

**Pastor Paul Bawden**  
**Grace Evangelical Church**  
**Sunday, November 29, 2009**  
**Message - "God – Just"**  
**Isaiah 45:21; Zephaniah 3:5;**  
**Romans 3:26; I Peter 3:18; I John 1:9**

An old beat up Volkswagen beetle pulls up in front of a church. You could hear it coming for a city block since it needed the muffler replaced. A man gets out of the car dressed in bib overalls that haven't been washed for awhile. His flannel shirt is ragged and dirty. Each shoe has a hole in it so one can see his dirty socks. As he approaches the front door of the church, the greeters open the door for him, but his unusual smell causes them to back off. The ushers see him coming and once they smell his aroma, they back off as well, but direct him to sit in a back seat in the auditorium. They didn't even give the man a bulletin.

A few minutes later a shiny Porsche drives into the church parking lot. A finely dressed man and his wife get out of the car, and walk toward the church. The greeters see them coming, open the door and greet them with a pleasant, "Good Morning." They love the smell of the man's after shave lotion, and they take note of his shining gold ring that he wears. The ushers quickly step forward and give the couple a warm greeting and a bulletin. One of the ushers indicates for the couple to follow him, and he leads them to a vacant pew near the front of the auditorium.

**Such is a true story with a contemporary description taken from what happened in the New Testament church when James wrote his letter in the first century. You can read about it in James the second chapter.**

James tells his readers and us that such action is showing partiality.

And it's easy to fall into that trap isn't it? We see someone that is dressed differently from us, or we encounter someone who is homeless asking for help, and our attitude may be one of disdain. We can even show partiality toward our children, our grandchildren, if we are not careful, or in other settings as we deal differently with people who have a different status in life. Yes, we tend to want to be with those who are successful, but those who aren't so successful, or those less fortunate than we are, we tend to ignore, sometimes even looking down at them.

**As I thought about this, I asked myself these questions, and you can ask yourself the same questions, "Is there someone who never shows partiality? Yes, is there someone who doesn't compare himself with others? Is there someone who always treats people fairly with equity? Yes, "Where is someone who can bring true justice to all the impartiality in our lives and society, who can rectify the injustice that we experience in our lives, and the injustice that is present in the evil world in which we live?"**

**The only answer I could find as I thought through history was the biblical God!**

**Note what the Bible says about the biblical God.**

**I. Scriptures that tell us about the biblical just God.**

**1. In the Old Testament.**

**(1) Isaiah 45:21-22.**

As God speaks through Isaiah to His people, Israel.

**"Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides Me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other."**

**(2) Zephaniah 3:5.**

God is speaking to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**"The LORD is just within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame."**

**(3) Zechariah 9:9.**

Describing prophetically the Lord who will come riding into Jerusalem on a donkey over 500 years later (which we know as Palm Sunday),

**"Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a colt, the foal of a donkey."**

The biblical God is just.

His Son, Jesus Christ, who will come to earth, whose birth we celebrate Christmas Day, is just. As God's eternal Son, Jesus Christ is just.

**2. In the New Testament.**

Refers to God in His work for salvation through Christ, while providing forgiveness for the daily life of the believer in Him.

**(1) Romans 3:26.**

**"For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justified of the one who has faith in Jesus."**

**(2) I Peter 3:18.**

**"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."**

**(3) I John 1:9.**

**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

**II. A definition of the word "just" when describing the biblical God.****1. Old Testament word for "just."**

The main word for "just" in the Old Testament is: "tsaddiq."

It has the same root as the word, "righteous," which we considered last Sunday. So it has the idea of straight as well, of being right, but also the idea of moral equity, of always being fair based upon His righteousness. It can also mean to declare right. God is always fair and balanced in His justice.

That the biblical God is just is expressed in His justice as He acts.

It is well to note that in some translations the word "just" is translated as "righteous."

**2. New Testament word for "just."**

The word for "just" in the New Testament is: "dikaioo."

It means to be morally equitable and fair, without partiality. It can also mean to declare right.

Again, that the biblical God is just is expressed in His justice.

**3. Definition of the word, "just."**

The word, just means to be always morally equitable and fair (a part from any prejudice, or impartiality, or comparison) while it can mean to declare right or righteous.

The biblical God, then, is the "just" God who is in his character a morally equitable and fair God who can make a declaration of righteousness.

We should be very grateful that the biblical God is a just God, for without Him being a “just” God there would be no way for the injustices that happen to our lives, and the injustices in the world to be ever dealt with.

