* This makes the same modern western Christianity doctrinal mistake as above in failing to understand the purpose and interplay between life and death, blessings and curses, deliverance and condemnation, spirit and law, and how those pairs are not all on the same coin, so to speak. We can still come under curses prescribed by the righteous law of YHWH as consequences of our actions just as surely as we will experience death if we jump off a cliff no matter how much we’re convinced that the law of gravity doesn’t apply to us. But in Messiah we are free from the curse of eternal death. However, if we were free from every curse of the law as Richards claims then we also would not have to die physically. But it is evident that millennia of believers in Messiah have had to still physically die, demonstrating that this doctrinal position is not Biblical. There are still consequences for sin on earth even for the believer.

It’s a major problem for rightly handling the Word of Truth when these inherited doctrinal lies are completely obscuring the lens through which Scripture is being approached. It makes applying sound doctrine to any topic almost impossible because the foundation is so contaminated, and it skews every conclusion upon which the misinterpretations are based.

**@ loc 74** - *“We are qualified for every aspect of the inheritance through Him. And every promise God has ever made to anyone is “yes” because we are in Him (2 Corinthians 1:20).”* This is modern, false prosperity gospel jargon and NOT what 2 Corinthians 1:20 says. It says: “For all the promises of God find their Yes in HIM. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” 1 Cor 1:20 is saying that Yahushua is the fulfillment and culmination and confirmation of all YHWH’s covenants. It does NOT say or even hint that every promise YHWH ever made to anyone is automatically ours as Richards asserts. We’ve already looked at many passages which describe the conditions on many of YHWH’s promises.

**@ loc 124** – *“Only God has the right to judge. He alone knows why people do what they do.”* We’ve already explore Scriptural examples showing how this is not totally correct. They why – the heart – manifests in behavior and is discerned by the Word of YHWH and the Spirit.

**@ loc 136** – *“The moment you attempt to determine why another is doing what he or she is doing, you have given it significance... nothing has the power to hurt you until you attach significance to it.”* This is nonsensical. Why people do things matters. Actions are already significant regardless of our attempt (or lack thereof) to analyze them. Things can be substantially significant and still have no power to hurt us. Whether we are hurt or not does not depend on the significance of something – it does not depend on anything external to us nor our response to it. Whether we are hurt / offended / damaged by something depends mostly on our own identity and the extent to which it is anchored securely in Messiah or in other false idols or areas of pre-existing unforgiveness, bitterness, and other bondages. How we are impacted by the actions of others is not initially or even significantly affected by our response to it. Our response to it (to use the author’s terms – attaching significance or judgment on it) is a product of how we were already impacted by it and NOT the cause of that impact.

**@ loc 139** – *“Passing judgment causes us to react to situations inappropriately.”* This is an ambiguous and therefore inaccurate statement by implication. A correct statement would be: *“Passing false / unrighteous judgment causes us to react to situations inappropriately.”* Scriptural, righteous judgement according to YHWH’s perspective is by nature inherently always appropriate.

**@ loc 238** – *“...it is highly possible that, before the Fall-Adam did not have the capacity or the tendency to judge... The ability to judge was a part of Satan’s destructive offer.”* This is nonsensical, unbiblical, unfounded, and distracting / misleading. Knowing good and evil is completely different than judging. Richards is just being really sloppy with use of language and definitions in this case in his overall attempt to defend his assumption that “judgment” is an inherently “bad” faculty. We have to remember that judgment is connected to authority and stewardship and Adam was YHWH’s delegated authority on the earth to guard the garden. Adam’s failure to righteously judge the serpent and exercise the authority YHWH had entrusted him with resulted in Havvah’s deception and his own fall. The ability to judge – as an inherent aspect of YHWH’s nature and character, and seen even in the mere existence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil definitely existed in Adam who was made in the image of YHWH. It was a failure to judge righteously that was the original sin problem.

