

The Doctrines of Grace

Doctrine 1-The Absolute Sovereignty of God

Part A/Lesson Seven

Part A- The Character and Nature Of God- continued

God is Just

Deuteronomy 32:3&4

3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD : ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Job 4:17

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Isaiah 45:21

Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD ? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

Zephaniah 3:5

The just LORD is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

The Acts 3:13-15

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

The Acts 7:52

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

The Acts 22:14

And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

Romans 3:26

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

2Thessalonians 1:6

Seeing it is a righteous thing (just) with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

The Revelation 15:3

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

When we say that God is Just- it is very similar to saying that He is Righteous, Good, and Holy. All three of these Attributes combined make God to be Just. The distinction of this Divine Characteristic comes in its application and is best comprehended in how God's Justice relates to His Mercy.

For God to be Just means that God *cannot* allow *anyone* to get away with *anything* that is wrong. Because of His pristine "Justness"- God *must* punish all sin- His Justice (the outward manifestation of God's "Justness") *demands* that all sin be punished.

For God to allow even one single sin to go unpunished would result in God sinning against His Own Just Nature- and by sinning- God would then cease to be God.

Exodus 34:6&7

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

So God *does not* allow one single sin to go unpunished- because He can't. And we must know that Biblical sin is defined in two ways:

1. Any act or thought which falls short of giving God the Glory that He deserves

2. Any act or thought which offends God's Holiness and Righteousness

So all acts and thoughts by all men- even those that we deem to be "noble" and "good" by our own human terms- which do not bring Glory to God but which rob God of that Glory and give it to someone or something else- is sin. And every act or thought- even those that we deem to be "noble" and "good" by our own human terms- that is not based in complete Trust and Confidence in the one true living God- is also sin.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 14:23b

... whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

And with this very broad and wide definition of sin- God has condemned the entire human race.

Romans 3:19

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

And with every human being declared guilty by God- God's Just Nature *dictates* that no sin may go unpunished- and the punishment for all sin- is death.

Romans 5:12

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

But not just *natural* death- the final Divine Punishment for all sin is *eternal* death.

The Revelation 20:15

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

God's Just Nature releases God's Justice (His Holy Anger and Wrath) that is kindled against all unrighteousness that is manifested in all men in whatever form it may appear.

Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (suppress) the truth in unrighteousness;(clarification added)

We must understand that because God's Justness flows out from His Perfect and Sinless Character and Nature- God's Justice is never unjust- it is always

correct and proper and a reflection of His Holiness. The release of this Wrath on the earth against sinners is called "God's Vengeance," which we will discuss in detail in a future Lesson.

God is Merciful

Exodus 15:13

13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

Exodus 33:19

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

Exodus 34:6&7

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD , The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

2 Samuel 7:14-15

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

2 Chronicles 7:3

3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD , saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalms 136

136 O give thanks unto the LORD ; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.

3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.

4 To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.

5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.

6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.

7 To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:

8 The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever:

- 9 The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 10 To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 11 And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 13 To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 16 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 17 To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 18 And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 19 Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 20 And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 22 Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

Luke 1:50

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Romans 9:15-18

- 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.**
- 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.**
- 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.**
- 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.**

The English word "mercy" comes from the Hebrew word *hesed*, and the Greek word *eleos*, which mean: underserved kindness and compassion. The Bible teaches repeatedly that the one true living God is, by Nature, Merciful. He is Kind, Good, and Compassionate.

Even though Mercy is one of the most precious Qualities about God- it is also one of the most misunderstood and misappropriated. And once Mercy is understood from a Biblical perspective- from God's Perspective- it is often looked at with great disdain.

We need to know that since God's Mercy is always underserved- then by definition that means that Mercy is never at any time distributed equally among all people. If Mercy was always distributed equally among all people- it would make Mercy to be a *payment*- and not a gift. It would make Mercy something that God *owed* to us- not something that he graciously gives us. It would make Mercy something that God is *obligated* to give- not something that He wondrously provides.

Mercy is *always*, and in *all cases*, distributed according to God's Will, God's Prerogative, God's Plan, and God's Desire without *any* consideration of Man's condition, his will, his need or his desire. People do *not* receive Mercy from God simply because they need it- but because God Sovereignly chooses to grant it to them. Thus it is true that everybody who *needs* Mercy- does not receive it.

Romans 9:14-21

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Now as we define God's Mercy- we must be clear that Mercy is not Leniency. Leniency is defined as:

The act of appeasing; the act of agreeable tolerance; being permissive; indulgent; or alleviating.¹

Indulgence is a *weakness* of character- not a strength. It is a character *defect* and is birthed in an unwillingness to stop something that is wrong. God is not weak; neither is His Character defective in any way. God's Character is Perfect and is the one single Standard of Righteousness. It is God's Justness that assures that *everything* that is wrong will be corrected, and that fact makes God's Mercy to *not* be Leniency.

