

# Justice

Justice is the abstract concept of the resulting state of proper judgment. In a legal sense, judgment refers to the process of defending the righteous and condemning the guilty. Together, these concepts form the basis of righteous governance in an emulation of the kingdom of God.

## Concept Summary

In Hebrew, the concept of judgment and justice is mostly commonly expressed with the term שָׁפַט (*šāpaṭ*), which means “to govern” or “to administer justice,” and its related noun מִשְׁפָּט (*mišpāṭ*, “judgment”). Another set of Hebrew terms related to justice in the OT includes the noun צְדָקָה (*śedeq*, “righteousness”) and its related verb צָדַק (*śādōq*, “to be or make righteous”). Depending on context, the Septuagint uses Greek words related to the terms δικαιοσύνη (*dikaiosynē*, “righteousness”) or κρίνω (*krinō*, “to judge”) to translate these Hebrew words. The NT mostly follows the Septuagint’s terminology for justice. For example, the NT uses terms derived from the δικ- (*dik-*) word group to express positive forms of judgment (e.g., “legally righteous,” “innocent,” or “justify”) and words related to κρίνω (*krinō*) to express more negative forms of judgment (e.g., “lawsuit,” “verdict,” or “condemn”). Neither set of words solely refers to negative or positive judgments; in each case, the context will determine the most likely connotation of a particular term related to justice. The Bible also contains many less-frequently used Hebrew and Greek terms that denote various

persons and types of judgments.

## Theological Overview

The OT concept of “justice” and “judgment” is grounded in responsible and merciful governance. Israel’s “judges”—whether warriors, prophets, priests, or kings—had full governing authority over the people. The standard by which Israel’s governors were measured was their ability to reign fairly and justly. They were to hear complaints fairly, not showing partiality for family, friends, or financial gain (e.g., [Deut 16:18–20](#)). They were to advocate on behalf of the needs of the oppressed. They were to live according to God’s law and emulate God’s justice, especially by advocating for the needs of oppressed, righteous persons.

The NT concept of “justice” and “judgment” relies heavily on the OT, though the Greek terms tend to be used in a stricter sense. Words such as “justice” and “justification” tend to be used more often in moral or ethical contexts with subtle legal undertones, while words such as “lawsuit” and “condemnation” tend to be used more often in legal contexts with strong moral overtones. The OT and NT collectively depict God as a just judge. For instance, [Deuteronomy 32:4](#) declares that “all [God’s] ways are just; he is a faithful God, and without injustice.” The OT also depicts God as just because he gave Israel the law that provided a standard of justice for the people (e.g., [Neh 9:13](#)). In the NT, God’s justice is preeminently expressed through his forbearance of human sin and the gift of Christ’s death (e.g., [Rom 3:24–26](#)). The NT also teaches that God will justly punish those who cause suffering for his people and those who reject the gospel of [Jesus Christ](#) (e.g., [2 Thess 1:6](#)).

## Lexical Information

### Old Testament

מִשְׁפָּט (*mišpāṭ*). n. masc. **justice, judgment.**

*Containing a nuance of righteous living, generally refers to all aspects of administering justice, including making laws, enforcing laws, and decisions regarding the merit of cases.*

The most common word in the OT for the idea of “justice” is מִשְׁפָּט (*mišpāṭ*). In the OT—and especially in prophetic poetry and Wisdom literature—the word *mišpāṭ* is closely linked to the idea of righteousness ([Gen 18:19](#); [2 Sam 8:15](#); [Isa 1:27](#)). The term *mišpāṭ* can refer abstractly to the idea of righteous governance or “justice” ([Judg 4:5](#); [1 Sam 2:13](#); [Isa 1:17](#)). The majority of uses in legal texts and in postexilic narrative refer to “judgments” or “ordinances” that become law ([Lev 5:10](#); [Dan 9:5](#); [Neh 8:18](#)), though this connotation is not limited to these sections (e.g., [1 Sam 10:25](#)). Less commonly, the term can refer to “instructions” that do not become law, yet they are to be followed in specific instances ([Josh 6:15](#); [1 Sam 27:11](#); [1 Kgs 4:28](#)). The term has various other meanings throughout the OT. To “keep judgments,” “face justice,” or “wait upon judgment” is to follow the law ([Lev 18:5](#); [1 Kgs 2:3](#); [Isa 26:8](#)). A word of judgment is the interpretation of the law and application for a specific case, thus “verdict” ([Deut 17:9](#)). A “judgment of death” refers to capital punishment ([Deut 19:6](#); [21:22](#)). Judgments of certain crimes, such as adultery or murder, refer to both the law prohibiting the crime and the judicial decision executing the punishments called for by the law ([Ezek 16:38](#); [Hos 5:1](#)). To act according to the justice of another people group is to follow their customs

