

HOW CAN A MAN BE RIGHT WITH GOD?

AT FIRST GLANCE, the very question seems absurd to many. After all, doesn't God simply forgive and accept everyone? Isn't everyone already "right" with Him? But the fact is that every religion - in one way or another - is trying to answer the question of how a person can be right with God. Roman Catholics go



to Mass, Muslims to Mecca, and followers of other religions perform rituals and try to obey various rules and regulations in an attempt to get right with God. Why would vast multitudes of people do such things unless they know they are not right with God, but instead stand guilty before Him? The fact that so many are striving to make peace with God proves that they don't yet have peace with God, so they seek to quiet their troubled consciences by trying to earn His forgiveness and favor with their religious performance.

THE ATTITUDE OF MOST non-religious people is, "How can God not forgive everyone?" But the real question is, "How can God rightly forgive anyone?" Think about this for a moment. If a judge let a rapist or child killer go free after paying a small fine, would you think that judge was loving and good, or corrupt and evil? What would you think of a judge like that? In the same way, if God simply winked at sin and refused to punish anyone, then God Himself would be corrupt and evil. But God loves what is right, so justice must be done. God is good, so He must punish the guilty.

AND BECAUSE GOD'S LOVE and goodness are infinite, He infinitely hates all wickedness and unrighteousness. God will have His day in court, and He won't stop at punishing murderers and rapists, but He will punish all sin wherever it is found.

THIS IS A TERRIBLE PROBLEM FOR US because "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (ROMANS 3:23) "There is none righteous, not even one." (ROMANS 3:10) You might say, "Yes, I admit I've sinned, but I'm not as bad as Stalin or Hitler!" Of course, we can all find someone worse than us to compare ourselves with, but on Judgment Day we won't be tried in comparison with others, but in comparison to the perfect standard of God's righteousness. "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God." (ROMANS 14:12) In order to be good enough to get to Heaven you have to be morally perfect for every single moment of your life. "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (JAMES 2:10) God is so holy and righteous, that just one sin is enough to make us guilty before Him, and we have all sinned a great deal more than once! On Judgment Day "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (ROMANS 2:16), and "there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known." (LUKE 12:2) Every wicked thought we have had and every wicked deed we have done will be made known to all. God says, "vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (HEBREWS 10:30-31)

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ALL OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR RELIGIONS —except for one— attempt to reconcile men to God through some form of works. In these religions a guilty sinner attempts to earn forgiveness and pacify the holy wrath of an infinite God by performing certain rituals or deeds. But the Bible says, “For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight.” (ROMANS 3:20) The gap between a finite sinful man and the infinite Holy God is so big that no amount of good works, no amount of “turning over a new leaf,” and no amount of religious activity can make a person right with God. Anyone trying to earn the right to Heaven by performing good deeds is under the curse and condemnation of God! “For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.’” (GALATIANS 3:10)

**Seek the Lord while He
may be found; call upon
Him while He is near...**

THE ANSWER IS FOUND in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who offers humanity a living hope. Without beginning and without end, Jesus Christ “is the image [the exact likeness] of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible

and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him.” (COLOSSIANS 1:15-16). Isaiah 9:6 even calls Him “The Mighty God”! At a point in time the “Mighty God” chose to become a man in order to reconcile us to our Creator. Jesus lived a sinless and perfect life, and in an act of infinite love He suffered and died upon a cross as a willing substitute, paying the penalty on behalf of those who had sinned and rebelled against Him. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (ROMANS 5:8) After suffering on the cross Jesus cried out, “It is finished.” (JOHN 19:30)

THREE DAYS LATER JESUS ROSE AGAIN to life, proving that He had completely satisfied the wrath of God on behalf of all those who abandon any hope of trying to save themselves, and instead trust in Him alone to rescue them from the wrath of God. Those who trust in Jesus no longer have to strive to appease God with their own works, because Jesus has already appeased God in their place! “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (ROMANS 5:1)

DEAR READER, you can be right with God through the death of Jesus Christ! “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” (1 PETER 3:18) What are you waiting for? Don't gamble with your eternal salvation! “Your life is a vapor” (JAMES 4:14), and you have no way of knowing which second will be your last. “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” (ISAIAH 55:6-7)

GOD TAKES NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked, but desires for you to turn from your sins and live! (EZEKIEL 18:23) You have a personal invitation from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (MATTHEW 11:28-29)

By Kevin Williams and Garrett Holthaus

Questions? Contact Us Below:

Art by Chris Powers

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