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Why Are We Supposed to Love as God Loves but Not Condemn as He Condemns?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about why we're supposed to love as God loves but not condemn as he condemns, whether Jesus would have issued a command like 1 Samuel 15:3, whether it would be kinder to not tell people the gospel so they can be judged by their hearts and works, and why God destroyed the world in the flood if he knew there was a salvation plan.

* If we're supposed to love as God loves, loving those who do us wrong, why don't we follow his example when he eternally damns those who hate or reject him?

* Would Jesus have issued a command like 1 Samuel 15:3?

* If those who haven't heard of Jesus get judged on their hearts and their works, then wouldn't it be kinder to not tell them the gospel so it's easier for them to qualify for the afterlife?

* Why did God choose to destroy the world in the flood so early on when he knew the salvation plan from before the beginning?

Transcript

I'm Amy Hall. I'm here with Greg Cokel and you're listening to Stand to Reason's hashtag S-T-R-S-C-Podcast. Hi, Amy.

Hi, Greg. Our first question comes from Kevin Bunker. If we are supposed to love as God loves, loving those who do us wrong, why then does God eternally dam those who hate or reject them? That is not providing an example which we should follow? The answer is that there are limits to the application of us being God-like because we are creatures and He is not.

He is God and we are not. So He has additional authority responsibilities whatever. God is good.

God is good. I developed this in the story of reality a little bit. When I give the talk, I talk about the issue of judgment coming up and then parody the response.

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I thought you said God's good and He's God is wonderful.

Why would God judge? I said, the question is God is loving. I said, what makes you think that God is loving? And the answer is, well, because God's good. If He's good, then He's going to be loving.

I said, right. He is loving because He's good. Well, then why is He punishing people? And the answer is because He's good.

In other words, the thing that informs His love also informs His justice. Okay. And they all go together in a package.

And so it would not be good for God not to judge the unrighteous. What's interesting about this particular question is it's directly answered in Scripture because what we are told is to forgive and not to take our own revenge, but rather leave that up to God because that's His job. So God is loving and this is why He graciously offers forgiveness.

But at the same time, He is just because He's good and He must punish those who disobey. And our job is not to punish in that sense. That's God's job.

Our job is to reflect the goodness of God in love to those who harm us and let God do what only God is allowed to do. Bring judgment on them in an ultimate sense. Now, of course, that responsibility of judgment in some measure is delegated by God to appropriate governing authorities.

As Paul says, God does not, or maybe it's Peter, that Caesar does not bear the sword for nothing. Okay. Both Paul and Peter speak to this issue.

So it isn't simply a matter of God is loving and we're supposed to be loving and forgive, so therefore God should be loving and forgive and not judge because we're not supposed to judge. There isn't a parody of roles there. There is an application of goodness that we have.

And there's an application of goodness that God has and that application of goodness that God has includes the responsibility of goodness to judge evil. And you brought this up, Greg, but this is God does provide an example with his judgment to the government. So the government is supposed to reflect God's judgment, not eternal judgment, of course, but actual judgment of, of, of crime.

So he is providing an example in that way and the government acts in God's stead in that way, hopefully, but for us, but for us, we are when Jesus came and he showed us grace, God wanted to reveal his grace. And that's what we are revealing to people right

now with our actions as we are treating people with kindness that they don't deserve. And we are showing grace to others.

We're revealing Jesus because it's the kindness of God that leaves people to repentance. So that's our, we're bringing people to repentance. And in the, in the end, God will bring about judgment.

But right now we're revealing his grace. And as you mentioned, Greg, our, our grace, we're able to show grace because we know there will be final judgment. There will be justice.

So no justice will be compromised in any of this. I was, I had one or a fleeting thought here regarding this, but okay, it'll have to wait for later. Maybe the next question that will come to mind.

All right. And I'll append it. All right.

Here's a question from Greg Odessa. Would Jesus have issued a command such as 1 Samuel 15, 3? Oh, wait a minute. I just thought of it.

Okay. Go ahead. Jesus said I did not come to judge.

Okay. Well, of course he didn't come to judge that time. He came to offer grace and mercy.

But in the end, it will be Jesus who is judged and those who don't accept the mercy are de facto judged already. That's in John 3. So, so, I mean, the, the question kind of presumes a truncated understanding of God's role in the end. And all that he does and our role in this as well.

Okay. And that, that does kind of lead into this question. So I'll just read it again.

Would Jesus have issued a command such as 1 Samuel 15, 3? Okay. Let me read that. 1 Samuel 15, 3 says this is directed by God through Samuel to Saul.

Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has and do not spare him, but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, oxen sheep, camel and donkey. With a high Christology, Jesus did give this. This is divinely inspired scripture for which God is the author and Jesus is God.

That means Jesus in his divine nature is the author of the Bible. Is the author of this verse to suggest that Jesus wouldn't have given this command is to, is to misunderstand the role that he played in carnit, that the word played incarnate in Christ. And I just mentioned that earlier, Jesus did not come to judge at that moment.

