

God Is Just and Impartial

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Gen. 18:25; Dt. 32:4; Ps. 92:15; Eze. 18:25; Rom. 2:11

God is unjust and partial

Gen. 9:25; Ex. 20:5; Mt. 13:12; Rom. 9:11-13

As God is not unjust or partial, the scriptures that are misused to claim that He is unjust and partial can only come from those who are under the influence of modern psychology, which views any corporal punishment as being cruel and unnecessary, especially when it comes to child discipline. This is at the heart of these supposed contradictions because Almighty God does command that parents discipline their children just as He disciplines those He loves. Without clearly defined, understood, and enforced boundaries or laws, the order and stability of society eventually breaks down (Ex. 20:12). One such example of God's law being enforced for the sake of societal order is the death penalty for any individuals found guilty of committing murder, which must be confirmed by two or more witnesses (Nu. 35:30),

...My son, do not despise the chastening (discipline) of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. ⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they (human fathers) indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Heb. 12:5b-11; cf. Pro. 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15; NKJV used throughout unless noted).

Godly discipline does not mean physical abuse or torture, and the “rod of correction” symbolizes many different forms of punishment for acts of rebellion. In the case of children what is effective depends on the individual. It can range from denying them something that they want, to physical discipline in proportion to and context of the offense. Punishment for disobedience does not make children more violent, unless the parents themselves are acting out of rage rather than taking the time to correct the child out of love. Discipline can be an opportunity to force a child to stop the harmful or disruptive behavior they are exhibiting and consider how their actions affect other individuals and circumstances around them. Children without guidance, including appropriate discipline, will be the ones more inclined to only think of their own desires and emotions, bully other children, and possibly commit delinquent acts. As God is very patient, He does not always act immediately when people rebel against His law and commands. However, this apparent slow response should not be confused with a lack

of discipline. He will sometimes allow people enough time to learn from the fruits of their actions as the consequences of those choices run their course. These individuals end up reaping the results of what they have been sowing through their disobedience to Him. With these thoughts in mind, the scriptures that are presented to accuse God of being unjust and partial will be examined. The first scripture is dealing with Noah's reaction to the sin of his grandson Canaan and it is not referring to anything that God said or condoned,

So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son (grandson) had done to him.
²⁵Then he (Noah) said" 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren' (Gen. 9:24-25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Obviously Noah was angry at what had just happened, but his reaction and response does not mean that God agreed with what he said or that He was going to fulfill Noah's request. Rather, it means that God allows those He has created to express how they feel about any situation they find themselves in and they are free to vocalize their opinions. There is another example of this prior to Noah's birth,

Then Lamech said to his wives: 'Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; O wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. ²⁴If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold' (Gen. 4:23-24).

Because this is what Lamech assumed would happen does not mean that God would respond that way. In fact, there is no indication in scripture that Lamech's expectations were answered by God. Nonetheless, God did not prevent him from expressing his thoughts and opinions.

The next scripture used by some to accuse God of contradicting Himself is Exodus 20:5. This is a good example of God allowing a period of time to elapse before He intervened, even though the offenders could have been punished immediately,

You shall not bow down to them (idols) nor serve (worship) them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me (Ex. 20:5; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is assumed by some that God is actively punishing subsequent generations of those families who have rebelled against Him. In fact, He is allowing them to reap what they have sown for a number of generations before He intervenes to save them from their own foolish and rebellious ways. In some cases, families will wake up to the consequences of their sinful behavior during the third generation and repent, which means they would not have to suffer the results of their own stubbornness to the fourth generation. In cases like this, parents have the difficult choice of allowing their children to learn lessons by experiencing the pain associated with doing things the wrong way. It's a "hands off" approach that is sometimes necessary and most beneficial in the learning process because some children will not accept instruction or discipline.

The next scripture that is used to accuse God of being unjust and partial shows a lack of understanding regarding God's mercy and omniscience. As God does not operate

within the constraints of time and space, He can see the end of all things before they are completed in both the physical and spiritual realms. For instance, He knew that someone in the spirit realm would sin if He gave them freedom of choice and enough time to commit a violation of His law. Because of this reality, God created a plan for the redemption of sin before any transgression occurred. In the example of Jacob and Esau, God knew which one of these brothers would reject Him and which one would not. Although Esau rejected what God offered him, God still provided the means through which Esau could be restored. The means of reconciliation was provided through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore, even though God was very displeased with what Esau said and did, His love for Esau is clearly demonstrated through the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ,

For the children (Jacob and Esau) not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls (cf. Rom. 2:4b), ¹²it was said to her (Rebekah), 'The older (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob).' ¹³As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved (during his lifetime), but Esau I have hated (during his lifetime)' (Rom. 9:11-13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is through Jacob's descendant, Jesus Christ, that Esau will have his opportunity in the second resurrection to repent and be reconciled (Rev. 20:4-6). Consequently, no man has the right to judge whether God is unjust or partial when He and He alone created the means through which all sinners can be reconciled and inherit everlasting life, despite what they have done in the past. God gave freedom of choice to Esau and he decided to reject God. In the sense that God hated Esau's sinful choices during his physical lifetime, God hates all sin equally. He is not a respecter of persons (Ac. 10:34).

The last scripture that has been presented to accuse God of being unjust and partial concerns those who are called to serve Him at any given time in man's history. In order to correctly understand this final reference, it is imperative that the reader comprehend how God calls people as well as their response to His calling,

For whoever has, to him it shall be given, and in abundance; but whoever does not have, what he has shall also be taken up from him (Mt. 13:12; RNT).

It is no coincidence that this last scripture appears just before the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:18-23). In the parable of the sower, Jesus Christ revealed the process that Almighty God uses to call people to understand His way of life. For the sake of brevity, many people are called but very few decide to continue living God's way of life for various reasons (Mt. 20:16; 22:14). Those who hear and reject it, whatever they might have received from God will then be given to others who deeply desire to follow and obey Him. This is the sense in which something is taken away and given to another person. Again, it is a matter of freedom of choice. Those who choose to reject God are figuratively giving away what they could have learned to those who really want to learn (Eph. 4:15; 1Pet. 2:2; 2Pet. 3:18).

In conclusion, God has laws in place to protect the wellbeing of those who follow them. These laws provide boundaries, order, safety, and good health for His children and there are consequences for violating them. This is reflected in human families when

parents provide discipline to their children. However, they still have the opportunity to make their own choices and mature based on those decisions. God would only be unjust and partial if He denied mankind the freedom to choose which way they want to live. Thankfully, He chose to give all of His children this freedom. However, with free will there is the likelihood that many will choose to rebel and do things their own way. Rebellious choices eventually lead to unhappiness and many other problems. Unless these same children repent, their rebellion will result in spiritual problems, eventually leading to everlasting death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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