#### **4. Difference between God being righteous and just.**

**Righteous means that God always acts in agreement with His absolute truth. He is right in His person and always does what is right in His action.**

**Just means that God as a righteous God is always morally equitable and fair. His righteousness is never tainted by our sin and rebellion. That means when God makes a judgment, you can count on it always being fair, for He does it in accord with His righteous person, His righteousness.**

**The more we consider the attributes of God, the more, I trust you realize that they are all linked together in the biblical God’s person. It doesn’t seem that God thinks to Himself, now I will be righteous, and now I will be just, or now I will be truth, and now I will act as the all-powerful God, or show my all knowing, and my all presence. In the relationship of the Triunity, the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, act as one in their same attributes to involve themselves in the affairs of men to provide eternal salvation, and to develop the on-going plan that God has for the world and for eternity.**

**There is no other God like the biblical God. That’s why God said through the prophet Isaiah that we referred to a few moments ago – Isaiah 45:21-22**

**“Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides Me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.”**

**The biblical God is a just God. Is God’s justice on display in history?**

### **III. The biblical just God in action.**

#### **1. In the Old Testament.**

##### **(1) The ejection of the star of the morning – Satan from heaven.**

**Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 12-19.**

When, the star of the morning, now called Satan or the Devil, decided that he wanted to be God, to take over as being number one in the universe, God ejected him from heaven and Satan took with him other angels called demons today. Obviously God displayed His justice here, acting in judgment that was right because Satan as a created angel could not be redeemed. God’s justice could only eject the evil one from heaven. He could no longer be in the presence of the righteous God.

##### **(2) The Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-3).**

**Did God show that He was a just God in dealing with Adam and Eve after they disobeyed Him in the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Delight?**

**Definitely. He could have taken their lives, for He told them that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. They had never seen death physically and spiritually, so they may not have understood the consequences of disobeying the Lord. But God could have taken those words literally, taken their lives, and started over again with another couple.**

**But He didn’t. Why? He was their Creator, and He loved them. At the same time, as a just God, He had to deal with their disobedience. How could a just God do that? He provided a sacrifice through the shed blood of the animals and whose skins were used as clothing for Adam and Eve. Through the shedding of blood, the life of the animals being given, God could now provide forgiveness in His mercy, not giving them what they deserved (forgiveness rather than judgment) as well as grace, giving them what they didn’t deserve (His unmerited favor). Of course this all looked forward to the coming of Christ and what He would do for all the world through His death, burial, and bodily resurrection.**

**Since they disobeyed the Lord, sin came into the human race, and Adam and Eve could not live in the Garden of Delight in a sinful state. God drove them out of the Garden (Genesis 3:24). The justice of the biblical God, the mercy of God, yet the consequence for their sin continuing on into our day, and until God destroys the old earth, judges all sinners at the Great White Throne judgment and creates a new heaven and earth.**

**But in the Garden in embryo form, we see how the biblical God was going to display His justice down through time. He was a just God but through the sacrifice of shedding blood, since the life was in the blood, and the wages of sin is death, God would be able to display His justice without in anyway compromising His justice, His righteousness and holiness, and in the process provide forgiveness for mankind who had rebelled against HIM.**

### **(3) Noah's Day (Genesis 6-9).**

In Noah's day, man had become so wicked that God had to step in lest man would destroy himself. In the midst of this cesspool of debauchery, God found one man and his family who was "righteous" before God – that is with God's help by faith lived up to God's standard of doing what was right before Him. In order to keep the line of the Savior alive; God used Noah to build that mammoth boat. God used Noah to preach His righteousness to the people for 120 years while the ark was being built. No one responded to the message to repent and turn to the Lord. No one accepted God's mercy and grace. God in His justice then, saved Noah and his family in the ark, who had responded to His love by faith. They were saved, but the others who rejected the Lord died in the flood. God's justice, with His mercy completely displayed – fair and balanced.

### **(4) Abraham's Day (Genesis 18).**

In Genesis 18 we have the encounter between the LORD and Abraham, where the Lord tells Abraham that because of the wickedness of Sodom and Gommorah He is going to destroy the cities. But notice the words that God spoke of Abraham, "The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham about what I am to do, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, in order hat the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him" (Genesis 18:17-19).

**Knowing that his nephew Lot and family lived in Sodom, Abraham began asking the Lord if he would destroy the city if 50 righteous people lived there. Then Abraham made this famous statement:**

**"Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?"**

Abraham knew that the biblical God who came to him was a just God and would act in justice regarding the sin of Sodom and Gommorah.

