

HUE AND CRY: Just Justice

by Mark Huey posted 27 March, 2006 www.outreachisrael.net

In these days of ever-increasing turmoil, as the world sometimes appears to be on a collision course with self-destruction, it is critical to understand that the God of Creation is not blind to what His creatures are doing. Nothing happens, whether evil or good, without His permission. A perfectly just God never sleeps nor slumbers (Psalm 121:4), and His eyes constantly survey all things:

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3).

As an omniscient, all-knowing Creator, the Lord is totally aware of not only the seen actions of every man and woman on Earth, but also the hidden intentions of each person’s heart:

“For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and **He sees all his steps**” (Job 34:21).

“The LORD looks from heaven; **He sees all** the sons of men; from His dwelling place He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who understands all their works” (Psalm 33:13-15).

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things** are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12-13).

Understanding that God **knows and sees all things** is difficult to fathom. In fact, the concept of *omniscience*, while explicable in abstract terms, is completely beyond human ability to fully comprehend—let alone imitate—no matter how brilliant the mind or massive the computer memory.

As finite creatures who believe in the Almighty God, we must admit two things. **First, we are limited creatures who are in desperate need of God’s mercy and perfect justice. Second, we must concede that our limitations are designed for our benefit**, even if we do not fully understand why. After all, was it not the Creator Himself who declared, after completing the transformation of dust into the first human, that all was *tov meod* (טוֹב מְאֹד) or “very good” (Genesis 1:31)?

The remark that God’s Creation is “very good” was made before Adam transgressed in the Garden in order to “be like God,” knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5, 22). As Believers, we understand from our study of the Holy Scriptures that man is partially blinded by the knowledge of comparative good and evil, because of our predetermined limitations. Fallen humanity operates on a basis of relative goodness versus relative evil. Believers must all agree, like David the Psalmist admits in Psalms 14 and 53, that no one truly “does good”:

“The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; **there is no one who does good, not even one**” (Psalm 14:2-3).

“‘There is no God,’ they are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; there is no one who does good. God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there is anyone who understands, who seeks after God. Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; **there is no one who does good, not even one**” (Psalm 53:1-3).

How is humanity going to be “just,” given our propensity to evil and gross limitations?

The Apostle Paul quotes from these passages in his letter to the Romans, describing the bankrupt sinful nature of man versus **God’s perfect judgment** of His Creation. Paul reminds us that our omniscient Creator is absolutely truthful, but that **all** are liars, whether they admit it or not:

“**Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar**, as it is written, ‘THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.’ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! **For otherwise, how will God judge the world?** But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), ‘Let us do evil that good may come’? Their condemnation is just. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, ‘**THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE**’” (Romans 3:2-12).

Thankfully, the brilliant mind of the Apostle Paul simplifies the realization what every person must first deal with in order to be absolutely honest about his or her fallen nature:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Once this is understood, the path to faith in the propitiation that God has provided in the bloody sacrifice of our Messiah Yeshua becomes attainable. One must recognize his or her sinful nature. One must admit his or her limitations as a fallen creature. A person must acknowledge that God is infinite in His knowledge of all things and that **only He can execute perfect justice**. In His mercy, He gave us the righteous requirements contained in the Torah and the Prophets (Romans 3:21). **According to the Scriptures, God’s righteousness requires a righteous sacrifice**. This sacrifice has been fully realized in Yeshua’s completed work at Golgotha (Calvary):

“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, **so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God**; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Messiah Yeshua for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Messiah Yeshua; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. ***This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 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 Yeshua.*** Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? **No, but by a law of faith.** For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law” (Romans 3:19-31).

Lamentably, the majority of humanity that currently resides on this planet does not take these words of Paul to heart. The complexities of the fallen nature still continue to plague even those who are born from above and seeking to live by faith. Remember, even Paul himself admits later in this letter that he continues to struggle with the battle between the indwelling Spirit of God and his fallen nature in Adam:

“For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, **but I am doing the very thing I hate**. But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. **For I know that nothing good dwells in me**, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. **For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want**. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle **that evil is present in me**, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. **Wretched man that I am!** Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Messiah Yeshua our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, **with my flesh the law of sin**” (Romans 7:15-25).¹

Are we as Believers in the Twenty-First Century any different than Paul? Do we not struggle with similar challenges in our various walks? When it comes to the subject of justice, is it possible for **even** those filled with the Holy Spirit to be perfectly just? According to the Holy Scriptures, every person is a liar—or at a minimum—partially deceived by the fallen nature. Certainly, God alone knows the

¹ Editor’s note: There is some considerable variance among interpreters today concerning Paul’s remarks in Romans 7:14-21. Many have adopted the view that Paul is *not* speaking about himself, per se, but rather an imaginary, hypothetical Believer who is struggling with sin per the rhetorical usage of prosopopeia. Is the person is described who struggles between the desires of the flesh and the will of God the Apostle Paul? Is Paul himself spiritually immature, wanting to do the things he should not do, and not wanting to do the things he should do? Or, is he speaking of a person who is an exception, a Believer regenerated by the Holy Spirit but is struggling through the sanctification process?

For a further discussion of these, and related issues, consult the article “The Most Influential Letter Ever Written” by J.K. McKee

intentions of one's heart. Even though from the outside, one's actions may indicate godly motivations, only God ultimately knows what is truly moving people to various activities.

When justice is involved, human beings can only seek justice on relative terms. This is where man's common view of "good and evil" comes into the equation. Realistically, since even true Believers are looking through a mirror dimly, the challenges to be perfectly just are staggering. Perhaps these realities coalesced Paul's thoughts for him to conclude that exhibiting *agape* love, rather than pursuing justice, is the paramount expression of our walk of faith:

"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:12-13).

When you read this, you realize that Paul speaks of abiding in faith, hope, and love. These are characteristics which demonstrate that God alone will execute His perfect justice, and continue to extend mercy and compassion on His children. But it is the expression or "fruit" of *agape* love that will, in and of itself, be the truest indicator of a heart that is following the urgings of the Holy Spirit. After all, unconditional *agape* love is the first fruit listed in Paul's description of the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

In conclusion, I ask you to remember some of the words spoken by the Messiah Himself when He admonished His Disciples about attempting to execute judgment on one another. Yeshua understood the limitations of fallen man, and pointed out the hypocrisy of those who seek to judge others:

"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. **For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.** Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

These are incredibly insightful words to contemplate. If you truly think through the consequences of your judgment of others—recognizing that you are often only seeing outward actions—perhaps you would see that you are unable to know the intentions of one's heart. Likewise, perhaps you would also see how you would be accountable to a similar measure of judgment. As a result would your own judgment of others be minimized, if not eliminated?

God alone is just. Only He can exact just justice. We need to leave the ultimate judgment to Him, and spend more time on letting *agape* love usher forth from our hearts in actions that imitate the sacrificial love that Yeshua demonstrated for the world. By loving others we testify of the good news of salvation to the entire world, as we attempt to comprehend the ultimate expression of justice from the Scriptures:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

This is just justice beyond our understanding, but still requiring our full belief!

Until the restoration of all things...

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