

GOD'S SCALES OF JUSTICE

The LORD our God is full of grace and mercy. His gift of the messiah to be our redemption is beyond all measure for that grace. However, there is another side of God that only He can balance. He is also the True Judge of the Universe. He is able to mete out wrath and punishment and reward truthfulness and other godly virtues. How does God pour out grace and mercy and yet measure and render justice? How does God determine Truth and Falsehood, Love and Hate, Good and Evil, Right and Wrong? This universe is His creation, including the concepts of truth and falsehood, love and hate, right and wrong. Each one of these comparisons is like a coin. A coin has two sides, a head, and a tail, so to say. But God does not flip a coin to decide. His judgments are based on truth and righteousness.

One thing is certain in answering this question: when a matter is within mankind's jurisdiction, man cannot make these judgments consistently and correctly every time. It is something that ONLY God can do as the True Judge of the Universe.

Many times, we struggle to understand God's justice, especially when He demonstrates how "long suffering" He is toward sinners. At the same time, how do we see His "fairness" when it comes to His judgment meted out for His enemies? We do not see all that is involved in His decision-making nor the wisdom in His timing. We learn to trust God in His decision-making in how He renders judgment of mankind.

God is infinite and beyond description; however, we are given clues to His character throughout Scripture. For example, when Moses ascended the mountain to see God's glory, God described Himself this way.

Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

Exodus 34:6-7

This is God describing Himself. He forgives much and the guilty are punished. For those of us who have called upon God's redemption, we expect forgiveness because of His promises to do so. But what about those who have not called upon Him and have willfully and defiantly stood against Him. Do we agree with His judgments in that instance?

Some people confuse God's love with punishment. They think that "love" is the "answer all" for every question of God's judgment. They also say, "Since God loves us all, then He will not judge mankind. Hell is not real; instead, He will just keep giving us more chances to do better."

This is clearly false. Hell is real and God has His limits. His scales have two sides; mercy and justice. One side is life and the other is death.

There is a specific teaching on this point given in the story of God's judgments upon Egypt. One of the judgments was hail that was on fire. Consider this for a moment: one would think that the fire would melt the hail and the resulting water would extinguish the fire. How can they exist together? You could ask the same question of justice and mercy. Only God can

truly balance the scales between justice and mercy. When men put their finger on the scale, either for justice or mercy, the scale is unbalanced. Only God can balance them. Only God can make hail that is on fire.

Let us examine how God renders His judgment on the opposites list we began with and try to understand what factors He considers in His judgments.

Truth & Falsehood

Finding the truth leads to the determination of Justice and Mercy. Without truth, you cannot read the scales correctly. God gives us very specific instructions in finding and determining the truth of a matter.

If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

Numbers 35:30

On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Deuteronomy 17:6-7

A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

Deuteronomy 19:15

Here is a very important clue as to how God establishes truth that leads to a proper judgment. There must be confirmation. The need for confirmation in seeking the truth has been

proved in countless stories of man's issues. The use of forensic science has been used to fill the need for confirmation in many criminal cases, using fingerprints and DNA. But what about a "he said-she said" case. Even our courts recognize that the matter is not "beyond a reasonable doubt." It is essential that multiple witnesses or confirming evidence be used to determine the truth. The truth then leads to justice.

But then we must understand a different falsehood that distorts a witness or evidence. What do we do with a witness who lies, who falsely reports, and attempts to corrupt the path to truth?

If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you.

Deuteronomy 19:16-20

If a witness testifies falsely, he is guilty of perjury. It is also a violation of the law to lie to a police officer investigating a crime. The same is true among brethren, even when it is not a criminal matter. A brother in the faith who does not speak the truth, by only sharing part of his explanation and thus misrepresenting his testimony, is guilty before God. He is being malicious.

God calls all of us to be truthful witnesses.

"You are My witnesses," declares the Lord, "And My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.

Isaiah 43:10

Witnesses are a very important part of living in a world where truth reigns. Maybe you did not know it, but witnesses are essential in all important legal matters. Consider the use of witnesses for a marriage ceremony. It is not just an honor one bestows on a couple of friends. They are persons who will stand and testify to the fact that you spoke vows of marriage to your spouse, should the question ever arise. A Notary Public serves as witness to signing a legal document. Was it really you that signed for the sale of your car? The Notary is that witness who will testify to that fact.

Let us explain further the responsibility of witnesses to speak up and testify. A witness does NOT have the right to NOT testify. Many times, we hear of a witness refusing to participate in an investigation because they "don't want to get involved" or "someone will get in trouble."

Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration to testify when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, if he does not tell it, then he will bear his guilt.

Leviticus 5:1

God does not excuse that witness; he has become a false witness by not testifying.

As quoted above regarding requiring more than one witness to establish the truth of a matter, a single witness is inherently weak in the same way that one eye has difficulty in perceiving depth. God gives us two eyes to see three-dimensionally. One eye, or one witness, thinks

they see something, but it is no better than seeing a two-dimensional photo or painting. There have been many instances where an eyewitness testified to what they believed they saw, only to discover it was not what they thought. Eyewitness testimony is not the strongest evidence in an investigation. Each eyewitness sees it from their perspective and bias.

I once was on a jury and heard a witness say he saw a truck strike a car. As it turned out his view was blocked by a vehicle in front of him and he saw the truck approach on one side and the car react to the truck on the other side. There was no actual collision. But the witness said, "I saw the truck hit the car." That is what he believed to have happened, but other evidence contradicted his conclusion.

Our faith is based on the truth. There is no such thing as blind faith. If you say you believe that Yeshua is the Messiah without at least two to three evidences, then your faith is really based on hearsay or presumption. Even those who claim to know the Messiah in their hearts must have the evidence of God's word to confirm. The Bible is a record of witness testimonies of Yeshua being the Messiah, sharing with us Yeshua's words and deeds. Our belief in the witness of Scripture is then counted as righteousness, and God works His grace for our salvation.