The conversation continues, and finally Abraham asks the Lord if he would destroy the city if there were ten righteous people there. When the Lord leaves, it is obvious that there are not ten righteous who follow the Lord seeking to do what is right before HIM. God then sent two angels to the city, and finally Lot, his wife and two daughters escaped, but Lot's wife looked back, which God told them not to do, and turned into a pillar of salt.

**Yes, the just biblical God acted in justice, but at the same time offering His mercy to the righteous.**

### **(5) Moses' Day (Exodus 32-34).**

**After the incident of Israel making the golden calf while Moses was in the Mount receiving the Ten Commandments, God told Moses that He would destroy them (Exodus 32:10), and make for Moses an entirely new nation.**

**What did Moses do? He certainly knew that the biblical God was a just God, but what did he do when he heard these words from the Lord? He appealed to God's eternal covenant with Abraham that God would be faithful to His people even though they were disobedient at times. Then In Exodus 34:6-7. Moses appealed to the Lord on the basis of His lovingkindness, His hesed, His mercies which are new ever morning. God, although He brought judgment on the people, did not destroy the people, but renewed the covenant with Moses and Israel, as God gave Moses a new Ten**

**Commandments on Mt. Sinai, with in His justice wrapped in mercy, providing His forgiveness with a recommitment to Moses and the people of Israel.**

**In fact that's what the sacrificial system was all about which was looking forward to Christ as the final sacrifice for sin. The sacrifices were an atonement, a covering, so God could be just in forgiving the offerer, just in mercy (Leviticus 17:11) – the shed blood was an atonement for their souls. That's why there was a mercy seat on top of the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies – It was where the justice and mercy of God came together through the blood of the sacrifice to make a covering for sin, a forgiveness of sin.**

**(6) King David's Day (II Samuel 7ff).**

In II Samuel 7, God makes that Davidic Covenant with David that He would have an eternal seed who would reign on His throne. What mercy God showed to David. A bit later David commits adultery with Bathsheba. God's justice is clearly shown in David's disobedience to God in also being involved in the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. The child by Bathsheba dies. David is forgiven, God's grace, but the consequences in David's family are devastating to him and the kingdom. Mercy, justice, mercy, the consequence of sin clearly seen, even though there was justice and mercy displayed.

**(7)The entire history of Israel.**

**The entire history of Israel is one of God's justice, mercy, and grace. Due to the northern kingdom's (Israel) disobedience, God sends them into captivity by the Assyrians (721 B.C.). God's justice displayed.**

**Then in 606, 596, 586 B.C. God sends the southern kingdom, Judah, into Babylonian Captivity with the promise that after 70 years, He would return His people. Here we see God's mixing again, his justice and His mercy along with His grace.**

**God's justice and mercy with His people in the Old Testament is clearly seen.**

**2. In the New Testament.**

**(1)Look at the life of Jesus Christ.**

**He was the just ONE. Did He display justice?**

**\*\*How did Jesus treat the Pharisees? (Matthew 23).**

**He told them that they were hypocrites because they used their position and power as jurists to adjust claims against wealthy widows, or to convince them to leave them their wealthy estates. The Pharisees were interested in the letter of law, but inside they were unclean and full of lawlessness.**

**They did not repent and turn to the Lord. Christ showed them no mercy, and God's justice eventually acted as they missed the kingdom of God.**

**\*\*How did Jesus treat the woman at the well (John 4).**

**He exposed her for her immorality, but when she began asking questions, Jesus pointed her to Himself as the Living Water. She placed her faith in Jesus. He displayed His justice all wrapped up in His mercy.**

**Other examples of Jesus justice, and then His justice wrapped in His mercy. The man born blind in John 9. The woman taken in adultery. Peter – Christ showed justice to Peter, when he tried to tell the Lord that He shouldn't die. Jesus told Peter to get behind Him, "Satan." (Matthew 16:18-23). He was thinking like men not like God. Later when Peter betrayed the Lord, the Lord looked at Him, and Peter went out and wept bitterly (justice) – Luke 22:61-62). After His bodily resurrection, Jesus restored Peter to fellowship and service (John 21:15-17) – mercy and grace.**

**(2)Look at the work of Jesus Christ.**

**Being just culminated in His death, burial and bodily resurrection.**

**That's why Jesus kept telling his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be rejected, die, and rise again the third day. John the Baptist recognized His ultimate mission when he saw Christ and declared, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."**

**How would this all happen?**

**\*\*There is the JUST God.**

**\*\*There is the JUST Jesus Christ.**

**\*\*Then there are UNJUST humans** – for there is “none righteous, no not one” (Romans 3:10). Which means that since we are all in Adam we can not do anything justly that can please the Lord. For “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, His standard of holiness” (Romans 3:23).