([Judg 18:7](#); [1 Kgs 18:28](#)). To “stretch out justice” is to make it sparse, thus perverting it ([1 Sam 8:3](#)). The “judgment of the king” refers to the king’s orders, which may be unjust ([1 Sam 8:9](#)). To “discern justice” is to reign wisely and righteously ([1 Kgs 3:11](#)). To speak judgment upon another is to make a legal pronouncement regarding his or her case, with either negative ([2 Kgs 25:6](#); [Jer 1:16](#)) or positive ([Jer 12:1](#)) implications.

שָׁפַט (*šāpaṭ*). vb. **to judge, govern, administer justice.** *This verb generally refers to all aspects of administering justice, including making, enforcing, and judicially deciding the merit of case laws.*

This verb carries many of the same connotations as מִשְׁפָּט (*mišpāṭ*) but refers to the act of administering justice rather than to the concept of justice itself ([1 Kgs 3:28](#)). As in English, “to judge” someone often carries connotations of the process of determining a penalty because of a fault ([Exod 5:21](#); [1 Sam 3:13](#); [Ezek 7:27](#)). To “enter into judgment” with someone is to open a legal dispute ([Jer 2:35](#); [Joel 3:2](#)). To “execute a judgment” is to enforce a penalty for breaking the law or acting unrighteously ([Ezek 5:10](#); [2 Chr 24:24](#)). At the same time, the verb can mean to administer justice to an innocent or righteous party. For example, *šāpaṭ* can convey the act of proving the righteousness of a person ([1 Sam 12:7](#)). To judge between two parties is to determine which one is right ([Gen 16:5](#); [Deut 1:16](#); [Isa 2:4](#)). To judge a people group is to administer justice over it ([Exod 18:13](#)). Legal judgment may come from God ([1 Sam 24:15](#)), individuals ([Judg 3:10](#)), or assemblies ([Num 35:24](#)). In a judicial setting, judges in the OT justify the righteous and condemn the wicked ([Deut 25:1](#); [1 Kgs 8:32](#)). To

“judge” the needy in this sense means to come to their defense to make sure they are treated justly (Isa 1:17; Jer 5:28). Judges can be male (Judg 10:3) or female (Judg 4:4) in the OT. In addition to those who are called “judges” in the OT, prophets (1 Sam 7:15), priests (1 Sam 4:18), and kings (1 Sam 8:6; Psalms 2:10; Prov 29:14) administered justice in Israel.

**שֶׁדֶק** (*šedeq*). n. masc. **righteousness, justice**. *The abstract concept of something or someone that is right or just. The focus of this section is on the legal aspects of justice.*

The noun **שֶׁדֶק** (*šedeq*) appears frequently throughout the OT; in many of these passages the term is used in parallel to **מִשְׁפָּט** (*mišpāt*). In legal contexts, the combination of terms helps express the notion of making righteous and just decisions when evaluating cases (Lev 19:15; Deut 16:18). The terms can also be used together to describe rulers governing justly in accordance with God’s laws (Isa 16:5; Psalms 9:4; Prov 8:15–16). The purpose of God’s judgments is to produce righteousness (Isa 26:9). The adjectival form of the term has a similar range of meanings. For example, just weights conform to the actual standards of measurement and therefore make fair and balanced measurements (Lev 19:36; Deut 25:15; Ezek 45:10). Righteous scales are also metaphors for a fair trial (Job 31:6). To judge righteously is to judge equitably (Isa 11:4; Jer 11:20). Righteous sacrifices are ones that conform to the specifications of the law, whether literally (Deut 33:19) or metaphorically (Psalms 4:5).

