

HIS GREAT JUSTICE

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Recently I was conducting a Bible study with a lady when she said, “My mom and dad were good, religious people but they never obeyed the gospel as I have just learned. Will they still go to heaven?” My reply was: **First**, God is the judge, not me. Judgment on the last day is a prerogative of the Divine, not human. **Second**, God is a *just* judge. We can be assured that He will be fair in his judgment of the human family. **Third**, God has revealed his will for humanity on the pages of the Bible. Within this revelation God makes it clear who is and who is not going to heaven. Those who fail or refuse to obey the truth of the gospel will ultimately suffer eternal punishment away from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:7-9). I made the appeal that God is *just*. The fact that God is just in no way contradicts his punishing the disobedient. She accepted the explanation. This woman eventually obeyed the gospel.

God is just. He is righteous. In English the terms *righteousness* and *justice* are different words. But in both Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek there is only one word group behind these two English terms. In the Old Testament the terms primarily translate forms of the *tsedek* word group. In the New Testament the words are derived from members of the *dikaioi* word group. Therefore, these two terms, *righteousness* and *justice* should be considered together when teaching this one attribute of God. Speaking of God, Moses says, “For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He ” (Deut. 32:4). Abraham appeals to God’s own character of righteousness when he declares, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). What does the Bible mean when it speaks of God being “just” and “righteous”? Simply this: God always acts in accordance with what is **just** and is himself the final standard of what is **right**.

The Bible teaches that God is an absolutely holy being (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). He is utterly separate from evil. The Lord’s holiness not only implies that he cannot commit sin (Jas. 1:13), it also means that he cannot ignore sin as if it never happened. Thus, it is necessary that God punish sin, for it does not deserve reward. Since sin is wrong it deserves punishment. God’s great justice demands it. God’s administration of his wrath coincides with his just and holy character. Scripture affirms that the outpouring of divine wrath on the ungodly is a “revelation of the *righteous* judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5; emp. supp.).

In his book, *Why I Am Not A Christian*, the late Bertrand Russell, a renowned British agnostic, cited one of the reasons for his unbelief was that Jesus taught there is an eternal hell for the wicked. The “problem” with reconciling eternal retribution with the justness of God is also reflected in the teachings of such religious groups as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and the World Wide Church of God (Armstrongism). Even churches of Christ have a few apostate preachers among us that have begun to teach the erroneous “no hell” theory. Indeed, the Lord did teach that there is an eternal hell. The term *gehenna* appears approximately a dozen times in the New Testament. Jesus uses it every time with one exception. If there is a preacher in the New Testament that preached on hell more than any other person that would be Jesus. He taught that those who are disobedient to the Divine will incur the wrath of God and thus be punished eternally in hell.

Most people who promote the “no eternal punishment” error do so because of their notion that such is at variance with Divine justice. They suppose that a just God and an eternal hell are mutually exclusive. Not so. Such is not contradictory at all if one is willing to take what God has revealed about himself on the pages of the Bible. What is at odds is the unbeliever’s own misperception of God’s justice. The issue of God’s great justice and the everlasting punishment of the wicked must be settled by an appeal to the inspired word of God, the Bible, and not human reasoning and speculation.

SOURCES

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Wayne Jackson, “Why Would a Loving God Send Us to Hell?” *ChristianCourier.com*. Access date: February 17, 2016. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles>.