Again, as unrighteous people are separated from the righteous biblical God as we saw last week, so unjust people are separated from the JUST GOD.

**\*\*Question: Can the JUST GOD ever get together, have fellowship, with unjust people?**

**\*\*Answer: Romans 3:26** – “For the demonstration, I say of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

God is the JUST ONE here and the JUSTIFIER – meaning to declare righteous, a legal term, of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**\*\*How can God be the JUST ONE, and the JUSTIFIER of the one who has faith in Jesus?**

**(1) We need to always know and remember who Jesus is.**

**He declared Himself to be in John 8:58** – The I AM, meaning that He always existed. He was eternal. That’s is why the Jews took up stones to stone Him, because He declared that He was God.

John in the first verses of His Gospel told us that the Word, who was Christ, was God, meaning deity.

At the same time Jesus was human, sinless humanity – He did no sin, neither was any deceit found in His mouth (I Peter 2:22).

This, of course is what Christmas is all about. God’s eternal Son took upon Himself sinless humanity – The Incarnation – the Grand Miracle.

**(2) We need to always know and remember what Jesus did.**

As the God-man, he could do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

**Peter puts it this way in I Peter 3:18.**

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just (who is Jesus) for the unjust (us – all humanity), so that He might bring us to God, put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, that is with resurrection life.”

Jesus, then, the JUST ONE, was made sin for us, took our place (**our substitute**) to be our sin bearer, really made unjust for us in His sinless humanity, so that God’s justice, His holiness and wrath of judgment, would be satisfied, or propitiated as Romans 3:25 tells us.

Now God can declare the unjust sinner, justified, - declared righteous. He can do it without tainting any of His justice and righteousness, for Jesus satisfies God’s justice, while providing the person the privilege to be declared justified or righteous before God.

**(3) We need to know what we need to do.**

When does that happen? What does the text say?

**Romans 3:26 – When one has faith in Jesus – when one realizes that he is unjust before God and reaches out in faith and accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, the unjust person is now justified declared righteous before God.**

**Now the person who was an enemy of God is God's friend.**

There is the word, **substitution** in I Peter 3:18 -The Just Jesus Christ dies in the place of the unjust sinner to provide justification

There is the word, **redemption**, in Romans 3:24 – Christ's redemption for us is toward sin – sin's penalty has been paid.

Then there is the word, **propitiation** in Romans 3:25 – toward God - that means Christ's death satisfied the righteous demands of the Holy God - He is satisfied with the death of Christ.

Then there is the word, **justified** in Romans 3:24 – toward one's legal standing before God - as we mentioned meaning to declare righteous.

But there is another word as well in Romans 5:10 – **reconciliation** – toward us - which means to be changed from being an unjust person, a sinner, an enemy of God, to being a friend of God – it means to converted, to make a 180 degree turn from not following God to following Him through faith.

The **JUST Jesus** is the one who stands in the gap between the Just God and the unjust sinner, as the sinner's substitute. The Just Jesus provides us the opportunity through faith in Him to be justified – declared righteous before the holy God.

**Amazing grace! Amazing Love! Phenomenal mercy!** Paul extols that love of God in Romans 8. In I Timothy 1, Paul writes that he can never get over God's mercy to him who was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent aggressor. If you read the book of Revelation, when John begins to receive the vision of what is happening in heaven, what is one of the sights that he sees? People and beings praising God, yes, the Lamb of God who was slain and now is resurrected. He has won salvation for everyone who believes in Jesus.

#### **IV. The biblical just God at work in the life of the believer.**

##### **1. Make sure that one knows the Just Jesus Christ as personal Savior (Romans 3:26. 22).**

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, it is good once and a while to revisit when you made that decision for Christ. It seals again that decision you made for Christ to accept Him as Savior and live for Him.

That's why Paul, as we mentioned in I Timothy 1, talks about his conversion experience. Then in II Timothy 1, he talks to Timothy that He was saved with a holy calling, and he knows whom he has believed and is persuaded that He is able to keep that which he has committed unto him against that day.

