

# GOD IS HOLY & JUST

## The Communicable Attributes of God, Part 2 of 3

**Theme:** God's attributes ought to cause us to fear Him and then to flee to Him... in order to follow Him!

**God is a Person (a personal Being) and therefore He has "attributes" (characteristics of how He is).**

- Because of that, part of "knowing God" is learning what He is like—it is growing in our knowledge and understanding of His attributes.

**God's attributes can be understood in two broad categories:**

1. The incommunicable attributes of God: These are the characteristics of God that He shares with no one and nothing—these are the attributes that makes God GOD (e.g., omnipresence, omnipotence, etc.).
2. The communicable attributes of God: These are the characteristics that He has shared with (communicated to) us, those who are made in His image.

**Last week we looked at the communicable attribute of God's love.**

- God is love and God loved the world (the most full and complete manifestation of that love is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross).
- And since God "communicated" this attribute to us, we ought to love also: We ought to love God (salvation and sanctification—our love is manifest in our submission and obedience to Him) and we ought to love our neighbor (evangelism and edification—love sees the greatest need and sacrifices all to meet that need).

**Today we are going to see two more of God's communicable attributes: His holiness and His justice.**

- God is holy... and God is just...

### **I. The Holiness of God: God is Holy – Isaiah 6.1-4**

#### **A. Holiness in the Bible always refers to two things: Separation & Devotion**

1. God is perfectly *holy*, therefore He is completely *separated* from sin (from that which bad).
2. God is perfectly *holy*, therefore He is completely *devoted* to that which is good and right (He actively, intentionally, zealously pursues that which is good and right).

#### **B. (1Jn 1.5) God is *holy*: That is His *Nature* (He *is* Light).**

1. God is totally and completely *separated from* all that is bad, wicked, and evil (darkness).
2. God is totally and completely *devoted to* all that is good and right (light).

#### **C. God's holiness is an attribute that He has communicated to (shared with) us.**

1. (1Pet 1.16) Because God is holy, He expects us (creatures made in His image) to be holy.
  - He expects us to be *separated from* sin (bad, wrong, evil) and *devoted to* good (and right).
2. (Heb 12.14) Without holiness (without being holy: separated from sin and devoted to good), *no one* will see the Lord.
  - a) Without holiness, the lost person will never see God (he will be confined to the lake of fire).
    - (1) (Acts 17.30-31) God commands all men everywhere to *repent*—to *separate from* their sins (to confess and forsake sin).
      - (a) God is holy, therefore He actively and zealously separates Himself from all that is bad.
      - (b) That ought to cause you (lost person) concern because *you* are *bad*.

(c) So many today are like the religious Jews of Jesus' day: They have the outward appearance of being "Christians" (they say Jesus is their Lord and participate in the religion—they attend church), but they have never been truly converted to Christ. On the Day of Judgment, God (in His holiness) will separate all that is *bad* from Himself; He will say to them: "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity!"

(d) We are bad, unholy. God is good, holy. That should strike fear in our hearts, a healthy fear that motivates us to *repent*, to flee from the wrath to come, and flee to Christ...

(2) (1Jn 3.23) God also commands all men everywhere to believe on His Son.

• You are not holy. But, Christ offers you *His* holiness. He *is* your sanctification.

(3) Without holiness (separation from sin and devotion to that which is good), you will not see God. For the lost person, that means repentance and faith—turn from sin to Jesus Christ.

b) Without holiness in us (Christians), no one will see the Lord *in us*.

(1) God expects us (Christians) to *separate from* sin always and continually (there ought to be a constant struggle in the Christian's life to *stop* doing wrong and then...)...

(2) God expects us (Christians) to *devote ourselves to* all that is good—to *actively, intentionally, and diligently* follow Christ to be like Him and live for what He lives for.

(3) This is the mark of the true Christian: The struggle and fight to grow in holiness, to be less and less like the sinners we were before, and to be more and more like our Savior, Christ.

3. God is holy and He expects us to be holy (as He is holy). His holiness is a communicable attribute.

## II. The Justice of God: God is Just – Genesis 18.25

### A. "Justice (Just)" is a legal term.

1. It refers to the essential character of God's government—to how He governs (rules) His creation.

2. God is *just* in *all* His dealings with *everyone*.

a) You can say that God is totally *righteous*—He *always* does that which is *right*.

b) It is God's nature (it is how He *is*): He treats each and every individual completely *fair* (just).

c) (Prov 17.15) God *cannot* do otherwise because that is simply how God *is*. It is His nature, His Person (He is just; He is completely fair and right in all His dealings with man).

3. Therefore, God's justice refers to how He governs:

a) Because God is completely and perfectly *just*, He will *reward* all those who deserve reward.

b) Because He is completely and perfectly *just*, He will *punish* all those who deserve punishment.

c) *God's justice excludes all favoritism*. God is the Just Judge who is *fair* with everyone.

### B. Because God's justice is the essential characteristic of how He governs, His justice is exhibited in His Law (specifically His moral Law).

1. (Rom 2.11-16) God gave His moral Law to all men (He wrote it on tables of stone for the Jews, and He wrote it on the heart and conscience of every Gentile), and He will *justly* and *fairly* judge *every* person for *every* thought, word, and deed... He will justly judge all your "secrets."

2. God has pronounced His just and right sentence on all lawbreakers from the beginning...

a) God established the "fine" to be paid for breaking His Law (for doing wrong instead of right)...

b) (Gen 2.16-17) To break God's Law (even one time, like Adam) is to be worthy of *death*.

(1) (Gen 5.5) Understand this: That sentence of death on the lawbreaker is *not* so much *physical* death, because Adam did *not die physically* on the day he broke God's Law.