**@ loc 241** – *“Prior to the Fall, Adam was an observer of the world.”* Again, more unbiblical, nonsensical, wild speculation contradicted by Scripture. Adam was clearly not only a participant from the very beginning of creation, but he was given an incredible responsibility by YHWH to manage, cultivate, steward, and exercise delegated dominion over creation. This is FAR from being “an observer.”

**@ loc 246** – *“We should be free from the need to judge; we should return to the place of experiencing life as an observer...”* Living as “an observer” is a pale shadow of who we’re designed to be and our full Kingdom destiny. There is no such thing as mere observers in the battle that rages around us between the 2 kingdoms. We are either increasing YHWH’s Kingdom or increasing the enemy’s Kingdom.

**@ loc 301** – *“I soon found out that peace and fixing cannot coexist.”* Nonsensical. True Shalom is not dependent on any external circumstances or our response to them. It comes from YHWH’s Spirit in us. We can be at total shalom or total frustration while “fixing” our vehicle. We can be at total shalom or total frustration while being used by YHWH to help “fix” others. We absolutely should be vessels of YHWH’s fixing / healing / loving / correcting / encouraging / discipline work in others. Our state of peace or lack thereof is a function of whether we’re anchored in YHWH or ourselves or some other idol. It has far less to do with the nature of the work Father has us engaged with.

**@ loc 307** – *“The moment I come to the place where I feel I can see your faults more clearly than I can see my own, I have become a hypocrite.”* More confusion in definitions. This is NOT the definition of a

hypocrite. Being a hypocrite requires both action of wrong and judging someone else for the same wrong action. We do not become a hypocrite merely because we have blind spots and think we see someone else's faults. Sloppy linguistics. Stretched definitions. Confusion.

**@ loc 329** – *“God wants you to know that the sin problem was settled by the finished work of Jesus.”* Then why: Heb 12:4, Rom 6:16, Rom 7:14-24, Rom 8:13, etc.? No, this statement is misleading and over-emphasizes and distorts what grace is and the struggle that still exists between our flesh and our spirit.

**@ loc 332** – *“In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus promised that if we would “yoke up with Him,” we would have a life that is easy and light.”* No, he did NOT. He said that HIS yoke is easy and HIS burden is light. He promised the opposite about life in general: John 16:33, Matt 7:13-14, 2 Tim 3:12, Rom 8:36, etc. This careless handling of Scripture undermines any valid points Richards is trying to make and misleads people into thinking that life of walking with Yahushua is something totally different than what He taught.

**@ loc 345** – *“They had reduced a relational walk with God to over six hundred daily rules of outward observation—all of which had little or no value regarding the motive of the heart.”* This is total ignorance of YHWH's perspective revealed in Scripture as to HIS heart in Torah. Reading through Ps 19 and Ps 119 written by the “man after YHWH's own heart” quickly demonstrate how ignorant and inaccurate this statement is. But, sadly, that's the perspective underpinning most modern, western, christian doctrine. And it is a doctrine of demons designed to obfuscate and attack the very heart and nature and character of YHWH revealed through His loving instructions to His people. The “six hundred daily rules” did not originate with the Jews. They are YHWH's instructions. And they are not “daily rules of outward observation.” They are the instructions specifically tailored by the Creator for his Family with intimate and perfect knowledge of our heart / soul / mind / body design.

**@ loc 380** – *“If we are feeling something other than love, we are not experiencing God.”* This is SO dangerous because “feelings” are easily subverted and deceived, and because there are so many false definitions of love out there. Yah's love often doesn't feel like “love.” Joseph in the pit. Joseph in prison. David hiding in caves. Messiah on the cross. Sha'ul in chains. On and on we could go. This kind of statement about “feeling” and “love” is indicative of just how ripe the church is for mass deception already in progress and a revealing commentary on its present apostate condition.

