

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Where God's proactive effort and man's response meet****Where God's proactive effort and man's response meet - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/12 8:53**

I am studying Jeremiah pondering the dynamic synergy of God's proactive efforts to turn His people back to Himself and their own response to His gracious initiatives. The precision of the grammar in the LXX (Septuagint) shines a light upon God's desire for mercy and the stubborn resistance of the people that brought judgment upon them.

Here are some insights gained from the grammar. The command for the people "to turn" is repeatedly written using both the imperative mood, and the passive voice. The implication is "allow yourselves to be turned" - indicating that God is actively seeking to turn them through Jeremiah and His other forms of correction.

God's declaration to the people to "yield to His attempt to turn them" is conjoined with their response. Here is an example from Chapter 3:12-13

"Be turned back unto Me, O house of Israel, and I will not strengthen My face against you, because I am merciful, and I will not despise you unto the age. Know fully your unrighteousness, that you were ungodly unto your God, and you dispersed your ways unto every stranger under every shaded tree, but you have not obeyed My voice says the Lord. Be turned sons having revolted, because I will have dominion over you..."

Later in the same passage God's promise of healing is set before the people. Verse 22 - "Be turned, sons actively turning away, and I will heal your wounds." If the people who are actively turning away, will yield to God's efforts to turn them back, they will be healed. This same dynamic relationship is found in Matthew 13:15

For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them.

The quotation from Isaiah has all the responses of the people in the "active voice" they have closed their eyes, they have not heard with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts, and they shall turn and I will heal them. Men must turn - then God will heal.

God's proactive effort to turn men back to Himself must be received by those He is seeking to turn. Without His gracious attempt to "turn us", we would be forever lost. But, although He calls men "be turned" - He does not force that turn upon men. His efforts must be received. Men must yield to His grace and mercy. They must cooperate with God.

When men refuse to receive His initiatives, Jeremiah records it this way. Chapter 5:3

O LORD, do not Your eyes look for truth?

You have smitten them,

But they did not weaken;

You have consumed them,

But they refused to welcome correction.

They have made their faces harder than rock;

They have refused to repent

All of us can be confident that God is proactive in seeking to turn men back to Himself. He seeks to "humble men" and we need to "be humbled". He seeks "to turn men" and we need to "be turned". His efforts are proactive and prolonged because He desires mercy. Nevertheless, His grace must be "welcomed" - received. Men must yield to His attempts to humble them and turn them. If they yield to His attempts and actively turn toward Him - they will be healed.

The words, the grammar is "God breathed" - infused with His spirit and life to show us the dynamic relationship of grace and faith. God inspired the writers to choose the specific grammar to make His desire for mercy and our responsibility to receive His efforts clear beyond all doubt.

mak

Re: Where God's proactive effort and man's response meet - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/12 12:47

GIMEL

Deal bountifully with Your servant,
That I may live and keep Your word.

Psa 119:18

Open my eyes, that I may see
Wondrous things from Your law.

Psa 119:19

I am a stranger in the earth;
Do not hide Your commandments from me.

Psa 119:20

My soul breaks with longing
For Your judgments at all times.

Psa 119:21

You rebuke the proud—the cursed,
Who stray from Your commandments.

Psa 119:22

Remove from me reproach and contempt,
For I have kept Your testimonies.

Psa 119:23

Princes also sit and speak against me,
But Your servant meditates on Your statutes.

Psa 119:24

Your testimonies also are my delight
And my counselors.

Amen

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/13 5:50

God desires mercy - and He will have mercy upon whom He has mercy and He will harden whom He hardens - but is there a basis for His decision that involves man's response?

Will God withhold mercy from those He has promised mercy if they turn away from doing righteousness? Will He give mercy to someone to whom He had decreed judgment, if such a man turns from His wickedness to do righteousness?

Consider God's words through Jeremiah in chapter 5:7-9

"On what basis will I be merciful to you? Your sons have forsaken me and have sworn by things that are not gods. I fed them, and they committed adultery and stayed in prostitutes'™ houses. 8 They became wanton horses; each one vied for the wife of his neighbor. 9 Shall I not inspect them at these things?" says the Lord. "Or shall my soul not be avenged on a people such as this?"