"You are My witnesses," declares the Lord, "And My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.

Isaiah 43:10

We are to follow the principle of multiple witnesses in conducting our business with other brethren. Going privately to a person to provide correction is in many times wise, but once a wrong deed is done, if you need to establish

the truth, you must have witnesses. This was the instruction of the Messiah.

But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

Matthew 18:16

Whenever any accusation is made against another, it immediately "indicts" that person. An indictment is not proof of the truth; it means that an investigation must be made to determine the truth. In the case of leaders, an indictment can lead to mistrust of that leader. Therefore, the Scripture stipulates that a single witness against a leader is insufficient to indict. There must be confirmation to begin the investigation.

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

1 Timothy 5:19

Without truth, there is no path to justice. Even God follows these rules. God had to travel to Sodom to see for Himself what was the outcry of Sodom. Even God wants to hear our own confession of faith and see our deeds to see if we trust Him and believe in Him.

The path of pursuing the truth is the path of life. Yeshua said it this way:

...and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

John 8:32

Love & Hate

The Scripture plainly says, "Jacob I loved, Esau I hated." This is a particularly difficult statement for many believers to accept and understand. How can this be right? This does not sound

like God is being fair in this matter at all. Paul addresses this subject directly.

And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

Romans 9:10-22

Many believers expect God to be fair in His judgments. God commands us to be fair using just weights and measures. However, God's character is NOT of fairness. Instead, He is just and righteous. Paul cites God's prophecy

concerning Jacob and Esau, given before they were born. He recounts Pharaoh's hard heart and reminds us of the power and authority of the Creator. Questioning God's purposes and decisions is an attempt to bring God down to our level, or worse, elevate ourselves to be God's judge. GOD FORBID. God is Sovereign and is not subject to our scrutiny.

Good & Evil

Goodness leads to life and peace; evil is harm that destroys and kills. Did God create evil? This is a deep question. We know God creates calamity but God does not put in a person's mind to do evil. Evil is a state of mind that tends toward harmful behavior. Take our coin example with the two sides again. A coin does not exist without two sides. In our limited, finite thinking, we understand the two sides of the coin. Why then would we question how evil exists? Because of man's original sin and inherited wicked heart, evil exists as a decision/action. It is like asking how darkness exists when God says He is light.

Most of us pursue good. We do not focus on evil and do not want to learn of it. But evil does exist and occasionally we are confronted with it. The Holocaust is an example of evil on a mass scale. In our days, we have seen pure evil when a gunman shoots and kills many innocent people. We have also recently witnessed Hamas, the Palestinian terrorists in Gaza, rise and demonstrate pure evil.

When we see evil, we can understand how God's scales weigh heavily on the justice side.

But let me ask another question. Do we desire to see God's justice poured out on evil? Honestly, I do, but then I wish I had seen none of it at all.

On Yom Kippur, we are commanded to fast and be somber before the Lord. We believe that day also speaks prophetically to the Day of the

Lord, the day God will judge the world by fire. As I mentioned earlier, God has a limit on His longsuffering and has already prophesied that He will judge the world. There is nothing to celebrate. There is nothing to rejoice about.

Right & Wrong

Do we listen to the voice that says "obey," or the voice of deception that says, "you can do it" with its self-centered justification. There is a right and a wrong before the Lord in every matter, but we sometimes think we get to make that judgment. Sometimes, we just ignore God and make the decision without His principles or counsel. We usually suffer for it as well. The original sin follows down through the generations of mankind. Since Adam and Eve, mankind has been making decisions relating to every aspect of life. Have you heard the quip "If you don't know history, you are doomed to repeat it"? That means you will make the same poor decisions made by your forefathers and will probably have the same unfortunate results.

God's intention was that we ask Him to guide our decisions and choices, but since Eve and Adam were given bad advice by the serpent, their decision was made without consulting God, and it has rippled down through the bloodlines to us all. So, God must now judge our decisions and the consequences.

Let's conclude our thoughts on God's scales of judgment. Looking back at the Scripture to understand, we have the evidence of God's decision to destroy the world with the great flood. God explained how He came to His decision. Noah alone found grace in God's eyes because of his faithfulness to live according to God's rules, but the rest of the world suffered His judgment. What were His reasons for making that decision? To summarize, the population grew, somehow the institution of marriage created by God became distorted, evil began to proliferate out of control, and God experienced regret.

Justice weighed more heavily than mercy. It truly happened.

Turning now to our future and God's judgment, the prophecy says that the next worldwide judgment will be by fire. He will be a "consuming fire" as "lightning." Why will God judge the world again? I believe it will be for the same reasons. Ok, so let us make a quick comparison for our world.

The world population is at its peak, marriage is being trashed, evil is rampant and off the scales (not a pun), and God is getting very angry. He has His limits. The guilty will not go unpunished.

God is going to choose truth over falsehood, love over hate, good over evil, and right instead of wrong. God is going to bring justice to His enemies and destroy their works. He clearly states how His Kingdom will be established after that future judgment.

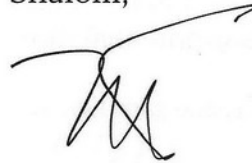
... to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to

seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

Daniel 9:24b

I would not be surprised if we were to see some of His justice as He vindicates Israel prior to the end. There would be a lot of evidences to see the truth. We would see how much God loves His people and destroys our enemies. We would see good overcome evil. We would see the True Judge of the Universe render His judgment.

Shalom,



Article written by Monte Judah.

* Scripture references from the NASB95

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