

BIBLICAL JUSTICE

I. Scripture Illustrates Genuine Justice

A. While justice may be difficult to find in the world, it is not in heaven; God will see that the wicked get what they have earned. “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.” (EXODUS 23:7)

B. God satisfies His own justice through Christ for believers so that they can become righteous even when they are not righteous in themselves. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (ROMANS 8:3-4)

C. The transformation comes to believers through the substitutionary atonement with the result that believers have what amounts to a second chance. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 CORINTHIANS 5:21)

II. Seek Justice in Small Things

A. When people side with the majority or judge according to who can pay, justice departs; look at the principles rather than the parties. “Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment: Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.” (EXODUS 23:1-3)

B. God demands genuine justice; avoid doing what will be reversed on appeal. “Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.” (EXODUS 23:6-7)

C. Bribery extracts justice from courts; facts cease to be relevant. “And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.” (EXODUS 23:8)

D. Delaying just payments is unjust; what is necessary for the employer is also necessary for the employee. “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.” (LEVITICUS 19:13) “Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.” (PROVERBS 20:10)

E. Taking advantage of the defenseless and deciding according to the status of the parties will produce injustice; God may not have been on Robin Hood’s side. “Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.” (LEVITICUS 19:14-15)

F. A civil society must provide honest courts which operate through neutral rules. “Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.” (DEUTERONOMY 16:18-19)

G. Genuine justice extends beyond people to all things entrusted to people. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.” (DEUTERONOMY 25:4) “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” (PROVERBS 12:10)

H. Failure to do what is just is to do what is unjust. “And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.” (EZRA 7:26)

I. Coming to the aid of those who cannot protect their own interests is an obligation for all Christians. “How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.” (PSALM 82:2-4) “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” (1 KINGS 18:21)

J. Injustice in any direction is an abomination to God; such failures begin cascades of injustice. “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.” (PROVERBS 17:15) “These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:” (PROVERBS 24:23-24)

III. KEEP TWO SIMPLE RULES IN MIND

A. Stop doing what is wrong. “Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” (PSALM 34:14) “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (ISAIAH 55:7)

B. Do what is right while the opportunity remains to do so. “Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.” (EZEKIEL 7:25) “They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.” (PROVERBS 28:4)