

Divine Justice

Life is not always fair. Men seek justice in court systems, but judges and juries do not always make the correct judgments, nor give just sentences. Imperfect justice exists in the world because men are imperfect. On the other hand, God is just. All of His judgments are right. The psalmist David wrote, *“The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”* (Psalm 19:9). God is just when He condemns; He is just when He justifies.

Divine justice is rooted in the character of Jehovah. God is light, in Him is no darkness (cf. I John 1:5). He is pure and righteous (cf. I John 3:3, 7). He is not tempted by evil (cf. James 1:13). He shows no partiality because He is not a respecter of persons (cf. Acts 10:34). Men’s discernment can be affected by prejudices – prejudgments prior to considering and examining necessary information in order to form a just conclusion. For that reason, men ought not to take vengeance into their own hands. *“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”* (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19). God’s outpouring of wrath upon the guilty erupts from His own righteousness as He executes judgment with righteous indignation (cf. II Thessalonians 1:6-8; Hebrews 10:27).

The justice which comes from above is administered according to attributes of Deity. The one hundred thirty-ninth Psalm describes in such beautiful language God’s omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. Possessing almighty power to execute the sentence of judgment is vitally important, but complete awareness, knowledge and understanding of absolutely everything are what make divine justice a reality. Thus God is just, and all of His judgments are just. The judgments which men make are based upon their limited observation of that which is within their scope. Jesus said in His warning concerning false prophets, *“Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ... Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”* (Matthew 7:17, 20). God sees what men can see, and He sees what men cannot see. *“O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ... Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your Presence?”* (Psalm 139:1-3, 7).

The judgment of God is according to truth because He renders judgment to each person according to his deeds (cf. Romans 2:2, 6). Sin and evil are transgressions of God’s law (cf. I John 3:4). God, who has no fellowship with sin and darkness, must justly judge the guilty, pronounce sentence and execute punishment. In all fairness, He warns that *“indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will fall upon every soul of man who does evil”* because he is self-seeking and does not obey the truth (Romans 2:8-9). The Lord taking fiery vengeance upon those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Christ is a righteous action (cf. II Thessalonians 1:8). He acts in judgment in perfect harmony with His impartial righteousness and complete knowledge of men’s deeds, words and thoughts.

Since the wages of sin is death (cf. Romans 6:23), how can God remain just in His

separating Himself from sin while justifying a sinner? He does not simply ignore the fact that men are guilty of sin. The penalty against sin must be carried out; the fine must be paid. God set forth His Son Jesus Christ as the propitiation, the atonement, the sacrifice for sin. The Father and the Son paid the required price of redemption (cf. Romans 3:24-25). Just as Isaiah prophesied, our Lord Jesus was wounded and bruised for our transgressions and iniquities, and our chastisement was upon Him (cf. 53:5). God is still just when He justifies a sinner who has faith in Jesus because Jesus died for sinners and gave His life a ransom for many. This goodness of divine justice ought to lead every man to repentance and obedience of faith. Therefore, unbelief and disobedience are justly condemned and promised eternal punishment by the true and living God, who so loved the world that He sacrificed His Son to make pardon available and accessible to the guilty.