

## IS GOD JUST?

Some people find "fault" with God. That's right! They find "fault" with God because God is either too kind, or too harsh! Some people think God is too kind in that He does not immediately deal with sinful people. But some other people find "fault" with God because He will not save everybody! Why cannot the greatest LOVE in the universe save everybody? People have a hard time understanding the Righteousness of God's decisions.

Jesus' apostle Paul addressed this problem of misunderstanding God. Misunderstanding God's righteous judgments and decisions was at the root of several relationship problems in the early church of Christ. You see, the early church was composed of people from two entirely different cultures, Jews and Gentiles. Gentile believers rejoiced that God had allowed Gentiles to become known as God's people. (cf Acts 13:48) However, the Jewish people had always made the claim that Jews were exclusively the favored children of God. They had a book that proved it! Therefore, when Christian missionaries, who by the way were Jewish, began to preach the good news about Christ to Gentiles, the Jewish believers in Christ tended to think that Gentile believers should NOW take on Jewish religious customs, including circumcision for the men! Those customs included religious calendar items such as commanded feast days and Sabbath days, and also food laws, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." (cf Colossians 2:16, 21) This misunderstanding of God's salvation led to much infighting among the first century Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Was God righteous in forgiving the sins of both Jews and Gentiles?

Jesus' apostle Paul addressed this problem of God's righteousness in his letters to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians. All of those churches had both Jewish and Gentile Christians assembling together. All of them had been called out of a lost world. That's right! Both Jews and Gentiles had once lived in their sins! They had been called by the Gospel of Christ into the forgiveness of their sins. Jews and Gentiles heard and obeyed the same Gospel. They both repented and were immersed in water; they were saved and Jesus added them to His one church. (Acts 2:47)

Paul began his letter to the Romans with an explanation of God's righteousness, God's justice, God's evenhandedness in saving some and condemning others. You see, the whole world lay in sin, even as today! Without Christ every accountable person stands condemned! That's right! Every one of us has the same problem!

We are lost without Christ the Savior! Jesus' apostle John put it this way: "the whole world lies in wickedness." (1 John 5:19) Furthermore, Paul put it bluntly this way: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness...." ([Romans 1:18 NIV](#))

Friends, God is just in condemning the world because of atheism and idolatry, especially the world of the Gentiles. Paul explained it this way, "What may be known about God is plain to them [the Gentiles], because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." ([Romans 1:19-20 NIV](#)) God expects the human mind to make clear deductions from the existence of the universe that God has made and humans can see!

Sin is misbehavior; in fact, the word translated by our English word "sin" means to "miss the mark!" Behavior is "righteous" when it hits the mark! What mark? Whose mark? The "mark" of approved behavior is revealed by the Creator! Who knows what is approved behavior and unapproved behavior? God! The Creator of everything knows the difference! And He has made the difference clear! That's right! God wrote the book on sin and righteousness! Maybe you have a copy? Furthermore, God holds people accountable for knowing and practicing the difference between approved behavior and unapproved behavior.

Is God right to condemn sin and become angry with those who practice sin? Even without God's book people of the world know **intuitively** what is right and wrong. That's right! Consider the laws of nations. Jesus' apostle Paul once gave a list of approved behaviors and then made an amazing statement. Paul listed behaviors which he called the fruit of God's Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; [and then Paul made this remarkable observation] "against such things there is no law." Of course there is no law against these behaviors! Every person and every government recognizes the great worth of these attitudes and behaviors. Paul went on to write, that "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." ([Galatians 5:22-26.](#)) Ah yes, there is that other side of the human being! The "passions and desires" crucified by Christians is also listed by Paul. He calls these the "works of the flesh." Paul wrote, "The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, (Paul said) as I warned you

before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."  
(Galatians 5:19-21)

So, is God just/righteous to be angry when His creation practices these passions and desires? YES. As Paul explained it, all sinners "Know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death...." But Paul continues that those same sinners "Not only continue to do these very things but also approve" of other people practicing these sins! (Romans 1:32 NIV)

Yes, the Gentile nations and their peoples had a gigantic problem and they would be justly condemned because of their deeds....UNLESS, they repented.

But the Jewish people also had a problem with sin. However, Jewish people thought they would not be held accountable for their sins because of their Jewish ancestry! Even though they were committing the same sins as some Gentiles, they felt they would be saved because of their Jewish religious practices that were taught them by God! They thought they could be sinners and still be saved! Does that thinking remind of anybody in today's world?

In Romans chapter 2 Paul speaks about the Jewish religious arrogance and says that God will judge even the Jew who is sinful. "You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (Romans 2:23-24 NIV)

"What shall we conclude then? [Paul wrote] Do we [Jews] have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin." (Romans 3:9 NIV)

Friends, God is righteous in condemning some and saving others. But how does He do it? How does God make the difference between sinners since all are sinners and should all die under the law of sin and death!? The ungodly sinner who knows nothing of God and the godly sinner who knows everything about God are both condemned because they both have sinned!

Well, it is just as Jesus said when His disciples asked Him, "who then can be saved?", Jesus replied, "With man it is impossible!" Jesus had just been talking with a young Jewish man who confessed that he had kept the law all of his young life! The young man had asked Jesus, "Master, What good thing must I do to get eternal life?" Jesus told him to keep the law. The young man said he had done that all his life. Then he asked, "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth." (Matthew 19:21-22 NIV)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" [Indeed, that's our question! Who can be justly saved?] Jesus looked at [His disciples] and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:23-26 NIV) You see, God already had a plan of salvation!

And so we ask this question? How can God be righteous when He saves some and condemns others?

God's Son, Jesus Christ, made it possible for God to forgive sin and save the lost! That's right! The apostle Paul said it right here in the Romans chapter one, verse 16 when he wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16-17 ESV)

God, the powerful Creator of the universe and the Father of mankind, needed "power" to save! God needed Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in order to justly forgive anyone! Who can be saved? "With man it is impossible!" But with God's arrangement all things are possible, even the salvation of sinful mankind who deserve eternal death!

Friends, God has always been righteous in condemning sin. But now, God is also righteous in saving mankind out of sin! Jesus gave His Father this power to righteously **forgive sin** by dying according to the law of sin and death for every human being who has ever lived! If Adam was saved, it was because God anticipated the justifying death of His only begotten Son! If Abraham, or Moses, or Isaiah were saved, it is because Jesus died for them, and God could honor their repentant life. If you are saved it will be because Jesus died for you and God will honor your repentance and obedience! The penalty paid by Jesus gives God the power to examine your loving kind deeds. Yes, every human being will be judged according to his deeds. (Romans 2:6) Because by Jesus the penalty for your sins has been paid! This leaves God the option of examining your deeds and judging accordingly. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV) Solomon put it this way, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 ESV)

Christ is calling you to believe this good news, repent of your sins, be immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins, and to live for the ONE who has loved you!  
(Acts 2:38) A new life awaits you!