

The Righteousness or Justice of God

Intro: Last week we considered the holiness of God conveying his separateness and His moral purity. Let consider today the righteousness or justice of God. It is what Strong calls “transitive holiness”.

God is a righteous or just God

That is to say that His holiness or self-affirming purity is manifested toward His creatures.

“The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before Thee. (Psalm 89:14)

“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” (Rev 15:3).

God’s treatment of His creatures conforms to the purity of His nature. God’s justice is not merely a matter of arbitrary will, but a revelation of His innermost nature. His laws or requirements of man are a manifestation of His holiness and righteousness.

God’s justice requires that His creatures be conformed to His moral perfection. In God’s law see justice commanded in various ways:

Just rulers

And I said, “Hear now, heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel. Is it not for you to know justice? (Micah 3:1)

Just courts

“You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. “You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

Just treatment of those under authority (servants)

Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)

God reveals His justice in the law revealing both the love of holiness and the hatred of sin.

Just balances

A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight. (Proverbs 11:1)

Just treatment of the disadvantaged

“You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge. (Deuteronomy 24:17)

These principles of justice bind us to the fair treatment of others when we might

have power to hurt or injure them.

God's justice causes Him to reward those who are righteous in conduct but punish those who are unrighteous.

Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes. With the kind Thou dost show Thyself kind; With the blameless Thou dost show Thyself blameless; With the pure Thou dost show Thyself pure; and with the crooked Thou dost show Thyself astute. (Psalm 18:24-26)

O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; for the righteous God tries the hearts and minds. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day. If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (Psalm 7:9-12)

Justice just as much binds God to punish as it binds the sinner to be punished! The boastful shall not stand before Thine eyes; Thou dost hate all who do iniquity. (Psalm 5:5)

In life we sometimes see a poetic justice.

Job, who lost all his family and fortune through Satan's trials received them back again from the Lord.

Jacob who deceived his father to secure the family blessing became the victim of the deceit of Laban and later his own sons.

The brothers of Joseph who mocked him for his dreams later fulfilled those dreams by bowing before Him in Egypt.

The Jews who use the Romans to murder Jesus were themselves murdered by those same Romans 40 years later in the destruction of Jerusalem.

We may even see in our own lives examples of the modern adage, "what goes around, comes around".

Yet, God's justice is not always met out completely in this life.

for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:45)

III. The story of the man who suggested that his crops were as good as those of the people who went to church. Someone responded, "God does not settle all of His accounts in October".

Our sense of justice tells us that God will not continue to do this!

"Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

(Genesis 18:25)

Therefore, God reserves for Himself a final day of justice.

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-

31)

who will render to every man according to his deeds: (Romans 2:6)

This final accounting will give to each person the just penalty of their whole life.

Sins unpunished in this life will not go unpunished. Men may succeed to hiding their transgressions or take advantage of the “loopholes” in our justice system. There will be no “secrets” at the final accounting.

It is comforting to know that those unfairly treated by others will receive their just desserts as well.

God’s justice is displayed in the salvation of mankind.

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

In the justice of God man’s sin could not go unpunished. God in justice responded to man’s sin by placing the penalty of sin upon His son. Paul shows us that there was the appearance of injustice in God’s forbearance or passing over of sins previously committed by men. But through the sacrifice of His son, God’s justice has been vindicated. Though the penalty for men’s sins was postponed, the penalty was paid by His own son!

Inasmuch as God’s salvation has been made possible for all, John affirms that God is just in forgiving the sins of those who have come to Him through Christ. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Conclusion: God’s justice will be satisfied. Someone will pay for your sins! Who will it be? You or Jesus?