



Foundation of the Christian Faith

Course: Salvation

Introductory Lesson One

Title: Just and the Justifier

Text: Romans 3:25-26, 'Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

Introduction:

Question: Can God do anything?

No - There are things that God cannot do.

God cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13 '...He cannot deny Himself'.

He must be righteous in His actions.

The name Yahweh or Jehovah (Hebrew: YHVH **hwhy**) means 'The One who is who He is'.

In Exodus 3:14 He is called I AM THAT I AM

If God ever did something contrary to His nature He would cease to be who He is.

Question: Can God allow sin to go unpunished?

No – God must punish sin.

God must condemn the sinner.

The love and mercy of God can never contradict the holiness of God.

Holiness can never condone sin.

Yet mercy desires to forgive.

If God forgives the sinner but leaves sin unpunished then God is unrighteous. He has denied Himself.

Yet God forgave sins even before the crucifixion.

In the gospels (Mark 2:5).

In the Old Testament. Psalm 103:3, 'Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;'

God must be just when He justifies His people. Romans 3:26 'To declare, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.'

God's promise of salvation meant He had to be both just and the justifier of His people.

The promise - God promised in the Garden of Eden that He would send a Redeemer who would be a descendant of Eve (Genesis 3:15). But it appeared impossible for God to be both 'just and the justifier' of His people. He could only be just if His people were legally justified.

The problem - The Fall of Adam (Genesis 3) could not be eradicated. Once Adam and Eve were joined to sin this union was irreversible. Even God could not separate Adam from sin. Every descendant of Adam inherited this irreversible union with sin.

The conundrum - How could God ever be just to justify a people who were irreversibly joined to sin? Even the angels could not understand how God could do this.

Introductory Illustration: A contradictory argument.

Philosophy tries to show that God does not exist by a contradictory argument. Here is the reasoning that is used.

Can God create a stone He cannot lift?

If God can't create it then He is not all powerful.

If God can't lift it then He is not all powerful.

Conclusion: It is not possible to perform both therefore an all powerful God does not exist.

The error of this logic is that it is based upon a wrong concept of the nature of God. The attribute of omnipotence does not mean God can perform any task.

Omnipotence means He is in control of all things and is able to cause everything to work for the good according to His divine plan and purpose (Romans 8:28).

The paradox of God.

God is holy and He must condemn sin.

God is love and desires to forgive.

Sin can only be justly forgiven when the law has been satisfied.

If God shows mercy with disregard to His holiness then He is denying Himself.
In order for God to be just in forgiving His people, He must also justify (legally) His people.
This was impossible because mankind could never be separated from sin.

Main Points

1. War in heaven.

Satan attacks the nature and character of God.
It is amazing how much we can see in scripture.
How could Lucifer fight God?
He does not have the resources.
Lucifer is a created being and God can destroy him in an instant.

Jesus did not come to destroy the devil. He came to destroy the works of the devil.
1 John 3:8, 'He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'

Satan's reasoning

Satan attempted to make God deny Himself.
He saw his opportunity because nothing could change Adam and Eve's sinful condition.
Even God could not change the fact that Adam and Eve were sinful.
Their condition was irreversible – they would die in their sins.

The death of God

In promising salvation Satan thought God was promising what He could not rightly do.
Satan saw the love of God for the sinner contradicting the righteousness of God.
If God was not acting righteously because of His love, then He was not being holy,
He was not the unchanging God - He had changed in character.
Conclusion: The I AM THAT I AM no longer existed because God had denied Himself. Therefore God is dead.

Illustration: September 11, 2001.

The terrorists did not have the resources to attack the US from the sky. They sought to destroy the institutions on which the US depends by using the resources of the US in a destructive manner. To achieve their goal there needed to be a weakness in the structure. They found the weakness in security checking.

Lucifer used these tactics to war against God. He did not have the resources to fight God but He tried to attack God through His own nature and character.

2. The Accuser – attacking the nature and character of God.

Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. His accusation was against the promise of God to His people. Through this he sought to attack the very nature and character of God. Revelation 12:10, 'And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.'

Question: Why did Satan accuse God's people?
To accuse God of being unjust in His dealings with His people.
For at least 4000 years Satan accused God of justifying an unrighteous people and God kept silent, but little by little He revealed to His prophets what He would do.

Note: When we are spoken against unjustly it is something God understands very well. For at least 4000 years God allowed Satan to accuse Him of being unjust. Matthew 5:11-12, 'Blessed are you, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.'

Moses

God showed Moses all the promised land from Mount Nebo in Moab. Then Moses died on the mountain and God buried him. Deut 34:6, 'And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knows of his sepulchre unto this day.'

But Jude tells us more. He quotes from the Book of Enoch
Jude 9 'Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.'

What is this all about?
Well Moses instituted the law and the Aaronic priesthood. But the law can only condemn it cannot save and the sacrifices offered by the priests could not cleanse from sin.

Moses was a murderer and his sin was not removed, yet God said he was righteous.
Even the angels could not understand how God could justify His people, '...things the angels desire to look into.' 1 Peter 1:12b, Michael did not argue with the accuser but just said 'the Lord rebuke you'.

Joshua the High Priest (Zechariah 3).

Joshua as the High Priest represents all of God's people.

Satan is accusing all of God's people when he accuses the High Priest.

Zechariah 3:1-3, 'And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.'

The reason Satan accuses God's people is because he is accusing God of denying His holy character.
Satan's accusations are an attack against the nature of God.

3. God is declared to be just. (Romans 3:25-26)

The finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross declares the righteousness of God in justifying His people both now and in the past.

God is seen to be righteous in forgiving His people in the Old Testament. His love has never contradicted His righteousness.
'...to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;' (Romans 3:25b).

He is just in declaring His people to be righteous.

'...that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' (Romans 3:26).

How did God do it?

He did not make the old better.

The Old is crucified with Christ and buried with Christ.

If any person is in Christ they are a new creation.

Colossians 2:13-15 explains it like this:

Sins forgiven v13

The law satisfied v14

The accuser silenced v15

'And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

The devil did not understand why Jesus came.

The demons knew Him, Matthew 8:29 'And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? are you come hither to torment us before the time?'

They tried to understand why he had come. They thought he had come to execute judgment before the final judgment.

The princes would not have crucified Jesus had they known.

The princes are earthly rulers but it also refers to spiritual powers because they are the instigators of their actions.

1 Corinthians 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*; they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Satan can no longer accuse God's people in the presence of God.

The cross declares the righteousness of God in His mercy towards them.

Satan can still make personal accusations against us but we are to put on the armour of God and resist him by standing on the Word of God.

Summary:

God is seen to be just in His dealings with His people.

1) God must be just when He justifies His people. War in heaven – God cannot deny Himself. His love and mercy cannot deny His holiness.

2) The promise of God regarding salvation appeared impossible to fulfil. How could God justify His people when they were united with sin and by nature children of wrath? Satan's accusation against the people of God was an attack upon the promise of God to forgive them.

3) The finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross has declared the righteousness of God in His dealings with His people. God is and always has been just in forgiving His people. He is shown to be just in forgiving sins before the crucifixion because of His foreknowledge.