

Lord's Day 4

9. Q. *But does not God do man an injustice by requiring in his law what man cannot do?*

- In other words:
 - Is it unjust for God to require perfection from us?
 - Isn't this simply a burden too heavy for us to bear?
 - Why such a strict standard?
 - How does this not deter one away from God?

Common objections people have regarding this concept:

- How can God command me to do something I am unable to do?
 - He knows I cannot do what He asks of me
 - How is this fair?
 - How is this even a reasonable requirement of me?
- Requiring this guarantees I am doomed to fail
 - It leaves me with no hope whatsoever

A. *No, for God so created man that he was able to do it. But man, at the instigation of the devil, in deliberate disobedience **robbed himself** and all his descendants of these gifts.*

- The answer to the many objections that may arise from this is – NO
 - God is not unjust for requiring us to live perfectly
 - And then judging us for the sins we commit
- Why?
- Why is God not unjust for requiring us to be perfect even though we cannot meet this standard?
 - Because God created us in a state of perfection
 - Humanity chose to disobey
 - We chose to live the way we wanted
 - The result – we have now become slaves to the sin we chose
 - We were perfect and could have remained that way
 - We did this to ourselves
 - We chose to side with Satan in the Garden
 - Choices have consequences

10. Q. *Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?*

A. *Certainly not. He is terribly displeased with our original sin as well as our actual sins. Therefore, he will punish them by a just judgment both now and eternally, as he has declared "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law" (Gal 3:10).*

- Original sin – refers to the eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden
- Actual sin – all the sins we have personally committed since birth
- God will judge both

- And He is just for doing this
- This is where I believe the tension exists
- We believe that we are generally good
 - Yes – we admit we sin, and sometimes we sin much more than we should
 - But deep down inside we think we are good
- The problem is:
 - Sin has greatly distorted our judgment
 - We easily see the sins of others
 - We have great difficulty seeing our own sins
 - We self-justify all the time
 - We don't take sin serious enough
 - **We lesson it in order to get by in life**
 - If we really had a true sense of our sin - we wouldn't be able to bear the reality of it
 - So, we suppress it
- But God doesn't
 - God does not suppress the reality of our sin
 - He hates our sin
 - He has to hate it or He wouldn't be just
 - Example: a drop of oil in a glass of water
 - Would you drink it?
 - Would you allow your kids to drink it?
 - What would you do?
 - Dump it out
 - But – its only a drop of oil
 - What if you saw someone place the drop of oil in your kid's glass?
 - Would you simply say – “Oh, it just one little drop”
 - Would you not seek justice?
 - We have to look at sin from God's perspective
 - He is holy
 - He is pure
 - Even the slightest hint of sin is horribly offensive to Him
 - The problem is – we are always viewing the degree of our sin from our own sinful perspective
 - Our hearts distort the reality of how disgusting human nature truly is
 - God sees us perfectly
 - He sees how evil we are
 - And like the person who places only one drop of oil in your children's cup
 - God must judge us for our sinful actions

11. Q. *But is God not also merciful?*

- Yes – God is merciful – we will get into this on Lord's Day 5

A. – *God is indeed merciful, but also just; therefore his justice requires, that sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul*

What is Punishment?

- It is a debt that is due to the essential justice of God
- Justice due to the violation of the law by an individual
 - He determines the measure of the punishment by the nature of the offense
 - He repays everyone according to their deeds

Why is There Punishment?

- To vindicate God’s righteousness
 - Sin must have its due
 - Sin must be punished
 - Justice requires punishment / the holiness of God must be honored
 - The standard of all righteousness – we must all adjust to this:
 - **Deuteronomy 32:4** – *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he*
 - God is perfectly just – He is also perfectly loving:
 - **Psalm 62:12** – *and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”; and, “You reward everyone according to what they have done*
- Is it true that God is not angry with the sinner, but loves the sinner, and because God loves all people equally, He is forced to punish?
 - No
 - The penalty of sin **does not** come from God’s love or His mercy
 - The penalty of sin comes from God’s **justice**
 - There is a distinction between those who God punishes and chastises
 - God disciplines / chastises –
 - Those He chooses to redeem and love
 - God punishes –
 - Those who are evil
 - Those who do not repent
 - Those who God allows to continue in their sin
 - God loves and chastises His own
 - **Ps 6:1** - *Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath*
 - **Ps 94:12** - *Blessed is the one you discipline, Lord, the one you teach from your law*
 - **Ps 118:18** - *The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death*