We must embrace all God's words related to mercy. Those that declare it does not depend upon man's desire or effort, and those that place a condition upon turning away from wickedness. It must never be one or the other - but always both.

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/13 6:02

Hi Mak,

Thanks for your scholarship on the Septuagint translation for the Jeremiah passages you cite.

I just wanted to ask you whether you see any distinction God has made with the mercy He showed His people Israel and that He showed through OT history to the rest of the gentile nations. It seems like you are extrapolating from His expressions towards Israel and applying that to the rest of mankind, the nations and gentiles at that time. Maybe you aren't and I'm just over stating your conclusions?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/13 8:00

Thanks for the question. I have not considered that, but I will give that some thought. That is a wonderful part of this for um, that other brothers can help you consider aspects you have not yet thought through.

Since I have been in Jeremiah, I will offer this passage from chapter 12 for consideration towards the question.

Chapter 12

14This is what the LORD says: "As for all My evil neighbors who attack the inheritance that I bequeathed to My people Israel, I am about to uproot them from their land, and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. 15But after I have uprooted them, I will once again have compassion on them and return each one to his inheritance and to his land. 16And if they will diligently learn the ways of My people and swear by My name, saying, "As surely as the LORD lives" "just as they once taught My people to swear by Baal" then they will be established among My people. 17But if they will not obey, then I will uproot that nation; I will uproot it and destroy it, declares the LORD."

In Isaiah the Lord even promises favor for Ammonites and Moabites whose hearts have been moved towards Him. Chapter 56

3Let no foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say,
"The LORD will utterly exclude me from His people."

And let the eunuch not say,
"I am but a dry tree."

4For this is what the LORD says:

"To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases Me
and hold fast to My covenant"
5I will give them, in My house and within My walls,
a memorial and a name
better than that of sons and daughters.
I will give them an everlasting name
that will not be cut off.

Please consider these passages and let's continue searching out His mercy together.

Mak

Re: Where God's proactive effort and man's response meet - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/5/13 8:18

Brother Alan,

Yes this is a worthy topic ðŸ™•ðŸ•»

I too appreciate the hand wherewith you have drawn out this point to be observed, contemplated and discussed- hopefully finding concordance amongst the body of believers

I can still remember years ago while in discipleship training it occurred to me that this was a subject that requires attention, the subject of where does the sovereignty of God end and the free will of man begin,...

Tho, if Iâ€™m being honest, I concluded it was a fluid border in that it moves- receding and advancing depending on the person and circumstances... but (if Iâ€™m reading you correctly) I also concluded there is indeed a dynamic aspect to it complete with emergent properties that signifies communion. Itâ€™s a subject that is so important to our faith but because of such intense personal passion, people sometimes shrink back from the perceived pushback and the subject goes without exploring .

Re: Where God's proactive effort and man's response meet - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/13 13:26

Hi Mak,

I am aware that God is always practicing mercy in all the earth and delights to do so. Of course, his movements of mercy are entirely up to Him and I think we agree on that. What I was referring to in my question is how does your analysis on the "imperative mood/ passive voice" play out with regard to the other nations. I was wondering whether your knowledge of the Greek in this regard reveals that He had the same heart and attitude toward the nations as He obviously did to His people Israel in commanding, pleading and reaching out His hand for repentance. Finally, I was wondering how you see God extending His message of "turning" to the nations when they did not ostensibly have access to Jeremiah et al.? I hadn't thought about that last question before and it seems puzzling to me. I am thinking of the example of Nineveh and the preaching of Jonah. There God had a simple but effective message of soon judgment which He described as merciful.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/13 13:57

Here is an example of God's mercy...

Job 33:14

For God may speak in one way, or in another,
Yet man does not perceive it.

Job 33:15

In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds,

Job 33:16

Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction.

Job 33:17

In order to turn man from his deed,
And conceal pride from man,

Job 33:18

He keeps back his soul from the Pit,
And his life from perishing by the sword.

Job 33:19

â€œMan is also chastened with pain on his bed,
And with strong pain in many of his bones,

Job 33:20

So that his life abhors bread,
And his soul succulent food.

Job 33:21

His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones stick out which once were not seen.

Job 33:22

Yes, his soul draws near the Pit,
And his life to the executioners.

