

God Revealed — Justice

The justice of God is revealed in how the holy God acts in every situation. He always does what is right and displays His holiness by His moral behavior which matches His goodness and righteousness. Since God is ultimately and totally holy, He cannot tolerate unrighteousness or evil. Yet, even in His wrath against evil and disobedience, God is wholly just, (Romans 2:5-16). When saving people from sin, God acts righteously and is totally just by putting the punishment of our sin on the person of Jesus Christ.

Consider the events that happened before Genesis 1.

The hosts of angels had already been created to serve Him. As free moral agents, they were given the ability to serve God in the capacity for which they were created or to rebel against Him and their rightful position. At some point in ancient history before the creation of man, Lucifer was filled with pride and led a rebellion of one third of the angels against God and fell from his lofty position, (Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:16). As a direct result of their action, the holy and just God in judgment and wrath immediately cast satan and his minions down. Some of them committed such atrocities that they were confined in chains in the bottomless pit.

The LORD God Almighty is holy.

When God created man, they were given a free will to choose to do good or evil, to obey and live, or to disobey and die.

God did everything possible to provide for the safety, security, peace and tranquility of Adam and Eve and their offspring. Everything God created was very good and there was no evidence of evil, corruption, or death in all of His work. After creating man in His image, God blessed them and gave them dominion over everything on the earth, (Genesis 1:26-31). Adam and Eve were unique in their innocence and position before God. Everything was extremely good.

After giving the dominion and authority, God planted a garden eastward in Eden, where He put the man He had formed. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the midst of the garden. God gave them free access to everything but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Ample warning was given to cause them to remain in a condition of innocence and rightness before God and enjoy continuous life, joy, peace, and tranquility.

Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Some time later, the old serpent lied and told the woman that they would not die, (Genesis 3:1-6).

Two things happened.

First, she believed the lies of the adversary more than the warnings of God. Second, she was enticed by her own passion and desire. As soon as they ate of the fruit, God’s judgment and wrath came upon them and they experienced both spiritual and physical death.

God is holy, righteous and truthful.

Whatever God has said, He will surely do. The judgment that came upon Adam and Eve was the holy righteous wrath and judgment of Almighty Sovereign God. God had given them everything necessary to continue to enjoy life, but they rebelled and transgressed God’s law and holiness.

The justice and wrath of God is revealed multiple times in the Bible.

- When the imaginations of men’s hearts were only evil continually, God destroyed the earth and all of its population with a flood, and only righteous Noah and his family were saved, (Genesis 6).
- After the flood, the people did not obey God and they built the tower of Babel in order to make a name for themselves. So, God came down and destroyed the tower and scattered the people, (Genesis 11).
- Over and over in the wilderness, the Israelites provoked God to wrath, (Deuteronomy 9:7).

Romans 1:18-19 ESV For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

Romans 1:20 ESV For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

After the exodus, God came down on Sinai and gave His law to Moses and the Israelites in order to provide access into His holy presence.

Everything about the exodus was a display of God’s presence, power

and person. God was unveiling His glory to His chosen people and to the world. He was guiding, keeping, delivering, blessing and helping them so they may know Him. After the LORD Jehovah called Moses up into the mountain of God to give him the Law, God made provision for people to come into His presence. The Law defined what is good and evil in God's sight and provided a method for cleansing and atonement for sin and iniquity.

Prior to the exodus, God had shown Himself and spoke to select individuals such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The giving of the Law, the Tabernacle, and the Ark of the Covenant provided access, so they could fellowship with God and find mercy and grace to help in their time of need.

God Almighty would come down in a physical manifestation to the Tent of Meeting and speak with them. The Ark of the Covenant represented God's throne and the Tabernacle and sacrifices offered access.

Although access to God for mercy and grace was provided, strict rules and restrictions were given so that ungodly men may be cleansed before entrance into God's holy presence. Every aspect of the priests, Levites and congregations activities around the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant had to be closely followed. He had warned them of what would happen if they deviated from His righteous commands.

God is holy, righteous and just.

In Leviticus 9, Aaron had offered the sin offering, the burnt offerings, and the peace offerings.