**שָׁדַק** (*šādaq*). vb. **to be or make righteous, to be or make just**. *Primarily describes the act of justifying a person or declaring a person to be jus-*

*tified.*

This verb is used primarily as a factitive verb in legal contexts. For a judge to declare someone righteous is to acquit someone of an accusation (Deut 25:1; 1 Kgs 8:32; Job 27:5; 2 Chr 6:23). To justify the guilty is to pardon them of their crimes, even if a pardon is unwarranted (Exod 23:7; Isa 5:23; Prov 17:15). In a trial, parties declared more righteous are acquitted of their alleged crimes (Gen 38:26; Psalms 51:4), while the opposing parties face harsh judgments (Jer 3:11; Ezek 16:51). To justify oneself is to declare oneself innocent of accusations, regardless of whether or not one is actually innocent (Gen 44:16). For a defendant to be just in a trial is to be innocent of the accusations (Job 4:17; 9:15). If a witness justifies a defendant, the witness proves the defendant’s innocence through testimony (Isa 43:9; 50:8; 53:11).

**דִּין** (*dîn*). n. masc. **judgment, trial, case**. *Refers to the legal event of judging a case, or to the merit for such case.*

In case law, **דִּין** (*dîn*) refers to the entire process of a lawsuit (Deut 17:8; Esther 1:13). For one to be deprived of *dîn* is to be deprived of the ability to have a case heard (Isa 10:2). To judge or make a *dîn* is to plead a case (Jer 22:16; Psalms 140:12). To have a just *dîn* is to have valid legal grounds for making a case (Psalms 9:4). To hear a *dîn* is to serve judicially over legal proceedings (Psalms 76:8). In Proverbs, *dîn* often refers to the legal rights of a party, including the right to have their case heard (Prov 29:7; 31:5; 31:8).

**דָּן** (*dân*). vb. **to judge**. *Refers to the act of officiating during a legal case.*

The basic form of the verb is identical to the

noun. The participle form refers to “one who serves as judge” ([Gen 15:14](#)). To [דִּין](#) (*dîn*) a person or a people group is to heed their case or to “vindicate” them ([Gen 30:6](#); [Deut 32:36](#); [Isa 3:13](#)). To *dîn* against a person is to vindicate the opposite party ([1 Sam 2:10](#)). To *dîn* a judgment is to plead a case ([Jer 30:13](#)). When used in parallel to [שָׁמַר](#) (*šāmar*, “to keep”), *dîn* refers to the preservation of the process of justice and judgment ([Zech 3:7](#)). To [דִּין](#) (*dîn*) with another party is to plead one’s own case against the other party ([Eccl 6:10](#)).

[דַּיָּאן](#) (*dayyān*). n. masc. **a judge**. *Refers to a person who judges.*

The noun [דַּיָּאן](#) (*dayyān*) comes from the verb [דִּין](#) (*dîn*) and functions in the same manner as the participle form of the verb. It occurs twice in Hebrew in the OT, where it refers to God advocating on behalf of oppressed persons ([1 Sam 24:15](#); [Psa 68:5](#)). It occurs once in Aramaic, where it refers to human officials overseeing governance of the people ([Ezra 7:25](#)).

[פָּלַל](#) (*pālāl*). vb. **to advocate, intercede**. *Typically used of intercessory prayer, this verb connotes one person advocating on behalf on another.*

The verb [פָּלַל](#) (*pālāl*) is used frequently in the OT to refer to intercessory prayer (e.g., [Gen 20:7](#); [Isa 37:15](#); [Job 42:10](#)). The legal connotations of the word come from the desire to avert divine judgment ([Num 21:7](#); [Deut 9:20](#)). On occasion, God will intercede in a situation without petition, thus serving as a mediator in a conflict between two parties ([1 Sam 2:25](#)). In late biblical Hebrew, [פָּלַל](#) (*pālāl*) carries an additional legal connotation of confessing sins to a

divine judge ([Dan 9:4](#); [Ezra 10:1](#); [Neh 1:6](#)). The books of Chronicles do not carry this added connotation but rather return to the default meaning of having intercessory prayer for someone ([1 Chr 17:25](#); [2 Chr 6:19](#); [32:24](#)).

[פָּלִיל](#) (*pālîl*). n. masc. **mediator, arbitrator, judge**. *A person who decides between two parties in a complaint.*

The noun is only used three times in the OT. Twice it refers to legal judges who arbitrate disputed matters and assess penalties ([Exod 21:22](#); [Job 31:11](#)). The other occurrence of the term in the OT is difficult to interpret ([Deut 32:31](#)). One possibility is that [Deut 32:31](#) applies the term *pālîl* to Israel’s enemies because of their ability to “judge” Israel’s God to be difference from other gods.

[פָּלִילָה](#) (*pālîlâ*). n. fem. **judgment, decision**. *The result of the process of intercession.*

Used in parallel to “advice” to indicate the result of an intercession, this noun appears only once in the OT ([Isa 16:3](#)).

