

Tension

John 12:36b-50

- Please turn to John 12:36b, pg. 899 in the pew bibles. (Address online guests)
- Read / "The Word of the Lord" / Pray

Genesis 3:4-5, But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Our moral compass broke, and man became autonomous (self governing, like Gods) and began to claim his own since of justice.

The depravity of the heart of man thought he knew what was best, & just, and went his own way, which culminated in mass genocide we call the flood. God chose one family, who found favor, or grace (KJV) and saved them to repopulate the earth.

And, our questions begin... Was God just in his actions? Was it fair that he choose some to saved and not others? Though all were deserving of this wrath... [The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. Genesis 6:5-6](#)

[But Noah found favor \(grace\) in the eyes of the LORD. Genesis 6:8](#)

I think we are all grateful he did, otherwise we would not be having this discussion... And I wonder if that's the point; instead of leaning on the fall which has us question God, maybe we should be grateful that he had grace, and he saved some.

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The pattern continues throughout biblical history. God chose Abram by grace to be a people of promise, "I will be their God, they will be my people, and I will dwell among them"¹ and that through them "all the families of the earth shall be blessed."²

And now, fast forward to a prophet named Isaiah, who was called by God to speak truth to God's people, and ultimately the coming wrath from the Babylonians and Assyrians who would be like the flood to God's people who, like in the time of the flood, *the depravity of the heart of man thought he knew what was best, & just, and went his own way.*

Isaiah 6- Tell story

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

¹ Gen. 17:7-8; Ezek. 37:26-27, Jer. 31:31-34

² Gen. 12:1-3

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And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." And he said, "Go, and say to this people:

"'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Is. 6:1-10

Why would Isaiah do such a thing? He just said they would not listen, wouldn't you ask the question, "why should I witness to people if you (God) are sovereign over whether or not they listen?" But note he didn't ask that... why? I would say it's a logical response to being in God's presence, being humbled by your own sin but shown grace... Obedience would be the logical response and the effects of the fall, *the depravity of heart that thinks it knows what is best, & just, and go it's own way*, well, it fades when it sees the glory of God and shown grace.

Isaiah then asks, "How long, oh Lord?" (Is. 6:11). The news isn't good, and like a flood, the people are exiled and it seems hopeless, BUT, by God's grace he keeps a remnant, and even better, he gives hope that one day, the curse, *the depravity of heart that thinks it knows what is best, & just, and go it's own way*, will be reversed.

Isaiah 53 prophesies that one will come.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:4-6

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Finally! The new covenant would come!

Isaiah 53 starts with a question, [Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? Isaiah 53:1](#)

So a person is to come to reverse the curse, and faith is means by which it is achieved. And Isaiah saw it... maybe not in it's fulness, but he looked forward to the day. In 1 Peter, it says of Isaiah and other prophets,

[Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:8-12](#)

The coming of Jesus, things which angels were blown away by, and evidenced with the miracles Jesus did, people still did not believe.

Read 12:36-37, Why? John takes us to the biblical narrative by quoting Is. 53.

Read vs. 38, And then says something that should stop us in our tracks.

Read vs. 39 "therefore they could not believe" (pause), Read vs. 40

And, our questions continue... Was God just in his actions? Was it fair that he choose some to saved and not others? Some to have eyes to see, and others remain blind? Some given a new heart, and others remain hardened?

I wonder when we ponder such things, how much the fall effects us. If our sense of autonomous justice stands above God's and we say, "that's not fair".

It was true of the flood, it was true of the exile, it is true today? That God draws some and others remain blind?

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No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. John 6:44a

But how does he draw him? Is the bible saying people will come to heaven kicking and screaming that they don't want to go?

CH Spurgeon says, *"Christ never compelled any man to come to him against his will! How then does the Holy Spirit draw him? Why, by making him willing! ...he is saved with full consent for he is made willing in the day of God's power."*

Read vs. 41, Isaiah saw it, and rejoiced! It's a logical response to being invited to the throne of grace! Yet, we are still responsible for our sins.

Read vs. 42-43,

Ok, so God is sovereign? Yes. But we are still responsible for our sin? Yes.

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—Romans 9:14-23

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The point of John is clear, to have true faith, in the true christ, to have true life.

John wraps up Jesus' public ministry with this summery.

Read 44-50

What's my point?

Do NOT let the fall impede your sense of justice. God is the source and foundation of any true justice. As you study the scriptures, we would do well to remember that.

If you believe you have been given a gift. You have access to the throne of God , the same thrown Isaiah saw, and like the prophet of old, he has commissioned you live in obedience, and to be a part of fulfilling his divine plan, "a blessing to all the families of the earth". Why? I would say it's a logical response to being in God's presence, being humbled by your own sin but shown grace... Obedience would be the logical response. It's called worship.

Invite to the table.

Pray.