

Understanding True Justice

*Zechariah 7:9 (NIV) "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Administer **true justice**; show mercy and compassion to one another.'*

Three Arenas of Justice

These are three arenas that I've personally come up with to help with understanding, and are not necessarily three specific types of Justice mentioned explicitly in the scriptures.

1. Spiritual Justice—An Inward Reality
2. Personal Justice—An Interpersonal Understanding
3. Social Justice—An Outward Necessity

Spiritual Justice

An Inward Reality

- Two things we must be sure of: **God desires mercy and loves justice**
 - **Hosea 6:6 (NIV)** For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.
 - **Psalms 11:7 (NIV)** For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.
- Because He is Good, God MUST demand Justice
 - We owed a debt to the Law—The Law of Sin and Death
 - We earned the wages to pay that debt through sin
Romans 6:23 (NIV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - God's Law, the Law of Sin and Death, demands Justice
 - Jesus fulfilled the Justice requirements of the Law through His death, and we are now freely Justified by faith in Him
Romans 3:21-28 (NIV) ²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
- God demonstrated his Justice through the sacrifice of Jesus, so we have been made alive in Christ

Personal Justice

An Interpersonal Understanding

- Having experienced the benefits of Jesus fulfilling the requirement of God’s Justice, it is of utmost importance that we learn to not pervert Justice in our human relationships, which can very often be our tendency.
- We do this by having to strong of a hold on our personal rights.
- This is seen very often in our desire for what we call “FAIR.”
- How many of us have ever said, “That’s not fair?”
- In reality, the terms Justice and Fairness can be somewhat interchangeable, so I’m not trying to be dogmatic about the terms that we use.
 - My point is that what many of us commonly mean when we speak of being Fair is not True Justice.

Justice and Fairness Contrasted

Fairness	Justice
Fairness has to do with wanting to be treated equally or differently, if we think we have earned it.	Justice has to do with making everything right, especially making wrong things right.
Fairness can lead to Lawlessness: “If he can do it, then I can do it.” [even if it is wrong]	Justice always leads to Lawfulness: “Though he does it, I will not. I will do what is right.”
Fairness holds on to personal rights.	Justice upholds God’s way, truth, and law above personal rights. [Of course, we can always trust that our Father has our best interests in mind.]
Self-preservation	Self-Sacrifice

- I do not believe that God has any interest in doing what the human mind thinks is Fair.
 - For one thing, he gives above and beyond what is has seemingly been earned:
Matthew 25:23 (NIV) "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
 - He is not interested in making everyone equal. He is interested in putting everyone in their RIGHT place:
Luke 14:11 (NIV) For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
 - He is clearly not interested in what we believe is fair treatment. He is God, and He does as He pleases:
Matthew 20:1-16 (NIV) ¹"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. ³"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' ⁵So they went. "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' ⁷"'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.' ⁸"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' ⁹"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰So when those came who were hired

first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' ¹³ "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?' ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

- How easy it could be to be offended and God and men if we have this perverted since of Justice that we often call Fairness.
 - If we continually hold on to our own rights, and demand that we be treated a certain way, then we will most certainly pervert Justice in some way.
 - For one thing, it is easy for us to demand Fairness when it ends positively for us, but not when it ends negatively.
 - In other words, we are quick to demand we feel we have earned, but don't always want what we deserve.
 - If we deserve a reward, then we think it is only Fair for us to receive it.
 - If we deserve punishment or judgment, we quickly let go of all desires for Fairness.
 - THAT IS WHY IT IS A PERVERTED SINCE OF JUSTICE. JUSTICE ALWAYS DOES WHAT IS RIGHT—ALWAYS.
 - That is why what Jesus did was so great. By fulfilling God's demands of Justice for sin he provided two things for us:
 - Grace—God gives us what we do not deserve. **Did you earn eternal life?**
 - Mercy—God keeps from us what we do deserve. **Did you earn death?**
 - **Romans 6:23 (NIV)** For the wages [earned] of sin is death, but the gift [not earned] of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - **Romans 3:23 (NIV)** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
 - So, in applying this concept to our interpersonal relationships:
 - Honor others above yourself (Romans 12:10)
 - Love one another (John 13:34)
 - Rather be done wrong than to bring a court case against a brother (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)
 - Always prefer to DO what is right rather than to prove that you are right
 - Trust your Father to defend you (Mark 15:5)
 - Accept hardship as discipline—for God accepts you as sons (Hebrews 12:7)
 - Be slow to speak, slow to anger (James 1:19)
 - Forgive freely (Matthew 18:35)
 - Love:
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1-10 (NIV)** ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,