So he, he called down, he did not call down judgment on anybody at that moment. But

he warned of the judgment to come and he actually did it in his earthly ministry. He will be the judge.

We know that because Paul says, it makes that clear at the, at the area, Ariapocha, s in Acts chapter 17. He will be judged by a man appointed by God, having supplied or furnished proof, having raised him from the dead. Okay, that's Jesus is going to be the judge.

And then when Jesus is on earth in his earthly ministry, he's pointing at things that happen. You know, you think you're more righteous than these guys that tower fell on? That's going to worse is going to happen to you unless you repent. And he gives a couple of examples like that.

So Jesus warns of judgment to come. And the judgment to come is a whole, going to be a whole lot worse than what we see here in 1 Samuel. That's just physical death.

It's going to be eternal destruction, separation from God and from the glory of his power, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. And that's going to be like, that's a lot worse. So Jesus is all in favor of appropriate judgment, not only by God, but also by human beings. Now people look at the Matthew 7 verse 1, and they draw all kinds of inappropriate conclusions from the statement Jesus says, makes when he says, judge not, less GB judged.

But if you keep reading, you realize that there is a very particular kind of judgment he is concerned with there. And, and he goes on to make statements right in the same pericopy, the same section of thought that require judgment. Don't throw what is holy to dogs.

Don't throw your pearls before swine. Okay, that's right in the same passage. In other passages, they said, judge with a righteous judgment, not in an inappropriate judgment.

So these, both of these questions are kind of informed, I think by a, a, when I say this graciously, because a lot of people are confused on this, a misunderstanding of Jesus and the role he had. And I think it's kind of like this is a cultural sense. Jesus is loving and kind and forgiving and accepting and all that.

Yet we see these awful passages in the Old Testament. This loving kind, forgiving Jesus could never condone. Wait a minute, he's the one who wrote it on a high Christology.

And he's the one who's going to be judging everybody at the end to eternal damnation. And in his ministry, he warns about that, that it's coming and it's appropriate. And, but he was there that first time to protect people from the appropriate kind of judgment that would be coming on them in the future by offering a sacrifice that could provide for their forgiveness.

All you have to do is read Revelation to see that he supports judgment. I mean, we can

see that very clearly. I think there, there's something that happens in the Old Testament that I think sheds light on this because I don't think Jesus would have called for this kind of judgment while he was on earth here.

I agree. And that's because it's a different kind of situation. Yes, it's a different situation.

He, he came to seek in the save that which was lost. He came to reveal God's grace and he wanted to be associated with that. And he wanted to introduce that whole idea.

I mean, not introduced because God has always been gracious, but he wanted to be associated with that. And I think about what happens in the Old Testament in 1 Chronicles 28, 3, when David wants to build a house for the Lord, he wants to build a temple. And God says, you shall not build a house for my name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.

Now, it's not that David was doing something God had forbidden. He was actually expanding the, this was according to what God wanted him to do. He was expanding the borders of Israel to the borders that God had given them.

So he hadn't done something wrong. It's just that God did not want his temple, his place of worship to be associated with war. He wanted the worship to be associated with peace and joy and love and all these things.

This is God's heart for us. This is the core of who God is. I mean, he, he judges people because he's just, but he's not enjoying that the way he's enjoying showing his grace and mercy and love towards his people.

So when Jesus came, it's like when, you know, David doesn't build a temple because God doesn't want the temple associated with military action. Well, God didn't want Jesus associated with judgment. He wanted, he wanted Jesus to be associated at that time.

He wanted Jesus to be introducing the salvation and the grace and the forgiveness. And so I don't, he wouldn't have said that at the time, but that's only because at the time that's what he was doing. Yeah, keep in mind when Jesus addressed Capernaum for their lack of belief when he was there preaching, he said, the judgment, your judgment is going to be more severe than the judgment on Sodom Gomorrah.

Oh, it's easy to just think, Oh, Sodom and Gomorrah judgment. Well, what was that? That was a complete destruction of the entire city. Every man, woman and child of the city saved those who escaped.

Okay. Jesus doesn't give the slightest hint that there was any impropriety in that, that judgment over that community. And, and he says, it's going to be worse for some others.

So this idea that Jesus was about love and not judgment can only be held by people who

don't read Jesus. And just think here, the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3 16, for God's who loved the world, he gave his only begotten son, etc. We all know that one.

Okay. For God did not send his son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not judged.

He who does not believe has been judged already. Wait, wait, who's saying that? That's the same. This is Jesus has because he is not believe.

So he's saying, I'm not here for judgment. I'm not here for salvation. But if you don't take the salvation, you're going to get judged.

It's right there in the same passage. All right. Because he is not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

This is the judgment that the light has come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil. What's that? That's a judgment on their behaviors. Okay.

And then later on, he says, he who believes in the son has eternal life, but he who does not believe obey the son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. That's the last verse in chapter three. So the chapter where Jesus gives the most famous verse in the Bible about the love of God and forgiveness is filled with Jesus comments about the wrath and judgment of God.