**@ loc 400** – *“Christians have created an antagonistic relationship with the world... It is no wonder the world hates us and looks for fault in us!”* As it should be! Yahushua said “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:19). There is something wrong with the believer whom the world does not hate. Richards gives a hint here of alignment with the modern unbiblical “seeker friendly” model by which the church emulates and looks like the world that it is absorbed into the world's ways of behavior and thinking. The true Body of Messiah is called to be completely separate from and antagonistic to the world with the open invitation and good news that deliverance from the world through Messiah is possible.

**@ loc 447** – *“...as related in the book of Acts, his communication skills were still those of a legalistic Pharisee. He caused so much trouble in Jerusalem that persecution broke out against him and the church. The brothers eventually ally took him, put him on a boat, and sent him away. Then, the Bible says, the churches in that area finally had peace. (See Acts 9:27-31.) This is a far cry from the man who changed his name to the Gentile “Paul,” shaved his beard, and ate with the unclean pagans in order to become an invited guest. Paul's respect for the message and the people eventually provoked him to walk in love and wisdom for the greatest benefit of the people.”*



This is straight CRAZY revisionist interpretation and implanting ideas on top of YHWH's Word that are nowhere to be found. Acts NEVER describes Sha'ul's communication skills as legalistic or Pharisaic. Stephen, Peter, and every other apostle / disciple that stood up and spoke in that day cause the same amount of trouble – not because of their speech but because of righteous judgment of conviction they brought in truth. Scripture never says Sha'ul changed his own name. Acts 13:9 simply states that he was also called Paul with no indications as to why or by whom. Acts 21 specifically records how Sha'ul – late in his ministry – participated in vows and sacrifices at the active temple in Jerusalem to specifically refute the false claim against him that he was teaching against Moses. In fact, shaving his “beard” (was actually his whole head) was part of that vow according to the Torah. The persecution against the early church in Jerusalem had NOTHING to do with Sha'uls “approach.” Acts records that it was **intended by YHWH** for the purpose of scattering the Good News throughout the whole land. Yikes. I cannot respect the points or conclusions of someone who is so careless in their handling of the Word in order to defend their doctrinal bias – willing even to go to the point of giving “credit” for an outcome to a human bias when Scripture clearly records YHWH was the cause of that outcome.

**@ loc 456** – *“Judgment causes us to fail to recognize boundaries.”* This is another twisted misperception that is opposite the Scriptural definition of righteous judgement. Scriptural judgment only becomes necessary when the boundaries that YHWH has set in place are broken. Failing “to recognize boundaries” in relationships is simply disrespect. This isn't caused by “judgment” – it's just caused by selfishness. Again, Richards confuses the issues by using incorrect terms and concepts – trying to pin everything back on “judgment,” when Biblically speaking, righteous judgment can't exist unless boundaries are properly recognized and observed to have already been broken. Righteous judgment requires defining and upholding righteous boundaries according to YHWH's Word.

**@ loc 567** – *“This is what the Bible calls repentance-to have a change of mind.”* No no no! This is another staggering example of how doctrinally impoverished western christianity has become, bearing the full fruit of our Greco-Roman heritage which is completely foreign to the way Father thinks and the Scriptures communicate. Repentance does NOT mean having a change of mind. In the Greco-Roman mindset everything is about mental ascent (grace, faith, hope, repentance, love, etc.) These are all abstract concepts that happen in the “mind” or “heart.” But this thinking is completely foreign to the eastern Hebraic mindset which preserves YHWH's Word. Those abstract concepts don't exist without action. Repentance is not a change of mind. It's a change of direction, action, motion – it's a complete reversal and movement in the opposite of the previous direction. It requires change from us or it is not Biblical repentance. Greco-Roman-Christian repentance merely entails mental acknowledgement that something wasn't right – “a change of mind” about something. But true Scriptural repentance is transformation of character manifested in action.