- **Prov 3:11-12** - *My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke,¹² because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights*
 - **Rev 3:19** - *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline*
 - God hates and punishes the unbeliever who opposes Him:
 - **Ps 5:5** – *The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers*
 - **Nah 1:2** – *the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies*
 - **Rom 1:18** - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth*
 - **Rom 2:5** - *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed*
- Chastisement also deters the believer from sin
 - Its purpose is to cause the backslidden Christian to look back and confess out of a sad heart the sins of the past
 - What we would refer to as “godly sorrow”
 - It is a way of keeping a believer from committing or going back to former sins
 - The painful experience of God's discipline is actually for our good
 - It is a reminder of how much God hates sin
 - It is also a reminder how much God loves holiness

What is the Basis / the Standard for Administering Punishment to the Wicked?

- God Himself
 - There exists no final principle on which punishment can be based other than the justice of God
 - All punishment presupposes an authority over those who have violated the law
- But be careful of developing an unbalanced view of God
 - He is the God of justice **and** righteousness
 - He by no means clears the guilty
 - Yet is merciful, gracious, and slow to anger, and upholds the rights of the poor and the afflicted, the widow and the orphan (Exodus 20:5-6. 34:6-7, Numb 14:18)
- Punishment originates in the righteousness or punitive justice of God
 - He is holy
 - And because of this
 - He demands holiness and righteousness from us
 - Question: What happens if God is taken out of the equation?
 - How would justice be defined?
 - How would it be implemented?

- The moment God's justice is denied – absolutes are abandoned
- The nature of punishment either collapses altogether
 - Resulting in anarchy / lawlessness
- Or justice is defined and enforced by the totalitarian elite
 - The ruling class of the time
- What this shows us is justice cannot be administered properly without having the true source of justice
 - Which is God Himself
 - When God is abandoned or misused, we either have:
 - Anarchy / lawlessness
 - Totalitarianism
- The Magna Carta (1215) – also Romans 13:
 - Placed the government under God
 - The government is not to function by itself with nobody over it
 - But - when God is taken away (like our secular culture today)
 - Humanity now has the final say
 - Whoever is in charge gets to rule as they see fit
 - Cruel and unusual punishment now becomes arbitrary
 - Who to punish and how - is now decided by the elite
 - Which is why Communism executed 100 million people in the 20th century
- Herman Bavinck:
 - The decline of the ancient Christian worldview has also resulted in the modification, indeed the abolition and banishment of the concepts of good and evil, responsibility and accountability, guilt and punishment.
 - Along with belief in the justice of God, belief in justice on earth disappeared as well.
 - Atheism proved to be the annihilation of all justice and morality:
 - No God, no master.
 - Sin and crime are not traceable to the evil will of the individual person, are not the responsibility nor imputable to them personally, but are, generally speaking, remnants or aftereffects of the animal ancestry of humans and to be explained in terms of their nature or their environment.

What is the Penalty of Sin?

- Death / Judgment / and Wrath
 - Spiritual Death – separation from communion with God / guilty conscience / polluted nature
 - A person can only live meaningfully if they have communion with Him
 - Physical Death – when the spirit leaves the body and the body is left to the earth to decay
 - Every person will be resurrected on the last day with their bodies to stand before God in judgment

- Eternal Death / 2nd death – the lake of fire =
 - God's wrath - enduring the justice of God for all eternity
 - When both body and soul are thrown into Gehenna for all eternity

Does the Bible teach capital punishment?

- **Gen 9:6** - *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed*
- This was given before the law of Moses during the Noahic covenant
- People often argue that capital punishment does not slow down or prevent crime rates
 - States that enforce the death penalty often have as many murders per capita as states and nations that have no death penalty
 - People forget – this is not the purpose of capital punishment
 - The purpose is *retribution / justice*
 - Life for a life
 - Not to slow down or prevent crime
- What were the sins by which a person was put to death under the Mosaic law?
 - Murder – Ex 21:12-14
 - Cursing or attacking a parent – Ex 21:15,17
 - Disobedience to parents – Deut 21:18-21
 - Kidnapping – Ex 21:16
 - Failure to confine a dangerous animal – Ex 21:28-29
 - Human sacrifice – Lev 20:2-5
 - Sex with an animal – Ex 22:19
 - Work on the Sabbath – Ex 31:14
 - Incest – Lev 18:6-18
 - Adultery – Lev 20:10
 - Homosexuality – Lev 20:13
 - Blasphemy – Lev 24:14
 - Perjury – Deut 19:16-19
 - False Prophecy – Deut 18:20
 - These were for the time of Moses and not for today
 - But – they show us God's mindset toward specific kinds of sin