We are to rejoice in the Lord as Paul told the Philippians – the JUST JESUS CHRIST HAS DELCARED US JUSTIFIED BEFORE THE JUST GOD – WE NOW ARE HIS FRIENDS WITH MOMENT BY MOMENT ACCESS TO HIS VERY PRESENCE.

##### **2. The believer in the Just Jesus is to live by faith not by sight. (Romans 1:17; II Corinthians 5:7).**

**Paul told the Romans, quoting from Habakkuk 2:4 – "The just, the righteous shall live by faith." Paul in II Corinthians 5:7 wrote, "We live by faith, not by sight."**

Paul is not talking about accepting Christ as personal Savior, which comes by faith. But living daily by faith in the Lord and His word as the believer lives for HIM.

**For FAITH is taking God at His Word and acting on it. It is not foolishness such as building a tower without considering the cost. We have the promise of God that His Spirit lives within us. We have the promise of God that His Spirit empowers us. We have the promise in God's Word that He is always with us. We have the promise that God hears our prayers and will answer in His will.**

We have the promise that as we give a portion of our monies to the Lord's work that He will use these monies for eternal purposes, and will supply our needs as we live by faith.

We don't experience the reality of these many promises, until we by faith take a hold of the promise and act upon that promise.

I received a publication this week from a mission organization in which a former pastor of mine and his wife have been faithful servants of the Lord. In this particular issue, this man and his wife were shown to have been honored by the Association of North American Missions Executive Forum (ANAM) with "The Life-Time Commitment AWARD.

These two people lived not by faith but by sight. May that be how we live, although not always easy, it is rewarding because the Lord is in control and blesses us for our faithfulness.

**3. When the believer in Christ sins, he or she is to confess that sin to the Lord, and go on in fellowship with the Lord serving Him (I John 1:9).**

When we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we have sinned against someone else we are to go to the person and ask that person's forgiveness before asking God's forgiveness.

**4. The believer in the Just Jesus has His view of people here and now (Romans 3:22).**

**(1) The basis for this.**

Note what Romans 3:22 says again.

"Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe, for there is no distinction."

Paul penned this as well in Romans 10: 12-13.

"For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek (Gentile) for the same Lord is Lord of all, abundant in riches for all who call on Him; **for whoever will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (quote from Joel 2:32).**

Jesus started stretching out the disciples to think more than Jewish by going through Samaria where Jews did not travel, and then talking to the Samaritan woman at the well. Then Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan who helped the robbed man while the Jewish religious leaders passed by.

After Pentecost, God had some learning for Peter. Yes, he could take the gospel to the Jews, but to the Gentiles. God stretched Peter out through a vision, when he was hungry, giving him unclean animals and birds which a Jew would not eat, but God told him what he had cleansed was clean.

Then Cornelius, a Gentile, directed by an angel, showed up where Peter was staying and asked for him to come to his house to give to them a message.

Peter went the next day to the house of Cornelius, where Peter told those gathered about the JUST JESUS who forgives sins. Those there believed on Jesus, God's Spirit came upon them and they were water baptized.

When Peter arrived in Jerusalem, he was questioned about what happened with the Gentiles. He explained to them what happened, and they accepted Peter's report and rejoiced that God was granting repentance to the Gentiles. Still Peter had challenges in this area as indicated in Galatians 2:11ff).

**The Just Jesus was made unjust for all peoples so that any who believe in Him could be declared righteous.**

**Paul in Ephesians 2 explains that the wall of partition (the wall that separated the Gentiles from the Court of the Jews in the temple), that wall between the Jew and Gentile has been broken down**

through the cross, burial, and bodily resurrection. Now Just Jesus brings together both Jew and Gentile into one body, the church, through faith in Jesus. Both have access to the same heavenly Father.

Again, it's the JUST Jesus who not only provides justification for all who believe in Him, but He breaks down any distinctions between people, for the gospel is for all people!

## (2) The outworking of this.

- ∞ The JUST Jesus' gospel message is for all people (Acts 1:8).
- ∞ The JUST Jesus' gospel must be shared with all people – Christ said for us to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).
- ∞ We must see all peoples like JUST Jesus does. This means that regardless of one's ethnicity, one's background, one's status in life, we must see people as Jesus does needing a shepherd (Matthew 9:36-38).
- ∞ All racial barriers are gone. Racism has no place in the Just Jesus' mind and heart. Such should have no place in the believer's mind and heart, who possesses the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16), and the love of Christ (Romans 5:5). Jesus loves all people and so should we. Jesus is color blind. We look on the outside, as Samuel did in selecting a king for Israel, but God told Samuel that God looks at the heart. Yes, Jesus loves all the children of the world, red, yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight.
- ∞ Partiality and comparing ourselves among ourselves is sin before God (James 2:9). That's why James says that showing partiality to the rich over the poor is against God's justice, it is sin. God shows no partiality. Showing partiality is breaking God's law just as adultery and murder break God's law.