**@ loc 569** – *“Repentance may mean we have to admit to being wrong.”* This is so watered down that it barely holds a connection with what Scripture teaches. Repentance “may” mean we have to admit being wrong??? Repentance – by definition – absolutely and only means that we MUST admit we were wrong AND change – leave our wrong way(s) and embrace and walk in YHWH's right way(s).

**@ loc 700** – *“Our negative, legalistic view of parenting has caused us to make “teaching the child what is right” the ultimate parenting objective.”* Scary dangerously wrong and unscriptural. Consider YHWH who is the ultimate parental role model. Is 48:17. Ps 25:8-12. Deut 30:14-20. There IS ONLY what is right in YHWH's eyes – that is the only thing that matters when it comes to ordering our lives because that is the only thing that can produce life optimally consistent with His design. I also find it pretty ironic and hypocritical that a book dedicated to attacking “judging” is so frequently making false “judgments” such

as “our negative, legalistic view of parenting...” Pretty self-reflexive in a cognitive dissonant sort of way. Pretty secularized and modern-psychology influenced rather than Scripture-influenced.

**@ loc 702** – *“Teaching a child to “be good” usually results in a self-belief that says, “I am bad.”* There’s no basis or support for this claim. Teaching what is right – what the goal is – what the design is – does not automatically result in a self-belief in an opposite identity. He is mixing and comparing two totally different things here. Behavior and identity. Sure, maybe lots of parents who have not been trained well make the mistake of also confusing these and – through parenting mistakes – unintentionally blur those lines. But it doesn’t automatically follow. Correcting wrong behavior and teaching right behavior is easily done without ever confusing the child that they are inherently defined by an identity of wrongness or rightness. Behaviors and identity are different things, although our behaviors certainly flow out of our identity they do not control our identity.

**@ loc 704** – *“Jesus brought us the revelation of God as a loving Father.”* Again, a doctrinally bankrupt and twisted perspective. The first 4000 years of human history before Yahushua is full of the revelation of YHWH as a loving Father. To suggest this was somehow new revelation when Jesus came is irresponsible and ignorant of the Scriptures. Ex 4:22-23, Prov 3:12, Ps 103:13, Ez 16:4-14, Is 9:6, Ps 68:5, Ps 89:26, Mal 2:10, Jer 31:9, 20.

### Application to Daily Life

As we’ve explored and shown - if judgment and judging from a Biblical perspective are NOT what most people think they are – if they are NOT vengeance, retaliation, punishment, criticism, control, false accusations, etc. then what are they? And how can we judge (restore life) properly in our daily modern lives? What does that look like? Let’s combine everything we’ve studied and map out example courses of action based on what we see in Scripture and therefore can know with confidence are pleasing to and desired by YHWH.

Often righteous judgement, delegated authority, and appropriate jurisdiction according to the Scriptures do not necessarily dictate or provide for what should be done TO the person or actions being judged. Rather, they determine how the person who is trying to do the right thing in YHWH’s eyes should RESPOND to what they have witnessed or experienced. In other words, it’s almost never about trying to decide or enforce direct “consequences” or “punishment.” It’s about setting and expressing a Scriptural posture in response to something that is out of alignment with life as defined by YHWH.

This response should be totally dictated by the Word and YHWH’s Spirit. In many cases, the best response to very similar situations might be fairly different. The key is that our rightly (Scripture-based) judging response should never go against the guidance of YHWH’s Word. And at the same time we need to use discernment through YHWH’s Spirit to know how to handle each situation with wisdom. Some situations might be very simple and clear, while others might be quite complex, risky, and uncertain as to the best course. Humility and love are always essential and the restoration of life is always the goal of righteous judgment.

We must **NOT** judge...

