

God is Just

The Character of God—part 10

September 2, 2018

DAY 1: The justice of God.

1. God is just. Justice is receiving what you deserve.
2. It's one thing to speak of God as loving us in spite of our sin, but tell people that God is also a Judge and people will recoil from you like you have leprosy. "I don't believe in a God as Judge! How can anybody in the 21st century believe in a God who judges people? The idea is not only preposterous but monstrous!"
3. But throughout the bible few things are stressed more often than the reality of divine judgment, and that part of God's work is that of judge. If it is right that justice prevails, that good overcomes bad, that right prevails over evil.

1 Peter 4:5 But they will have to give account of themselves to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

4. You have to give account of yourself at school or you'll be repeating a school year. You have to give account of yourself at work, or you'll be out of a job. You have to give account of yourself to your coach or you'll be off the team. You have to give account of yourself to the law, or you may end up in jail. Why do we somehow think we can skate through life without any fear of giving account of our lives to God?

A Judge is a Person...

1. With authority.

James 4:12 There is one Lawgiver and Judge, he who is able to save and to destroy...

- (a) In our country the legislative branch enacts the law, but the executive branch executes the law, while the judicial branch tries to ensure that the law is followed. God does all three functions with people.

(We'll continue tomorrow with three more characteristics of a judge)

- (b) What strikes you about the justice of God?

DAY 2: A judge is a person ... (continued from DAY 1)

2. Of wisdom to discern truth.

Romans 2:2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

- (a) In the courtroom, the pursuit by the judge is to pursue truth, according to the law. The jury is tasked with the same duty.
- (b) The same is true for God with regard to judging us.

3. Of power to execute sentence.

Psalm 97:2 Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

- (a) In the modern world the judge only pronounces sentence. It was that way in the ancient world also. But God not only pronounces sentence, he also carries it out. All judicial functions are his.
- (b) Does the first part of this verse, suggest anything regarding the second part of this verse?

4. Of goodness. He does what is right.

Zephaniah 3:5 The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame.

- (a) Zephaniah declared that God "is righteous." It is a statement that is an absolute statement about His character.
- (b) The rest of the verse describes pictures of His righteousness.
- © What strikes you about each of the following pictures?
- (1) "He does no wrong."

(2) "Morning by morning He dispenses justice."

(3) "Every new day He does not fail."

(d) What strikes you about the last phrase in Zephaniah 3:5?

DAY 3: Jesus' view of judgment

1. People who read the bible very rarely, if at all, proclaim that the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath, while the God of the New Testament is a God of love.
2. You'll hear, "I believe that Jesus is all about love."
3. If you actually read the New Testament you'll find not only the reality of a coming judgment, but you'll find that the primary espouser and warner of coming judgment is none other than Jesus, Himself! During the next three days we'll unpack a very familiar parable of Jesus.

Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,

⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

4. Before we look further into this parable, what strikes you at first?

5. Put yourself in the parable. Where do you see yourself?

DAY 4: Parable of the great white throne judgment, part 1

1. Jesus is the Judge!

Matt. 25:31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

(a) It is a stunning statement out of the mouth of the “meek and lowly” Jesus comes the statement that He Himself will be the judge at the end of all things!

(b) What is the image that Jesus paints for us in verse 31?

Matt. 25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

© That “meek and mild” Jesus will be before all the *nations*, all the people who once walked this earth.

(d) What does He say He will be doing, in verse 32?

2. The Righteous are rewarded.

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

(a) What are these folks given?

Matthew 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

(b) These who are rewarded are stunned. Why?

DAY 5: The great white throne judgment, part 2

3. The evil are excluded.

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

(a) People *aren't* saved because they did not do enough works. People *are* saved because of a relationship with Christ which produces significant change in human nature which is observable in people's actions. The evidence of faith is lives that change! People give themselves away in whatever situation they find themselves in.

(b) You often hear someone say, "I know I'm not perfect, but I'm not an ax murderer or a rapist." The inferences in their comment are, (1) There are worse people than me, (2) Others may face judgment but I won't. What things is this person assuming about judgment and themselves?

Matthew 25:44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' ⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

© Just like the first group, the second group is astonished, but for very different reasons! How would you characterize the attitude and perspective of this second group?

4. Our destinies are final.

Matt. 25:46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

(d) Some non-Christians reject Christianity because they assume that hell is an unjust place and that if there is a god, he certainly wouldn't capriciously throw people into such a place. In what ways does Jesus' parable dispel those errors?

(e) What things strike you from this week's devotions about the justice of God?