[שָׁטַן](#) (*šāṭan*). vb. **to accuse, oppose**. *The opposite of “advocating” or “interceding”; implies standing in opposition to another party.*

This verb only occurs six times in the OT. In the book of Psalms, humans “accuse” ([שָׁטַן](#), *šāṭan*) other humans by bringing implicitly false accusations against them ([Pss 38:20](#); [71:13](#); [109:4](#), [20](#), [29](#)). In the book of Zechariah, it refers to Satan accusing God’s people during eschatological judgment ([Zech 3:1](#)).

[שָׁטָן](#) (*šāṭān*). n. masc. **accuser, adversary**. *A human or superhuman entity who brings legal charges against another.*

The noun [שָׁטָן](#) (*šāṭān*) appears 27 times in



the OT. The most common use of the noun comes from the book of Job, in which a superhuman adversary puts the character Job on trial with God as judge to vindicate Job's righteousness (Job 1:6–9, 12; 2:1–7). The noun שָׁטָן (*śāṭān*) can also refer to a human bringing legal charges against another (2 Sam 19:23; Psa 109:6). Once, the Angel of the Lord stands as an accuser (שָׁטָן, *śāṭān*) in judgment of a human who was acting contrary to God's ways (Num 22:22, 32).

**רִיב** (*rîb*). n. masc. **strife, dispute, lawsuit**. *In relation to judgment, primarily connotes conflict within a judicial proceeding.*

The basic connotation of this word is conflict (e.g., Gen 13:7; Exod 17:7). In legal contexts, disputes generally occur between two parties and are resolved by a judge (Exod 23:2; Deut 17:8; Ezek 44:24). Disputes are to be judged impartially (Exod 23:3; Lam 3:36). In certain cases, God is to be the sole judge in disputes (1 Sam 24:15; Isa 41:21). Other times, kings and their officials judge over disputes (2 Sam 15:2; 2 Chr 19:8). In some cases, God brings suit against a people (Jer 25:31; Hos 4:1; Mic 6:2). To contend against an accuser is to attempt to vindicate the accused (Psa 43:1).

**רִיב** (*rîb*). vb. **to contend, plead (a case)**. *In relation to judgment, may connote arguing for or against another party.*

The verb רִיב (*rîb*) can mean “contend” in a variety of nonjudicial contexts (Gen 26:20; Exod 21:18; Neh 13:25), though this section will only focus on the few contexts related to legal justice. To רִיב (*rîb*) “for” someone is to plead their case (Judg 6:31–32; 1 Sam 24:15; Isa 1:17). The verb can also mean to plead one's own case

(Jer 12:1) or to make accusations that require a judgment (1 Sam 2:10; Isa 3:13; Hos 2:2).

**נָקָה** (*nāqāh*). vb. **to be clean, to be innocent, to cleanse, to acquit**. *Indicates the state of being innocent or the act of acquitting another of an accusation.*

In legal contexts, the state of being נָקָה (*nāqāh*) is to be blameless or innocent (Judg 15:3; Jer 2:35). To allow a guilty party to *nāqāh* is to allow them to go unpunished (1 Kgs 2:9; Jer 49:12; Prov 16:5). To state another person is clean is to acquit them of their faults (Job 10:14). The creed of ancient Israel includes a statement that God will not acquit the guilty (Exod 20:7; Num 24:18; Nah 1:3). However, God will acquit persons for unintentional faults (Psa 19:12–13). One may willfully release another from an oath, allowing them to “be free” of it (Gen 24:8).

**זָכָה** (*zākāh*). vb. **to be clean, to be blameless, to justify**. *Indicates the state of being blameless or the act of justifying another.*

This verb is nearly synonymous with נָקָה (*nāqāh*). To “make oneself clean” is to cease to break God's law (Isa 1:16). According to Micah 6:11, a person cannot “remain blameless” when using dishonest scales since such action involves cheating others for selfish profit. In Job, the idea of being “clean” is associated with “justice” (Job 15:14; 25:4), while the psalms associate “cleanliness” with innocence and obedience (Pss 73:13; 119:9).