Job 33:23

â€œIf there is a messenger for him,
A mediator, one among a thousand,
To show man His uprightness,

Job 33:24

Then He is gracious to him, and says,
â€œDeliver him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransomâ€™;

Job 33:25

His flesh shall be young like a childâ€™s,
He shall return to the days of his youth.

Job 33:26

He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him,
He shall see His face with joy,
For He restores to man His righteousness.

Job 33:27

Then he looks at men and says,
â€œI have sinned, and perverted what was right,
And it did not profit me.â€™

Job 33:28

He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit,
And his life shall see the light.

Job 33:29

â€œBehold, God works all these things,
Twice, in fact, three times with a man,

Job 33:30

To bring back his soul from the Pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

God's mercy is extended to man over the process of time. God's grace is given "To bring back his soul from the Pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life.

As a side note...Job lived outside the time of Israel.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/13 14:14

Thank you for clarifying your question Robert. Pondering your question, brought this passage to mind from Jeremiah 18

Here is the passage from the Lexham English Septuagint

The word that came from the Lord to Jeremiah, saying,

2Â "Rise up and go down to the house of the potter, and there you will hear my words." 3Â And I went down to the house of the potter and look! He was doing work on the stones. 4Â And the vessel that he was making fell in his hands, and he remade it another vessel, as it pleased him to do. 5Â And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 6Â "Shall I not be able to do with you just as this potter, O house of Israel? Look, in my hands you are like the clay is to the potter. 7Â Finally I will speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to remove and destroy it. 8Â And let that nation turn from all their evil, and I will change my mind concerning the evil that I have planned to do to them. 9Â And finally I will speak concerning a nation and a kingdom to rebuild and to plant it, 10Â and they do evil before me so as not to hear my voice. And I will change my mind concerning the good things that I have spoken to do to them

The Greek of the LXX in verse 8 for "turn" is an aorist, passive, subjunctive, - indicating the translators of the ancient Hebrew text saw the "turning" as potential but not indicative. This is followed by the word "I will heal" which is in the future, active, indicative. This is a very common conditional clause. If the condition is met, this is the action that will follow.

Although, as you have indicated, Israel, would have had abundantly more access to God's servants and mercies than other nations, here God extends the same hope for mercy unto them.

I hope that helps, or at least directs us to the next clarification.

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/13 14:24

thanks Mak. I get what you are saying that God holds out a compassion if they will turn to God or fear God as Psalm 103 says. What I was asking is if you had any cites for the proposition that the nations knew of this extension of mercy. Where would they have learned the condition? I'm not doubting the condition but rather contemplating the communication of it.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/13 14:33

Thanks Robert,

I will ponder that with you and if you have any insight now or receive any, please share it with me. I look forward to searching out the matter with you.

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings to SEARCH IT OUT!

mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/13 17:30

I have one thought. Not sure it is an insight. How will they believe if they have not heard and how will they hear if someone doesn't preach and how will someone preach if he isn't sent?

Just as today, there are many, many millions that God has said he desires that they repent.

So, you are left with three choices. Either God has direct revelation to millions without a human preacher. Second, the reason many haven't heard is the fault of God's people. Or, third, God has not intended to grant some, or many, the mercy that He has granted to others.

This is the big elephant in the theological room. It always seems to come down to this when God's people attempt to peer into the mystery.

I'm not trying to start a discussion about the character of God or God's people. I'm just trying to state the conundrum.

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I realize none of those choices is a good one in the sincere hearts of many.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/5/13 19:16

Quote;

Romans 2:14 Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. 15They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts,

Luke 10:29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/14 7:25

I believe it is safe to allow what has clearly been stated to set the parameters for concluding matters that have not been fully revealed.

For example: This statement establishes the reason for God rejecting His own called, and chosen people.

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Here, beyond any doubt, it was THEIR CHOICE -not God's.

The testimony of the prophets establishes this over and over again. A people who become "unhearing", who "stiffen their necks" so as "not to receive correction", who "thrust away" the covenant God made with them and "turn their backs" to God - bring about their own destruction.

God "repays" them according to their deeds. His judgments are righteous. Heaven and earth are His witnesses to every attempt He makes to turn men towards Himself.

Solomon was inspired by God to write - "a man who remains stiff-necked after MANY REPROOFS will suddenly be destroyed without remedy."