Each step of the offerings, sacrifices and activities had to follow the exact specifications God had given. Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. Everyone in the camp recognized the holy presence of God and shouted and fell on their faces.

Leviticus 10:1-2 NKJV Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

The incense and fire they offered on their censors was profane, strange or foreign fire.

Apparently, they had taken fire and incense from some other place than the fire from the altar. Some suggest they were also drunk when they offered strange incense and fire before God. Immediately and without additional warning, fire went out from God and devoured them and they died.

Leviticus 10:3 NKJV And Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.’ ” So Aaron held his peace.
Anything that does not glorify God is not true worship and should not be allowed.

God was making it clear that He is holy and must be revered. Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar were deeply disturbed at God’s judgment and wrath. God had warned them in many ways that those who come near to Him must be regarded as holy.

Many years later when Eli was the High Priest, the Ark of God was captured by the Philistines.

When the ark of God was taken, the glory of the Lord departed from Israel, (1 Samuel 4:22). The Philistines placed the ark of God in Ashdod, in the house of their god Dagon. At that time the people of Ashdod were struck with tumors, so they moved the Ark of God to Gath and their people were also struck with tumors. Finally, they put the Ark of God on a cart and sent it back to Israel. The Levites took it down and the chest with the articles of gold, (1 Samuel 6:15). Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. After the sacrifices, the men of Beth Shemesh looked into the Ark of God and 50,070 men were struck down by God with a great slaughter, (1 Samuel 6:19).

(Note: the NIV and a few Hebrew manuscripts 70 men were put to death. However, most Hebrew manuscripts say 50,070 died.)

1 Samuel 6:20 NKJV And the men of Beth Shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?”

They were questioning the justice of God. The men of Beth Shemesh sent messengers to Kirjath Jearim, probably from the priestly family, to come and take back the ark of the LORD. The Ark of God ultimately came to rest in Kirjath Jearim in the house of Abinadab, and Eleazar his son kept the ark of the Lord. The Ark of God remained there for twenty years. When David became king over Israel, he wanted to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem. So, David and 30,000 choice men of Israel set out

to bring up the Ark of God. When they arrived, they set the Ark of God on a new cart, and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab the keeper of the Ark, drove the new cart.

2 Samuel 6:5 NKJV Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the Lord on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

Everyone was excited to bring the Throne of God to its proper place. They were playing music and worshipping on all kinds of instruments before the Lord.

2 Samuel 6:6-7 NKJV And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.

God warned His people that not even the Levites could touch the holy objects of the tabernacle, lest they die, (Numbers 4:15).

God is holy.

2 Samuel 6:8-9 NKJV And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?"

After three months, David heard that the LORD blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought the Ark of God to the City of David with great gladness, (1 Chronicles 15). This time, every six paces they sacrificed oxen and sheep and the Levites carried the Ark on their shoulders, as God had commanded Moses.

"Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

What happened to Uzzah had a dramatic impact on David.

Psalms 24:1-2 NKJV The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters.

Psalms 24:3-4 NKJV Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

Since God is holy, who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

Isaiah 64:6 NKJV But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities,

like the wind, Have taken us away.

In Romans 3:22 NKJV we are told, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

If access to the Throne of God can only happen when we are clean and without sin, how shall we ever come before God to find His mercy and help? Our hands are dirty and our sins have taken us away.

This is where God’s mercy and grace intervened.

Romans 5:8 NKJV But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Hebrews 4:15-16 NKJV For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

A dramatic change has been made since Christ died for us and ascended back to the Father’s right hand. At the base of Mount Sinai, God gave the command to Moses that no one was to even go up to the base of the mountain, (Exodus 19:12). Now because Christ our High Priest is at the Father’s right hand, we can approach God’s presence.

The word “*boldly*” means without fear, with confidence or courage. We can come to the throne of grace and find mercy and help.

Romans 5:9-10 NKJV Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

God has not changed.

The LORD our God is holy, holy, holy. He should be revered and approached with Godly fear. Through Christ, we who have the blood covering and cleansing have been reconciled to God and have bold access before His throne.