## New Testament

**δικαιοσύνη** (*dikaïosynē*). n. fem. **justice, righteousness**. *The quality of being in accordance with God's law.*

The Greek noun [δικαιοσύνη](#) (*dikaiosynē*) refers both to moral righteousness and legal justice. Although [δικαιοσύνη](#) (*dikaiosynē*) most commonly implies living in accordance with God's moral law, the focus of this section will be on its relationship to justice and justification. The noun *dikaiosynē* may refer to one's ability to follow the law ([Matt 5:20](#); [Phil 3:6](#)). To judge in *dikaiosynē* is to judge equitably or mercifully ([Acts 17:31](#); [Rom 3:25](#)). Paul asserts that *dikaiosynē* is the basis of justification, though it can be obtained by faith when there is an ignorance of the law ([Rom 4:3–13](#), 22). To be convicted concerning *dikaiosynē* is to have one's ability to act in accordance with God's law evaluated in a legal proceeding ([John 16:8](#)). In several cases, "lawlessness" ([ἀνομία](#), *anomia*) is used as an antonym to *dikaiosynē* ([Rom 6:19](#); [2 Cor 6:14](#); [Heb 1:9](#)).

[δίκαιος](#) (*dikaios*). adj. **just, correct, righteous, innocent.** *The characteristic of following God's law.*

The Greek adjective [δίκαιος](#) (*dikaios*), occurring 78 times in the NT, comes from the noun [δικαιοσύνη](#) (*dikaiosynē*). For something to be *dikaios* is to be in accordance with God's law ([Luke 1:6](#); [Rom 2:13](#); [Eph 6:1](#)). To judge what is *dikaios* is to determine how the law applies to a specific situation ([Luke 12:57](#)). To be *dikaios* of a crime is to be innocent of it ([Luke 23:47](#); [Rom 5:7](#); [Jas 5:6](#)). To have a just *dikaios* is to have an equitable judgment in accordance with God's will ([John 5:30](#); [2 Thess 1:5–6](#); [Rev 16:7](#)).

[δικαίω](#) (*dikaioō*). vb. **to pronounce righteous, to justify.** *To make or declare someone or something righteous.*

In the NT, the verb [δικαίω](#) (*dikaioō*) means to pronounce or declare a person "righteous." In the face of accusations, the wise are justified

by their actions ([Matt 11:19](#); [Luke 18:14](#)). To attempt to justify oneself is to find an excuse for not acting justly ([Luke 10:29](#); [16:15](#)). One may be either justified or condemned, based on testimony ([Matt 12:37](#); [Rom 3:4](#)). For Paul, faith in Christ is the basis for all justification, the result of which is righteous living ([Rom 2:13](#); [Gal 2:16–17](#)).

[δίκη](#) (*dikē*). n. fem. **justice, righteous punishment.** *Connotes the "just rewards" one receives for wrongdoing.*

This noun only occurs three times in the NT. [Acts 28:4](#) uses the term as a reference to "Justice" ([δίκη](#)), the daughter of the mythological god Zeus and goddess Themis. In the other two instances, *dikē* refers to the eternal punishment one receives for wrongdoing ([2 Thess 1:9](#); [Jude 7](#)).

[ἐνδίκος](#) (*endikos*). adj. **just.** *Connotes the basis for the "just rewards" one receives for wrongdoing.*

This adjective only occurs twice in the NT. In one case, it describes a fitting judgment upon evil persons ([Rom 3:8](#)). In the other case, it describes the necessary retribution one receives for disobedience ([Heb 2:2](#)).

[ἐκδίκησις](#) (*ekdikēsis*). n. fem. **vindication, righteous vengeance.** *Refers to the act of seeking retribution for a victim of a crime.*

In Luke, [Jesus](#) describes a time period of *ekdikēsis* when wrongs against God's people will be righted ([Luke 18:7–8](#); [21:22](#)). Two letters quote [Deut 32:35](#) by saying [ἐκδίκησις](#) (*ekdikēsis*) belongs to God ([Rom 12:19](#); [Heb 10:30](#)). [Acts 7:24](#) uses the term to refer to Moses' murder of an Egyptian for killing a Hebrew.

[ἐκδικέω](#) (*ekdikeō*). vb. **to vindicate, to avenge.** *Refers to seeking retribution for a victim of a crime.*

This verb often relates to acts of vengeance or revenge in the NT. In [Romans 12:19](#), Paul uses the verb *ekdikēsis* in conjunction with its related noun when quoting [Deut 32:35](#). In this passage he urges believers not to avenge themselves but to allow God to avenge on their behalf. In Revelation, the saints wait upon God to avenge them ([Rev 6:10](#); [19:2](#)). In Luke, Jesus tells a parable that compares God to a judge who will vindicate the oppressed upon repeated request ([Luke 18:1–8](#)).

