

Judging God and Man?

Commentary for November 1, 2006 — Who Is Responsible?

Many of us have found that friends, parents, loved ones, as well as those in authority over us such as teachers, employers, or government officials have done evil to us during our lives. You may never have thought about the fact that most people also think that God has been unfair to them. (Haven't you thought, why has God allowed this to happen?) This is indeed the case in many instances. God has been unfair to you and to others. God Himself says this is so. He may indeed have done evil to you, either through circumstances that He could have prevented or warned you about, or through direct actions against you or your loved ones or friends.

Several of those who have composed the writings in our Bible also have had problems with how God does things in this world. They too have thought God was unfair in His actions or inactions. Let us review statements by a few biblical personalities.

Upset with God

More than once Moses was an advocate for Israel when God indicated that He wanted to exterminate all of them except Moses (Exodus 32:9–14, Numbers 14:13–20). Moses himself, when he was frustrated and angry with God and the Israelites, cried out to Him saying, **“And if you deal thus with me, kill me, I pray you, out of hand, ...”** (Numbers 11:15). Moses was saying, if you are going to treat me so badly, then kill me instead!

David openly expressed his frustration with God, stating things like, **“Why stand you afar off, O Lord? why hide you yourself in times of trouble?”** (Psalm 10:1). David also complains extensively about God's treatment of him in Psalms 22 and 38. Yet David was constantly rescued and exalted resulting in his kingship, often at the expense of others, enemies and friends (2 Samuel 7:9; 1 Chronicles 17:8; Psalm 18:37–42).

Although he knows God is righteous, the prophet Jeremiah writes that he does not understand how the world system operates that God has established

“Righteous are you, O Lord, when I plead with you: yet let me talk with you of your judgments:

Wherefore [why?] does the way of the wicked prosper?

Wherefore [why?] are all they happy that deal very treacherously?

You have planted them [the wicked], yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: you are near in their mouth, and far from their reins.”

The prophet has other complaints in Jeremiah 15:10–21. In Jeremiah chapter 20, he laments the triumph of evil and that God rescues the poor but not Jeremiah, God's own prophet to Judah:

“But, O Lord of hosts, that try [test] the righteous, and see the reins and the heart, let me see your vengeance on them: for unto you have I opened my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise you the Lord: for he has delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers. Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.”

• *Jeremiah 20:12–14*

In the New Testament Martha and later her sister Mary each expressed their disappointment over the death of their brother Lazarus, telling Jesus, **“Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not [would not have] died”** (John 11:21, 32).

When the disciples feared that their boat would be lost in a storm, they questioned Jesus' care for them. They woke Jesus and asked, **“Master, care you not that we perish?”** (Mark 4:38). In other words, they were saying, “don't you care if we die?”

And finally Jesus Himself, after experiencing all the trials of man (just like you and me, Hebrews 2:17–18, 4:15), and the agony of the crucifixion, cried out on the cross, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**! (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34, quoting Psalm 22:1).

This Month's Article

A much fuller discussion of this topic is to be found in this month's article by Dr. Martin is titled “Judgment on God and Man.” Please read first the [“November 2006 Newsletter,”](#) which has additional information about God judging man and man in turn judging God. The question this article directly addresses is this: if God loves us, why are we treated as abandoned children by an absentee Father, who sometimes punishes us when we seem to be so ignorant of His requirements and even His presence?

This is a tough question and a tough topic. Maturity is required to understand what God is doing in the world. Know that everything is resolved through God's reconciliation with man, and man's response to God (individually and corporately), through Christ's voluntary work of redemption for you and for me. (In addition to reading this month's article, it will be useful to review Dr. Martin's excellent article [“Repentance of God in the Bible.”](#))

It is sometimes difficult for us to accept and believe this concept with so much evil around us and around the world, but it is a fact and we have God's promise that it is so. Best of all, we can know that Christ's work of redemption is completed already. It is sure.

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