(2) (Eph 2.1) That death is a spiritual death—a separation from God, Who is life. We are all born dead spiritually (separated from God; born in sin). This is the "first death."

(3) (Rev 21.8) God's sentence of death is ultimately the *eternal death* of separation from God in the eternal, conscious torment of the lake of fire—the "second death."

(4) That is God's justice—His just sentence (punishment) He declared from the beginning on all who would break the Law.

c) (Ezek 18.4, 20) God repeated that just sentence throughout the Old Testament...

d) (Rom 6.23) ...and nothing has changed (because God's character does not change; He is just).

3. Because God's justice is the essential character of how He governs, His justice is seen in the Law.

**C. Because God is just, He *cannot* overlook sin—it is *impossible* for God to simply overlook sin.**

1. Many say: "Oh, God is love... God forgives... I say I'm sorry and God just says it's okay..." Wrong!

2. (Eccl 12.14) Because of God's *nature* (His attributes/character; how He *is*), He *must* judge *righteous judgment*—good or bad. It is *just* (right) to reward good and to punish bad. That's God!

3. (Eccl 12.13) This attribute of God (His justice) ought to cause you to *fear* and to *flee*...

a) **Fear:** Fear the fine! Fear the punishment! Fear facing the judge (Who will show no favoritism).

(1) If God spared not His beloved Son from the just, fair, and right punishment of the Law, and that for the sins of others...

(2) Why would we ever think He would simply overlook our sins that we committed willingly (knowing it was wrong) and with pleasure (finding enjoyment in the act)?

(3) Fear God! And then let the fear of God and the fear of His justice move you to flee...

b) **Flee:** Flee from the wrath to come (repentance!) and flee to the only safe refuge (Jesus Christ!).

(1) (Rom 3.21-26) Salvation from God's *justice* is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) Because Jesus Christ *paid your fine* (all of it—He suffered the death you deserve)...

(3) God can still be *Just* even when He *justifies* wicked lawbreakers like us (because Jesus took our place and suffered our punishment, therefore we can take His place of righteousness).

(a) He lived the perfect life of obedience that we have not (and that we cannot).

(b) And He died the death that we deserve (suffering the Father's wrath in our place).

(4) (Rom 4.5-8) Now God offers to us *His* righteousness (His legal standing as "right" and "just")... if we will but *believe on* the Lord Jesus Christ.

(a) **Repent:** Confess and forsake your sin. Stop thinking you are good, realize you are bad, go to God (the Just Judge) and tell Him that! Stop believing in yourself for salvation!

(b) **Trust:** Place your faith and trust in Christ and Christ only for your salvation. Believe *on* Him (rest *on* Him only; trust Him only for your salvation).

4. God is just and He will govern with complete and harsh justice (He will not—cannot—overlook even one sin). That should cause you to fear Him and His judgment, and to flee to the Savior.

**D. And then, because God's justice is a communicable attribute, He calls us to live *justly*.**

1. In Christ we have *liberty* (freedom) from the Law's sentence—we are free from God's justice.

2. (Rom 6.14-15) But, our liberty in Christ is *not* freedom to sin—it is *not* liberty to break the Law.

3. (Rom 6.16-18) Those who would take grace and salvation (our liberty in Christ) as a license or permit to sin (to live how they wish) are giving indications that they are *not saved* (the fact that they willingly and joyfully yield themselves to sin and unrighteousness is an indication that they are still bound to sin as sin's servants).

4. (Rom 6.19-22) We are saved from sin and from sin's consequences. We are liberated from our old master, and we are bound to Another.
- Liberty in Christ is freedom from slavery to sin... because it is slavery/service to God.
5. (Rom 6.23) God will not *make you* be saved; salvation is a free *gift* (offered to you freely).
- a) But, understand this: Although Christ purchased that gift (you cannot purchase it or earn it by your "good works"), that gift will cost you your life (you must die to self to live in Christ),
  - b) God said salvation was free, and it is because Christ paid for it (all of it) Himself.
  - c) But God never said it was easy. You are no longer the slave to sin; in Christ you serve God.
  - d) But in the end, after picking up the cross and following Christ in this life, we will have *eternal and abundant life* with God (vs. eternal punishment in the lake of fire).
    - (1) It's like Jim Elliot said: *He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*
    - (2) You cannot keep the treasures of this world; the pleasures of sin are but for a moment.
    - (3) You are no fool to give that up in order to follow Christ and invest in eternity (to gain what you cannot lose).

### **Conclusion:**

**God is *holy* (separate from sin, devoted to good) and God is *just* (perfectly fair in all His governing).**

#### **1. Lost: Salvation...**

- God's holiness and God's justice ought to cause you to *fear* Him (because *you* are *not* holy and just).
- And that ought to cause your to *flee* from your sin to the only refuge God has provided: Jesus Christ.
- Repent of your sins: Recognize you are wicked; recognize the wicked deeds you have done by breaking God's Law. Confess it to Him, and forsake it.
- Believe on Jesus Christ: Trust Him. Rest on Him. Place all of your faith in Him to save you. He will justify you... He will give you His righteousness (because He suffered for your unrighteousness).

#### **2. Saved: Sanctification...**

- God's holiness and God's justice are communicable attributes that He has shared with us.
- God expects us to grow in holiness and live justly (to do that which is right, always).
  - ✓ Yes, Christ *is* our holiness... Christ *is* our justification... But that is not a license to sin.
  - ✓ We should *enjoy* the free gift of salvation—we should *rejoice* in that always.
  - ✓ But we should also allow Christ's sacrifice, love, and kindness to motivate us to *follow Him*.
  - ✓ Grow in holiness (read the Bible—know what it says—and then do what it says).
  - ✓ Live justly (do what is right always, even when no one is looking and even when it is difficult). That's what God expects of us.