[κρίσις](#) (*krisis*). n. fem. **judgment, legal case**. Refers to the process, event, or result of legal proceedings intended to evaluate punishment.

This noun occurs 47 times in the NT and refers to the process or event of judgment. The noun can refer to a “trial” for a crime in human history ([Matt 5:21–22](#)). It can also refer to the evidence brought forth within a trial ([John 3:19](#)). It can refer to the positive resulting state after judgment, i.e., “justice” ([Matt 12:18–20](#)). To execute judgment is to deliver a verdict ([John 5:27](#)). For judgment to be “upon” someone is for the person to be in a time of trial ([John 12:31](#)). To neglect [κρίσις](#) (*krisis*) is not simply to neglect “justice” but rather to neglect the process that leads to justice ([Matt 23:33](#); [Luke 11:42](#)). To be convicted concerning judgment is to have a punishment assessed ([John 16:8](#)). Most often, judgment has negative implications upon those who are judged ([2 Pet 3:7](#); [Jude 6](#); [Rev 18:10](#)).

[κρίμα](#) (*krima*). n. neut. **judgment, decision, verdict**. Specifically connotes the result of judgment or a manner of quickly passing condemnation.

This noun occurs 29 times in the NT. Most often it refers to God’s condemnation of evildoers ([Mark 12:40](#); [Luke 20:47](#); [Acts 24:25](#)).

Despite condemnation, God’s judgment is considered righteous ([Rom 2:2–3](#)). Frequently it can refer to eschatological judgment, with special emphasis upon the verdict and resulting state ([Heb 6:2](#); [Rev 17:1](#)). It can also refer to one’s manner of mercilessly condemning others ([Matt 7:2](#); [1 Cor 6:7](#))

[κρίνω](#) (*krinō*); [κρίνομαι](#) (*krinomai*). vb. **to judge, decide, dispute**. To oversee judgment or to pass a verdict, especially one of condemnation.

The verb [κρίνω](#) (*krinō*) is directly related to the nouns [κρίσις](#) (*krisis*) and [κρίμα](#) (*krima*). The active voice refers to the act of overseeing judgment or handing verdicts. The middle/passive form [κρίνομαι](#) (*krinomai*) can connote taking someone to court in the NT, accounting for only 3 of the 115 times the verb is used ([Matt 5:40](#); [1 Cor 6:1, 6](#)). The middle/passive infinitive can also indicate “to stand trial” ([Acts 25:10, 20](#)). The verb most frequently means to condemn someone (e.g., [John 3:17–18](#); [Acts 17:31](#); [Col 2:16](#)). The instruction not to judge lest one be judged relates to the act of mercilessly handing out condemnation ([Matt 7:1–2](#); [Luke 6:37](#)). According to Jewish law, one could not be condemned without having the right to mount a self-defense ([John 7:51](#)). In a small number of contexts, judging a person may connote handing a favorable verdict, depending on the standard used to judge ([Jas 2:12](#); [1 Pet 2:23](#)).

[ἐλέγχω](#) (*elenchō*). vb. **to reprove, to convict**. Generally connotes judging for the purpose of reformation rather than condemnation.

This verb is used 16 times in the NT, three of which imply eschatological judgment ([John 16:8](#); [Jude 15](#)) or a lawsuit ([Jas 2:9](#)). In the remaining uses of [ἐλέγχω](#) (*elenchō*), the act of judging another is part of religious gover-

nance, and it is for the purpose of reforming persons rather than punishing them. Reproof may be conducted in semi-private settings ([Matt 18:15](#); [Luke 3:19](#)). Reproof may also be conducted in semi-public settings ([1 Cor 14:24](#); [Eph 5:20](#)). When reproofing others, patience and love are to be demonstrated ([2 Tim 4:2](#); [Rev 3:19](#)).

βῆμα (*bēma*). n. neut. **judgment seat**. *The place a judge or tribunal sits in order to hear a plea or execute judgment.*

This noun is used nine times in the NT. Twice it metaphorically refers to an eschatological court ([Rom 14:10](#); [2 Cor 5:10](#)). In the middle part of Acts, it refers to the seat where a single judge sits in judgment ([Acts 12:21](#); [18:12](#); [18:16–17](#)). In the latter part of Acts, it refers to where the Roman tribunal sat in judgment of Paul ([Acts 25:6, 10, 17](#)). In the Gospels, the judgment seat is where Pilate sat to judge Jesus ([Matt 27:10](#); [John 10:13](#)).

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