

GOD IS JUST.*

God always does the right thing in practicing His holiness. He is right to punish sin with great wrath.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
Job 34:10-23 Psalm 9:7-10 Psalm 89:1-14; Psalm 97:1-6 Psalm 99 Psalm 111 Psalm 119:137-144 Proverbs 21:2-3 Daniel 9:1-10 Jeremiah 32:16-21 Romans 1:16-20 1 John 1:8-10 Revelation 16:5-7	Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed At the Cross Before the Throne of God Above Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy Gethsemane (Getty/Townend) Solo Here Is Love His Robes for Mine (Forrest) SATB Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness My Jesus, Fair Rejoice, the Lord Is King Sing Praise to God Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted There Is a Higher Throne (Larson) Duet



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* Fits as Part 2 of 4 in series, "God of the Gospel."

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

INTRODUCING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

EXCHANGE WORDING

God is just and cannot overlook our sin. *He is a Judge, and the consequence He has said we deserve for our sin is death. Imagine a judge presiding over a murder trial. If the defendant is found guilty, the judge must condemn him, even if the guilty man is someone he loves – his own brother, for example. God’s love for us does not change His demand for justice. However, because He is loving, He does not simply stand by and watch while men die and go to hell.*

In the month of January we’re looking at the four attributes of God that are presented in the Exchange Bible Study written by Jeff Musgrave, who’ll be with us next weekend. One of the things I appreciate about Jeff’s approach to presenting the plan of salvation is that it focuses on God and His attributes. God is holy. Just. Loving. Gracious.

Today, God is just. He is a just judge. A just judge looks at the evidence, and sentences according to the justice system. An unjust judge may look at the evidence and sentence according to his own emotional attachments to the defendant. He let’s a murderer go free because the murderer is related to him.

But God is not that way. Even though He is emotionally attached to us, John 3:16 states that he loves the whole world. He may love us, but that love does not nullify His justice. No, our just God cannot overlook the evidence. In our case, the fact is that we have sinned. Romans 3:23. And then He sentences according to the perfect justice system, His justice system. Romans 6:23 lays out the just punishment for our sins. For the wages of sin is death.

And then Revelation 21:8 expands on that death. It declares the punishment for sin is the second death, eternity in the Lake of Fire. God is so committed to his justice that He *must* punish our sin. Yes, God is just and cannot overlook our sin.

Today in worship, we say that God is “right” about our sinfulness, and that we deserve punishment. Yet we can rejoice that this just wrath was satisfied in the suffering and death of Christ. Worship the God who is just! (Mark French)

HUMAN JUSTICE BREAKDOWN

Human justice is always subject to debate and even tampering. Find an example of a case that demonstrates the failures of the human justice system. This can happen at any (or several) of many different points: legislation (bad laws exist), enforcement (power to enforce the law sometimes corrupts), evidence (can be doctored), judge and jury (judge might not have all the information or jury might be biased), punishment (people are sometimes convicted and

imprisoned falsely). However, in God's justice system, everything is always perfect, because His law is perfect and He Himself is the perfect Judge. His "guilty" verdict of us is a just verdict. He is right to punish sin with great wrath.

Almost 30 years ago, in 1991, a woman was found dead here in Phoenix. A suspect was quickly identified and apprehended, one Ray Krone. Krone was nicknamed the "Snaggletooth Killer" for his ugly teeth and facial features. Investigators liked Krone for the murder and he was convicted in 1992 and sent to death row. Like many in prison though, he maintained his innocence. Krone was able to secure another trial in an appellate court in 1996 but he was again convicted. One party familiar with the case said "his smile was an inditement." So, what's the big deal? You might ask. Another criminal caught and sent where he belongs right? Let's continue the story. Krone was able to secure a THIRD retrial. At this point, you might be thinking: wow, another criminal milking the system, another criminal who is clearly guilty but is trying to find some loophole in the law that will get them released. You might be thinking the same thing I was when I first read this story: how much did all these retrials cost taxpayers? Well, this is where the story changes, DNA evidence given at Krone's third trial proved his innocence and pinned the murder he had been convicted of on another man who was already in prison for another murder. After spending 10 years in prison, 2 of them on death row, Krone was finally released from prison in 2002. Krone was awarded settlements from both the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County totaling over 4 million dollars.

So, what's the point of this story? I want to be clear here, I'm not here to disparage our justice system. Our justice system, including investigators, attorneys, and judges plays a critical role in upholding the rule of law and maintaining the safety that we all enjoy every day. My point is that as good as our justice system is, sometimes mistakes are still made. In the case of Ray Krone, he looked the part of a murderer even though he was innocent. As long as there are people running the justice system, there will be mistakes. Thankfully, we have a God in heaven who is perfect and His justice is perfect. We have seen a lot of upheaval in our society recently. Murders, riots, vandalism, and looting. It seems like there's a lot of injustice right now. We may be afraid or worried about the future. What we need to do in times like these is trust God. He is the perfect investigator: He sees all. He is the perfect judge: He knows who is guilty and who is innocent. God will never send someone to Hell because of a clerical error. God will never allow someone into heaven by mistake that shouldn't be there. At the end of time, every crime, every sin will be dealt with perfectly by God himself. There will be no mistakes, nothing missing from the record. He will right all wrongs, even the ones that we humans missed. We can trust our God, the God of perfect justice. (Tim Waycaster)