- Hypocritically - We cannot confront or correct when we are actively guilty of the same things and worse. For example, we can’t confront our brother for lying on an insurance claim if we’re cheating on our taxes. (Matt 7:1-6, Luke 6:41-42)

- Falsely – We must never call evil good and good evil, which even extends to condoning or turning a “blind eye” to sin. (Ex 23:2-8, Deut 16:19-20, Is 5:20, Eph 5:11)
- People in and of the world – Those who are not part of the family of YHWH (or are at least not calling themselves or pretending to be believers, Christians, etc.) are outside of our jurisdiction. They are ruled by the enemy and the enemy has authority over them, and they will ultimately be judged by YHWH / Yahushua. (Acts 26:18, 1 Cor 5:9-14, 2 Cor 4:4, 1 Jn 3:8)

We **MUST** judge...

- Wicked actions we witness – We are instructed to expose, reprove, contest, protest, and correct sin within the body of Messiah in order for repentance, healing, and restoration to happen. If repentance does not come, and the behavior continues, then we are to break fellowship and treat them as unbelievers, because they have shown by their actions that they do not love YHWH and are unwilling to obey Messiah, therefore trampling his sacrifice. (Matt 18:17, 1 Cor 5:1-8, Titus 3:10-11, James 5:19-20, Heb 10:26-29)
- People in or claiming to be in the Body of Messiah – Fellow believers or so-called believers who have become reprobate or apostate (backslidden), when their actions and words contradict Scripture and fit specific criteria, must be held accountable. It is even appropriate to name them publically so as to warn the body of Messiah against their deception even as Sha’ul did in several cases. (1 Cor 5:1, 1 Tim 1:18-20, 1 Tim 5:8, 1 Tim 6:3-5)
- The cause of the widow, the orphan, and the needy – We should “judge” the needy, which means we should make decisions and actions through which they are provided for, taken care of, protected, and respected. (Prov 31:9, Is 1:17, Jer 5:25-28)
- Within the areas of authority delegated to us by YHWH – This could be an entire study all to itself. We covered it briefly already up in the section called “Delegation of Judgment Authority.” In essence YHWH through Scripture defines several jurisdictions: “All things” > The Heavens > The Earth > All Humans > The Body of Messiah > Families > Relationships > Individuals.
- False prophecies – We must test all prophetic words and discern the nature of prophets because there are many false ones. (1 Cor 14:29, 1 Thess 5:20-21, 1 Jn 4:1, 2 Pe 2:1-3)
- False teachings – We must test all teachings / doctrines against the standards of Scripture and reject those which contradict the truth. (Acts 17:11, Titus 1:9-16, Titus 2:15, Jude 1:3-4)

Conclusion

Scriptural judgment is NEVER a negative in terms of what is right according to YHWH and therefore as children of YHWH who want what is right in His eyes we should always welcome righteous judgment in every form – including through our fellow brothers and sisters. The purpose of righteous judgment is the restoration of life. Those who love life have nothing to fear or resist against Scriptural judgment. However, for those who are wrong / wicked / evil / in opposition to YHWH in their thoughts and actions, those who prioritize self, even if they say they serve God, will fear and resist and be offended by righteous judgment, because they ultimately don’t want to be separated from their own ways especially if it requires correction and discipline.

Executing righteous judgement has nothing to do with the righteousness of the (human) judge - it only has everything to do with the righteousness of the law-giver YHWH and the righteousness of His instructions and right-rulings. We cannot withhold YHWH’s righteous judgment on the earth just because we are (in our flesh) unrighteous. Having been made righteous through Messiah we are required to bring his righteous judgment / ways / rulings into the earth based on His written Word.

When we do this Scripturally, we are not “judging” motives, intents, or heart (although we see from Scripture that we CAN through the Set Apart Spirit have discernment of those things). We are judging actions according to the conditions and proper processes laid out in Scripture. We can only judge where we have jurisdiction. Every true believer has jurisdiction in the Body of Messiah and the responsibility to confront falsehood and sin within the Body. We can only judge in righteousness according to YHWH’s perspective which he has made known to us in His Word. Everything outside this (or in addition to this) is NOT right-ruling / right judgment – it’s false judging, false accusations, bitter criticism, etc.