

How God Governs Man—Part 2: Problems in Redemption

Review

- What is the basis for God's law?
or What is the end of the law? Why did He give it to us?
- Did God have to give us the law?
(What was His motive?)
- Can God force us to keep the law?
- How *can* God hope to secure the end of the law?
- What is the basis for the governmental sanctions of the law?
- How strong, therefore, must the sanctions be?

A. God has a dilemma.

1. God's love motivated Him to impose death as a consequence of sin – in His justice.
2. God's love predisposes Him to show mercy to us.
3. He cannot do the latter without destroying the benefit of the former.

B. What the problem is not:

1. God is not unwilling to forgive.
He is not harboring resentment or bitterness toward us.
 - a. When Adam sinned, he thought God had changed, and he hid himself.
 - b. God came looking for Adam and Eve and worked to repair the relationship. (Genesis 3:8–21)
 - c. "Come boldly before the throne of grace." (Hebrews 4:16)
 - d. Read references.
2. It is not that man's sin is too great.
 - a. God's mercy is greater than that.
 - b. "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20)
3. It is not a problem that man does not seek after God. (read Romans 3:10-18)
God was seeking after man.
 - a. In the Garden.
 - b. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." (John 12:32)
 - c. "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:27-28)

4. It is not a problem that man is unable to repent.
 - a. He commands us to repent.
 - b. We are able to obey His commandments. Deut 30:11-14; Matt 11:30; 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Jn 5:2-4
 - c. Some who believe man is unable to repent say that God must force us to repent (this view is called "irresistible grace"). This comes from an unbiblical view of the depravity of man.

C. What *are* the problems that God has in bringing man back to Himself?

They are due to the fact that God is both *just* and *merciful*.

The problem is with God's justice.

1. God must be just to His own government.
 - a. God said, "The soul that sins shall die."
 - b. If he later says, "The soul that sins shall live," he would be arbitrary and unjust.
 - c. Finney's Systematic Theology, page 196, item 9.
2. God must be just to His own character (how man thinks of God)
 - a. When man rebels against God, we pervert our view of God's character.
 - i. Adam
 - ii. Cain
 - iii. Romans 1:18 & 25
 - b. We make God out to be a tyrant or an ogre.
3. God had to be just to man's selfishness – He must show man the wrongness of his sin (how man thinks of himself).
 - a. He must bring man to understand the destructive nature of his own sinful actions.
 - b. God cannot have an intimate loving relationship with someone who is proud, selfish, and rebellious.
4. God has to be just to man's will.
 - a. For it to be a love relationship, it must be voluntary on both sides.
 - b. God has to do something, or man cannot be saved.
 - c. Man must respond to God.
 - d. "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3) – All of our doctrine must fit the concept of a relationship.
 - e. God must leave man free, he cannot use force, or the relationship is meaningless.

D. Problems Solved – In the atonement, in the death of Jesus, God has found a way.

Read Romans 3:23-26

1. God was just to His own government. God *passed over* sins until the time when Jesus' crucifixion could provide a basis to forgive people justly.
 2. God was just to His own character.
 - a. Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) and "He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15)
 - b. Our view of God's character is repaired.

"I thought God was an ogre, but He gave Himself so that I could be free from sin."
"I thought God was an ogre, but He became a man and went through all of the problems that I go through."
"I thought God was an ogre, but He made a way that I could come to know Him, though I was in rebellion to Him."
 3. God was just to man's selfishness.

In the cross, man gets a public display of what his selfishness does.
 4. God was just to man's free will.

In the cross, man is left completely free. God has made provision for man to be forgiven, if he meets the conditions.
The Grounds and Conditions of Salvation – "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;" (Ephesians 2:8)
 - a. Grounds – God's part (grace, resulting in the atonement)
 - b. Conditions – Man's part (faith, resulting in repentance, baptism)
- E. If God can accomplish the end of the law, the goal of His government, in some other way, He can set aside the penalty of the law for an individual.

References

(New American Standard Bible)

God's Inclination to Forgive

Isaiah 30:18

Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you for the LORD is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him.

Isaiah 48:17-19

¹⁷Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,

"I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit,

Who leads you in the way you should go.

¹⁸"If only you had paid attention to My commandments!

Then your well-being would have been like a river,

And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

¹⁹"Your descendants would have been like the sand,

And your offspring like its grains;

Their name would never be cut off or destroyed from My presence."

Matthew 23:37

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."

Hebrews 4:16

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 Peter 1:20-21

²⁰For He was *foreknown before the foundation of the world*, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

²¹who through Him are believers in God,

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our sin is not too great to be forgiven.

Romans 5:20

The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but *where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,*

It is not a problem that man does not seek God.

John 12:32

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

Matthew 11:27–28

²⁷"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.*

²⁸"Come to Me, *all who are weary and heavy-laden,* and I will give you rest.

The Grounds and Conditions of Salvation – Grace and Faith

Romans 5:2

through whom also we have obtained our introduction by *faith* into this *grace* in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 2:8

For by *grace* you have been saved through *faith*; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Faith Is Not a Work

James 2:17

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Salvation is conditional.

Mark 16:15–16

¹⁵And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

¹⁶"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

John 6

²⁸Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

⁴⁰"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 8:24

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

John 11:25–26

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Acts 10:43

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

Acts 16:31

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 4:5

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Galatians 2:16

nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

1 John 5

¹⁰The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

¹¹And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹²He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

¹³These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

God is just to His government.

Romans 3:23-26

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Acts 17:30

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,"

God is just to His own character.

1 John 1:1–3

¹What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--

²and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

³what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

John 1:18

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

[New International Version]

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

John 14:7–9

⁷"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 17:5–7

⁵"Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

⁶"I have manifested Your name [or character] to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

⁷"Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

a·tone

a·tone (e-ton¹) *verb*

a·toned, a·ton·ing, a·tones *verb, intransitive*

1. To make amends, as for a sin or fault: *These crimes must be atoned for.*
2. *Archaic.* To agree.

verb, transitive

1. To expiate.
2. *Archaic.* To conciliate; appease: "So heaven, atoned, shall dying Greece restore" (Alexander Pope).
3. *Obsolete.* To reconcile or harmonize.

[Middle English *atonen*, to be reconciled, from *at one*, in agreement : *at*, *at*. See *at* + *one*, *one*. See *one*.]

— **a·ton¹·a·ble** or **a·tone¹·a·ble** *adjective*

— **a·ton¹·er** *noun*