That this is the inevitable consequence because of man's rebellion and loving darkness rather than light of a rejection of the free offer of forgiveness that he gives. All right, Greg, here's one more question from Paige. Okay.

I'm paraphrasing a question I saw on Facebook that asked if those who haven't heard of Jesus then get judged on their hearts and their work, then wouldn't it be kinder to not to spread the gospel so it's easier for people to qualify for the afterlife? Okay. Well, so it's interesting the way the question was asked because first they will be judged on their hearts. Okay.

And that would be easier for them to qualify. This presumes that a judgment on their heart will qualify them. Right? Okay.

So what is famously, I'm trying to think it was Jeremiah, their hearts are deceitfully wicked. Who can know it? Right? Romans chapter three, for there's none who does good, not even one. And their hearts are an open grave, you know, or their mouth is an open grave, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, poison of asps on their lips.

There's, I mean, this is ugly. And by the way, this is Paul quoting the Old Testament. So both testaments are now confirming this notion of the, this total fallenness of every

human being.

And so when, when, when one says, well, they'll be judged by the light they've been shown. If we are speaking with understanding, we are, we are not offering that as kind of another way out. Because Paul, when he talks about this says the consequence based on the light they are shown is that they are without excuse.

A phrase he uses twice in chapter in the last half of chapter one of Romans. So there was this a certain, you know, an attempt to parry the challenge about those who'd never heard by saying they'll be judged by the, by the light that they've been shown. Okay.

And that, that might kind of get you around a concern here and get back to the light that the person you're talking to has been shown, which is more important. Okay. But the light that has been shown to people doesn't save them.

It's adequate to condemn them. And that's the point that Paul makes in Romans one. So it isn't like, well, this other method makes it easier for them to qualify.

So to speak. Again, Paul actually says if, if it were the case that we could be saved by works, then Jesus died for nothing. That's right.

Jesus is the way out from the bad news of our works trying to save us. He's the only way out. So I think this is just where people get confused and they assume it's possible for us to work our way.

Or at least have the right attitude and show enough sincerity. You know, Paul says in Romans 10, I'm 10. I bear the Jews witness that they have a zeal for God.

But not in accordance with knowledge for not knowing about God's sense of righteousness and seeking to establish their own. They did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. And he's that's where he says Christ is the end of the law of righteousness for all who believe.

So, so sincerity is not going to help. Having a good heart, so to speak, kind of sorta. What we think is not going to help because God sees the heart and he says it's not really good.

All our righteous deeds are like filthy rags and our inequities like the wind carries away. And it certainly is not easier for people to qualify for the afterlife according to their works. That's not easier.

In fact, Jesus is the only one who was ever good enough. The only one. Okay, well, let's squeeze one more question in here from Lisa.

Why did God choose to destroy the world in the day of Noah? So early on, relatively speaking, when he knew the salvation plan from before the beginning? Well, this is one

of those why questions. Why do God questions that is difficult to answer since it presumes insight into the mind of God on his decisions, which we don't often have or usually have on these kinds of things. All we can do is speculate.

All right. He knew there's a salvation plan, but that doesn't mean it was inappropriate for him to demonstrate his wrath towards sin by judging in a temporal fashion. I mean, I don't entirely understand the logic of the question.

Even though he has a salvation plan for the world, that how does that preclude that he knows about? And he knows how it's all going to end? How does that preclude acts of temporal judgment? And there were many of them that the flood was one. Book of Revelation has more and then in between, especially some against, well, like we talked about earlier, the Malachites and some against the Jews, God's own people for their waywardness for doing the same thing that the Canaanite cultures were punished for doing for so many years. So I just don't understand how the fact that God has a plan for salvation in the long run somehow obviates temporal punishment in the short run.

Well, I think the plan also involves a very specific thing. God was going to take Abraham. He was going to create a nation.

He's going to give them their laws. He was just reading in Isaiah where it said, no, I can't remember where it was, but God created the nation to reflect him to the world. So God had a plan to work through Israel to reveal himself to others in very specific ways and to lead to the Messiah.

He had the sacrificial system. There was a whole, there was a whole thing going on here. Now, he says that he destroyed the world in the time of Noah because every inclination was evil all the time among the people.

So basically, he's limiting evil. He's creating a world where he can do this plan, which requires, like I said, creating a culture that can reflect him to the world. Now, if everyone is, if the world is so far gone that the culture is perpetuating a kind of evil that is just beyond anything that God wants to use to work with, then he can definitely remove that from the world.

And I think you're right. I think he was also revealing his judgment to people throughout the Bible. They point back to the flood.

Peter does that a lot. They do that in the New Testament too, but they look back to God's judgment. And that also is part of his plan because showing that he's just and there will be judgment is part of creating a nation and revealing himself.

All right, Greg, we're out of time. But these were great questions. Thank you, Lisa and Paige and Greg and Kevin.

We appreciate hearing from you. And if you have a question, send it on Twitter with the hashtag SDRask or go through our website. Just go to our hashtag SDRask podcast page and you will find a link there and you can give us your question.

This is Amy Hall and Greg Coco for Stand to Reason.