



The Justice & Mercy of God

Romans 2:9-11 -- There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil... but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.



Introduction

1. The relationship that God has with man imposes an interesting problem: How can a perfect, holy and justice-oriented Deity have a proper (and meaningful) relation with imperfect, unholy and condemned humanity?
2. On the one hand, because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), God is obligated by His own standard to condemn man to eternal judgment. On the other hand, because of His loving nature, He does not wish any to perish but for all to come to repentance and eternal life (2 Peter 3:9).
3. This then is the problem that presents a puzzle for man. Fortunately, nothing is impossible with God, yet it is man that is still having trouble trying to figure it out

A. The Problems of Works of Law

1. When "Christian" Faiths began to mold and model themselves after the Jewish religion they began to run into the same problems and limitations.
2. The Jews had a law that was good, however because it lacked grace (or would have without the Son's sacrifice), it became an instrument of sin.

Romans 7:12 -- So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Romans 7:11 -- For sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

3. Thus when one has merely a system of law (even divine law), without mercy, that law becomes a curse.

Galatians 3:10 -- for as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them." (From Deuteronomy 27:26).

4. So why such a system in the first place? It was given to help man take notice of his sin and that he needed help from God to be right with God. Thus the Law was a conveyance of justice helping one to look for something where mercy (grace) could be obtained.

Galatians 3:24 -- Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

Galatians 5:1 -- It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:18 -- But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Romans 8:1-2 -- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

B. The Problems of Grace Only

1. Many now believe that God did such a good job of providing grace and justification through the sacrifice of His Son that man no longer needs have a part in his own salvation since God has done away with the Law (Hebrews 10:9; Colossians 2:13-15).
2. The doctrine of "Supererogation" was part of Catholic doctrine at one time and held that man had to work beyond his duty (become a saint even) in an effort to earn his eternal salvation.
3. John Calvin (1509-1564) and other protestant leaders rebelled against this concept, but pushed the pendulum too far the other way. They believed God's grace abrogated any works that needed to be done by man for he was now saved "by grace." Most Faiths have now accepted this and this has led to three basic conclusions and problems: Predestination, Direct Calling by the Holy Spirit, and Faith without Works.

- a. **Predestination:** According to this teaching, God determined before the beginning of the world that some would be effortlessly saved while others hopelessly lost.

Problems:

1. This makes God a respecter of persons, which He claims not to be (Acts 10:34; 1 Peter 1:17; Romans 2:11).
2. It ignores the purpose of the Great Commission to preach to every creature (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20)
3. It nullifies what the Scripture teaches about the Gospel being open to ALL:

Matthew 16:24 -- Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If ANYONE wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Acts 10:34-35 -- And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him."

- b. **Direct Operation of Holy Spirit:** Calvinists also believe that God operates through the Spirit on man directly to create faith.

Problems:

1. Why is there such a things as a gospel and why did men have to go out and preach it? People work at studying the Scriptures to discover that they do not have to work to study the Scriptures.
2. The Bible specifically states that faith comes from hearing (Romans 10:17) and that man is called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14) that has the power to save him (Roman 1:16).

Acts 11:14 -- [The reason Cornelius was told Peter was coming was because] he shall SPEAK WORDS to you BY WHICH YOU WILL BE SAVED, you and all your household.

- c. **Faith Without Works:** This Calvinist doctrine explains that man is required to do nothing for his salvation.

Problems:

1. The gospel requires obedience (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17) and obeying God's will (Matthew 7:21).
2. It abandons love for Christ because Jesus said, "If you love Me you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).
3. Faith itself is trashed because the Bible speaks of faith as a work (John 6:27-29; Galatians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; James 2:22).
4. The only time "faith only" is mentioned in the Scriptures it is called "unsaving", "dead", "useless", "unperfected", "unjustifying", "dead" (James 2:14, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26).

C. Behold the Goodness & Severity of God!

1. If man were saved by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8) then all men would be saved (Titus 2:11). However, God's grace is conditional predicated upon obedience.

Hebrews 5:8-9 -- Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the thing which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who OBEY Him the source of eternal salvation.

John 3:36 -- He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does NOT OBEY the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of god abides on him.

2. It is then through Jesus that conditions are exacting, He who kept the Law perfectly, that God could be both just and the justifier of he that has faith in Christ (Romans 3:26).
3. Thus man must love God for the great sacrifice of His Son in order to make it possible to be able to get cleansed and approach Him in the pure righteousness of His Son. Man should also fear the wrath of God if he strays from the path set before him.

Romans 11:22 -- Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.