it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

- If you find it hard to let go of your own rights, and follow these practical things, then consider this if you want Fairness over Justice:
 - Jesus on the Cross = Justice
 - You dying for your own sins = Fairness

Social Justice

An Outward Necessity

- The scriptures are abundantly clear that God demands Social Justice—he disdains injustice. Throughout the Old and New Testaments he spoke of treating the weak, needy, poor, fatherless, widows, and otherwise marginalized people groups with justice. He also stated that those who deny them justice are cursed.
- When Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom and to rule physically on the earth from his throne in Jerusalem, He will rule with Justice. One of His primary courses of action will be to establish Justice for those who have been denied it and punishing those who have withheld it:
 - **Psalms 89:14 (NIV)** Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.
 - **Psalms 45:6 (NIV)** Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
 - **Isaiah 9:7 (NIV)** Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.
 - **Isaiah 11:1-4 (NIV)** ¹ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord-- ³ and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
 - **Isaiah 42:1-4 (NIV)** ¹ "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ² He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."
 - **Revelation 19:11 (NIV)** I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.
- All of these scriptures speak primarily of Social Justice—Jesus will administer Social Justice to all the oppressed of the earth, and he will punish the wicked who caused injustice.

- God demands that His people act in Justice now, before His return:
 - **Isaiah 56:1 (NIV)** This is what the Lord says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
 - **Jeremiah 21:12 (NIV)** O house of David, this is what the Lord says: "Administer justice every morning; rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done-- burn with no one to quench it.
 - **Psalms 106:3 (NIV)** Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right.
 - **Proverbs 28:5 (NIV)** Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully.
 - **Micah 6:8 (NIV)** He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
 - **Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)** ¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"
 - Justice starts in the place of prayer—Jesus will be looking for those who have been faithful in crying out for Justice Day and Night when He returns.
 - From there we can truly take on Works of Justice with Godly passion and compassion:
 - Feeding the Poor
 - Clothing the Naked
 - Standing for the Cause of Life
 - Standing against Human Trafficking and the Sex Trade
 - We put our time, money, prayers, and physical effort into these sorts of things

The False Justice Movement—A Warning

From Stuart Greaves (IHOP, KC):

The present social justice movement is preparing the poor of the earth to receive the Antichrist.

... there are two justice movements emerging in the earth. One is a false movement that has been growing over the last hundred years, rooted in humanism and undermining the apostolic revelation of Jesus. This false movement will be fully manifest in the one-world religion that the Bible calls the harlot of Babylon. It will be a counterfeit forerunner movement for the Antichrist; by wearing down people's ability to discern right from wrong and by undermining the true gospel, the harlot Babylon will leave them susceptible to full-blown Satan worship under the leadership of the Antichrist.

It is important to realize that Satan worship does not spring up overnight. It is the product of years of baby steps away from truth and into deception, one tiny compromise at a time, seeming very harmless at first. The global

consciousness of the nations is becoming increasingly more awakened to humanitarian needs through the real lessons of justice that have been learned throughout history. Humanity has made progress by fighting oppression of the poor, addressing racism, defeating totalitarian governments, resisting anti-Semitism, and confronting violent expressions of religious fundamentalism. The current social justice movement will continue to address these issues.

However, while the list of injustices addressed by secular movements grows steadily more comprehensive, the core issue of justice from heaven's vantage point is entirely neglected. The face of evil is wearing the mask of "good" in that the issues are being addressed but the apostolic requirement of faith in Christ is completely ignored. The false justice movement will mature into a harlot religion with the outward appearance of good in its actions, but its leaders and followers will have rage against Christ and His ways in their inner-man.

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