

AUGUST 2, 2020

LESSON 9

# CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

## THE JUSTICE OF GOD (DEUTERONOMY 32:4)

### Life Isn't Fair

In the early evening of July 4, 2020, a 7-year-old girl was walking along the street in her Chicago neighborhood. Suddenly, a light-colored vehicle pulled up and started shooting at a nearby house. Because this young girl happened to be in the general vicinity of the shooting, she was struck in the forehead with a bullet, and died.<sup>10</sup>

What would you do to make this right? If the person who shot her was caught, would that be justice? How would you feel if this had been your little girl? This innocent girl is dead: how can this be fixed?

How many of us like to be wronged? What is the typical response of the world when they have a wrong done to them? It is to take immediate revenge for the wrong that was done to them. As we have discussed here that is not the Godly way to handle a situation.

In this section we will discuss some of the ways that people in the Bible were wronged. We will also discuss ways that we may be wronged today. All of these will have a focus on the fact that God is a just God. That God is the one who rights the ways that we may be wronged in our lives.

It all starts from the beginning of the Bible.

### Cain and Abel (Gen 4)

In Genesis 4 we see a scene where there are two “sacrifices” that are made. Cain brings an “offering of the fruit of the ground” and Abel brings “the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.” God had regard for Abel and for his offering and he did not have regard for Cain and his offering.

Cain feels like he has been wronged in this instance. Verse 5 says that Cain “became angry and his countenance fell”. The passage describes a warning from God to Cain. He warns him that he should not be angry and that if he does not do well that “sin is crouching at the door.” He tells Cain that he must master it.

<sup>10</sup> Steven Graves, “7-Year-Old Girl Shot, Killed In South Austin Neighborhood On July 4th Evening.” Website: [chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/07/04/young-girl-shot-in-south-austin-neighborhood/](http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/07/04/young-girl-shot-in-south-austin-neighborhood/). Accessed July 22, 2020.

### Genesis 4:7

“If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door**; and its desire is for you, but **you must master it.**”

What then is the response of Cain? Cain and Abel are in the field and Cain kills his brother. At this point in the chapter we don't see what the reaction was of Adam and Eve but I am sure that as a parent that we could all imagine what our reaction might be. We do see the Justice of God shining through in this instance though.

These are the ways that God showed Justice for Abel and what happened to him:

1. Cain was cursed from the ground: This was his livelihood. This was how he made his way in the world. In this instance and because of the sin that Cain committed he was cursed.
2. Cain was to be a vagrant and wanderer on the earth: Cain would not be in one place. Cain essentially would not have a home that he could go to.
3. Cain would be hidden from the face of God: Cain went out from the presence of God (verse 16). Consider what he had done and the fact that it meant separation from God. This is the effect of sin for all who commit it. The saving grace for us is the blood of Jesus

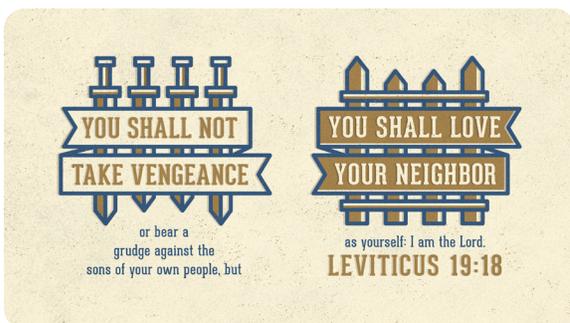
God makes clear that if anyone killed Cain, that he would take vengeance on them "sevenfold." He appointed a sign for Cain so that no one that found him would kill him.

In this section we see a couple of things. Cain feels as if he has been wronged and he takes it out on his brother by killing him. Abel is actually wronged and God meets out justice on his killer. Abel could not have looked for revenge himself but his family could have. That was not what happened. Note the fact that God says that those that would avenge Abel by killing Cain would have the vengeance of God "sevenfold."

Now as we consider this let's talk about ways that we may be "wronged" in this world and our reactions:

1. People may attack us: Cain attacked Abel. When we think about today there are many ways that people may attack us. They may attack us physically, they may berate us verbally, they may spread false stories about us, or they may just try to separate us from the people that we care the most about. What are we to do in situations like these? This sounds a lot simpler than it really is but what we have to do is continue to rely and trust in God.

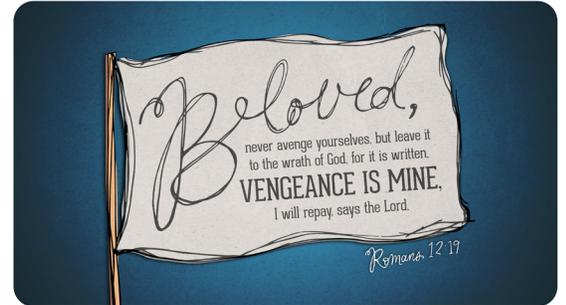
Peter had a sword in John 18:1-11. When Jesus was being arrested (to eventually be attacked and killed physically) Peter drew his sword and cut the ear off one of the people that were there. The sword did not magically appear giving us some insight into protection (another study/another time). Jesus instructed him to put the sword back in the sheath. This was not a time for Peter to avenge Jesus. This was not



a time for Peter to be offensive and take out those that would harm Jesus.

The thing is many of us “carry a sword.” It is not for us to avenge when things go wrong or we feel that we have been wronged. As we have seen in Romans 12:19 and Proverbs 25 vengeance belongs to God.

2. What should we do then? In Romans 12 and Proverbs 25 we see that we should do these things:
  - a. Never pay back evil with evil Be at peace with all men so much as it depends on you.
  - b. Be at peace with all men so much as it depends on you.
  - c. Never take you own revenge.
  - d. Treat your enemies well.
  - e. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.



I want to focus a few minutes on the last one that we see in that section. We see that we should not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. This takes a lot of work on our part because there is a natural reaction that we may have to want revenge.

How then do we practically overcome evil with good? For that answer we go back to the beginning of Romans 12. In verse 2 the Romans are told not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed. This is a whole different way of thinking when you compare what our friends in the world may think.

So what does this accomplish then? It gives the Glory to God. I am reminded of Daniel Chapter 2 and the King’s forgotten dream. The King wanted someone to first tell him the dream and then interpret it. Of course his magicians told him that this was impossible. After praying with his friends Daniel was able to do what this king asked. Daniel gave all the credit and glory to God for this and as a result the King praised the God of Daniel.

When we react to things differently than the world, when we leave room for the Justice of God instead of our own revenge we look completely different than the world. This may be an opening for you to give Glory to God. This may be your chance to be an example of overcoming evil with good. This kind of faith may even lead your enemies to God. And even if it doesn’t, then you have been the Christian that you should have been.

3. What is the final answer to this question: In the book of Ecclesiastes we see wisdom. The wisdom of King Solomon. He covers several things throughout that book including the futility of life itself. He tells his readers in Chapter 9:10 that “whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” I submit

that we should work to overcome evil with all our might and leave vengeance for the ways that we may be wronged to God.

In Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 we see the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments... for God will bring every act to judgment, whether good or evil.

Cain felt like he had been wronged and took matters into his own hands. As a result he was separated from God. The same fate awaits us if we do the same. There will never be justice in the world, but know for certain that God will bring every act to judgment.

Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew 10:28 not to fear those that can kill the body, but the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell. That's enough motivation for me. What about you?