But the one thing that becomes crystal clear from studying the Scriptures is the great distinction between the God of Israel- the one true and living God; the God

¹ Dictionary.com

of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Creator Redeemer God; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ- and all the other man-made "deities" of the false religions and human philosophies of the earth is that none of them are compassionate; none of them are loving; none of them are gracious; none of them are forgiving; none of them are kind; none of them are merciful and none of them are tender-hearted.

There aren't any Savior-gods in the other religions of Man. There are not any "gods" of love, or tenderness or compassion in the demonically inspired religions of sinful men.

Don't pick Islam if you want a Merciful God- because you will never find a "god" like that anywhere in the Koran. Don't search for a Merciful God in the Bhagavad- gita, or the teachings of Confucius, or the writings of the American Indians, or the writings of the Buddha because you will never find Him there.

The concept of the Omnipotent, Omniscient God and Creator of the Universe also being Loving, Kind, Merciful, Tenderhearted, Compassionate, and Good is unique to the God of the Bible. The "gods" of the false religions of the nations are distasteful unhappy gods who can never be appeased; are never satisfied; and will never in a million years issue Mercy to anyone. But it is the very Nature of the one true and living God to feel real Compassion and to have genuine Love and Mercy on us.

How Do Mercy and Justice Relate?

We need to understand that as human beings who are sinful- we elevate Mercy far above Justice- precisely because we are guilty. But from God's Perspective- His Justness and His Mercy are always kept at a perfect Balance. God is never more Merciful than He is just, and He is never more Just than He is Merciful.

Now it appears, at first glance, that God's Attribute of Mercy clashes with His Attribute of His Justness. We understand God to be *either* Just or Merciful- but we struggle to comprehend God being both Just and Merciful at the same time with the same person. In fact- we see God issuing His Justice and His Mercy to be at odds with one another- and most of the time that would be true.

In fact- this single issue of balancing God's Justice with His Mercy that is called, "The Great Theological Conundrum". It is a Theological issue which no other religion- other than Biblical Christianity- can solve. All other religions fail in their effort to allow God to be both Merciful and Just at the same time to the same person.

The problem is displayed something like this:

If God is Just- then He must judge all sin. But if He judges all sin and all men are sinners- how can God issue Mercy to anyone? If God allows even one sin to go unpunished- then He ceases to be Just but if He judges all sin- He ceases to be Merciful.

No other religion other than Biblical Christianity can solve this Theological Conundrum because no other religion has the Incarnation. When God became a

Man, and when God left His Throne in Glory and took on human flesh- He lived a perfectly sinless Life. Jesus obeyed God's Law- perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed every second of every day for 33-1/2 years. By doing this- Jesus developed and earned His Own Intrinsic Righteousness.

At the Crucifixion- God the Father imputed (credited) all of the sins of those whom He chose for Salvation on Jesus. So on that Cross and in the Grave- the complete Wrath of God against all sin (brought about by God's Justness) was poured out without measure on Jesus. In doing that- God's Justice was entirely vindicated.

Therefore- all sin was forever judged and no sin went unpunished (God by no means cleared the guilty [**Exodus 34:7**]). All sin was judged- but not all sinners were judged. Jesus died in the place of those chosen for Salvation.

Because all sin has been forever judged by God- He is now free to issue His glorious Mercy to those He has chosen to visit with that Gift. Thus, in the case of God's elect- God is Just in that He has avenged His Need to punish all sin, and He is also the One Who then Justifies (Forgives and makes Just) those for whom Jesus died.

2Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Romans 3:26

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

Recap of Lesson Seven

1. What do we mean when we say that God is Just? _____

2. Why does God have to punish all sin? _____

3. What does God mean when He describes Himself the way He does in **Exodus 34:6&7**? _____

4. What is more important to God- His Justness or His Mercy? _____

5. Why is that true? _____
6. Is God able (does He have the power/ability) to let sin go unpunished? _____
7. Why is that true? _____
8. Why is Mercy more important to us than Justice? _____
9. What is the commodity that God's Justness demand that He punish? _____
10. Define sin _____

11. How many people on earth are sinful? _____
12. What does **Romans 3:19** mean? _____
13. What is the penalty for sin? _____
14. What does God's Just Nature release? _____
15. What *kind* of Kindness and Compassion is God's Mercy? _____
16. Finish this sentence, "Since God's Mercy is always undeserved- then by definition that means that Mercy is _____"

17. If Mercy were always distributed equally among all people- it would make Mercy to be _____

18. How is God's Mercy distributed? _____

19. Why do people receive Mercy from God? _____

20. Explain what **Romans 9:14-21** teaches about the distribution of God's Mercy

21. What is the difference between Mercy and Leniency? _____

22. Is Leniency a godly trait? _____

23. What is the great distinction between the one true living God of the Bible and the "deities" of the other man-made religions? _____

24. What is "The Great Theological Conundrum"? _____

25. Explain how Biblical Christianity solves this Problem _____

26. Why can't the other man-made religions of the world solve this Problem? _____