5. The believer in the JUST Jesus will in God's time see His justice displayed completely (Romans 12:19; I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10; II Thessalonians 1:4-10).

### (1) Romans 10:19 – God will bring justice.

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

Circumstances at times seem unfair in our lives as believers. Relationships break up. Families become fractured. But God does not overlook such happenings. Yes, there is God's forgiveness to those who turn to Him. God, though keeps the books for believers.

### (2) I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10 – at the judgment seat of Christ for believers.

All believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of what they did for Christ while on earth. Some will get into heaven, but their works will be burned up – meaning that they did not live for the Lord while alive on planet earth. They lived for themselves. God's justice always prevails although there was mercy for the believer entered God's presence.

### (3) II Thessalonians 1:4-10 – God brings His justice against those who afflict the righteous and those who reject Christ.

#### \*\*The unrighteous who afflict the righteous.

In this passage Paul tells the Thessalonians who were suffering for their faith from unbelievers that the just God will bring His justice against those who have been persecuting them.

"This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you" (II Thessalonians 1:5-6).

Think of those who have been persecuted for Christ down through time, and those being persecuted for Christ today, some becoming martyrs for their faith. Their day of retribution and judgment is coming. They will be sent to the lake of fire.

**\*\*Those who reject the JUST Jesus' JUSTIFICATION – His forgiveness and grace.**

Then in II Thessalonians 1:8 the text reads that God will bring retribution, His judgment on those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. They will be sent from the presence of the Lord when He returns – that is ultimately to the lake of fire to be punished forever and ever.

Such seems from our human viewpoint that God is acting unjustly. But He is not acting unjustly.

Remember that God is JUST and the JUSTIFIER of the one who believes in Jesus Christ as His personal Savior. Those who believe in Jesus are declared righteous before God and can live for Him in the power of the Spirit of God. Those who don't accept Jesus as personal Savior, are not justified, but remain in the state of being unjust, sinners before God, bound for a Christ-less eternity.

There is no doubt that the biblical God is a just God and He acts with justice, but always includes His grace and mercy for those who reach out by faith and accept the JUST JESUS as personal Savior.

Then as justified people, believers in Christ can show forth His justice, not showing partiality, not comparing one's self with others, but seeking in the Holy Spirit's power to show for the love of Jesus Christ to individuals, to members of one's family, to those in the church family, and to those who know not the Savior whether at work, at school, and in the neighborhood.

In fact God says that we who have been justified by faith in the Just Jesus are blessed.

Hear the words of the Psalmist (106:3).

**"How blessed are those who keep justice, who practice righteousness at all times."**

Dodie Gadiant, a schoolteacher for thirteen years, decided to travel across America and see the sights she had taught about. Traveling alone in a truck with camper in tow, she launched out. One afternoon rounding a curve on I-5 near Sacramento in rush-hour traffic, a water pump blew on her truck. She was tired, exasperated, scared, and alone. In spite of the traffic jam she caused, no one seemed interested in helping.

Leaning up against the trailer, she prayed, "Please God, send me an angel . . . preferably one with mechanical experience."

Within four minutes, a huge Harley drove up, ridden by an enormous man sporting long, black hair, a beard and tattooed arms. With an incredible air of confidence, he jumped off and, without even glancing at Dodie, went to work on the truck. Within another few minutes, he flagged down a larger truck, attached a tow chain to the frame of the disabled Chevy, and whisked the whole 56-foot rig off the freeway onto a side street, where he calmly continued to work on the water pump.

The intimidated schoolteacher was too dumbfounded to talk. Especially when she read the paralyzing words on the back of his leather jacket: 'Hell's Angels -- California'. As he finished the task, she finally got up the courage to say, "Thanks so much," and carry on a brief conversation. Noticing her surprise at the whole ordeal, he looked her straight in the eye and mumbled, "Don't judge a book by its cover. You may not know who you're talking to." With that, he smiled, closed the hood of the truck, and straddled his Harley. With a wave, he was gone as fast as he had appeared.

**Yes, Lord, help us this week to practice your justice and righteousness in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we can experience your blessings, that it is more blessed to give than to receive.**