Why are men destroyed and not saved? Should not what has been clearly stated guide us in our questions about those who in our minds have not heard or had opportunity?

mak

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/14 8:46

Pro 1:20

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

Pro 1:21

She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

Pro 1:22

How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

Pro 1:23

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Look to this promise, "I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

Who is the "Wisdom of God?"

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2020/5/14 11:01

Re:Rookie,...
Scripture given,

Prov.1:20,
"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets"

Then you ask:
"Who is the "Wisdom of God?"

.....
Yes,.. I would say that *wisdom is The Spirit of The Living God.
...The One that calls to us on our *path, .. our walk, ,... guiding us by His Spirit..... God , who is The Word and The Spirit of That Word.

.....
elizabeth

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2020/5/14 17:59

Again,.. as to thinking on Alan's post about Gods mercy and tying it together with the Scripture that Jeff offered.

.....
Re:Jeff,

Prov.1:20,
"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:"

.....
Thinking on how The Lord,...The Spirit of The Living God,does cry in our streets,.. where we walk,.. to *turn us to His *wisdom,.. to His Way,.. ..
..... how He, in His infinite wisdom sees His Life and Godliness.

Would that be His Grace, calling, and a mercy ?

Even His judgments are a mercy....?

"-"

Hope I am not spoiling the subject that you all are so graciously having.

â€ˆâ€ˆâ€ˆâ€ˆâ€ˆâ€ˆâ€ˆ
elizabeth

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/15 7:12

Hi Sister Elizabeth,

I was touched by Mak's original post. In his study of the Scriptures, I saw someone who is drilling down into the meat of the words of God. He is discovering what has been from the days of Adam. Mak's thoughts reminded me of Michelangelo's painting of "The Creation of Adam." What Mak is revealing is how I view the touching of God to man. The Scripture s I injected were posted to highlight what Mak is writing of.

In Michelangelo's painting, God is actively reaching out to Adam who is passively receiving what God is working out. The point of where God and man touch in the painting, to me, is where "wisdom" is birth in Adam.

The Holy Spirit is God's power to convey wisdom to man. Wisdom is the substance that Paul writes of in his definition of faith. This substance is what creates the hope in those who receive God's wisdom.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/15 13:02

Quote:

-----I have one thought. Not sure it is an insight. How will they believe if they have not heard and how will they hear if someone doesn't preach and how will someone preach if he isn't sent?

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So, you are left with three choices. Either God has direct revelation to millions without a human preacher. Second, the reason many haven't heard is the fault of God's people. Or, third, God has not intended to grant some, or many, the mercy that He has granted to others.

This is the big elephant in the theological room. It always seems to come down to this when God's people attempt to peer into the mystery.

I'm not trying to start a discussion about the character of God or God's people. I'm just trying to state the conundrum. I realize none of those choices is a good one in the sincere hearts of many.

A couple thoughts came to mind. In Romans 10:18 Paul goes on to say,

â€œBut I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: â€œTheir sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.â€œ

Paul is quoting Psalm 19:4 there. Psalm 19:1-6 says,

â€œThe heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat.â€œ

In Romans 10:18 Paul is comparing the extent of the preaching of Christ via His preachers with the extent of the preaching of God's eternal power and Godhead via the celestial bodies. In other words, just like God has always used the celestial bodies to declare His glory He has now been using his preachers to declare the Gospel of Christ to all people.

From Psalm 19 and many other passages throughout Scripture, I believe we can deduce that God has always sufficientl

y revealed His glory to all people throughout all time. Granted, that general revelation and the acknowledgment of it has not been sufficient to save people. But it has been a means of God's "drawing" of people nonetheless. It has always been up to sinners (both Jew and Gentile) how they respond to that "light." The Spirit of God has been "striving" with the unbelieving world in different ways throughout the history of mankind.

In Noah's time the message of salvation via repentance and faith in the true God went out to the whole world and almost all perished without excuse in their rejection of that message.

The same can be said of Gentile nations throughout history. They have always had enough light to draw them closer to God, but most have chosen to remain in their darkness. Some have responded positively to God's dealings with them and God has been merciful and faithful to reveal Himself to them. We see that throughout the Old Testament as well as the New. Think of Nineveh for example in the time of Jonah. They could have avoided God getting so provoked to anger by them, they could have avoided God forcefully sending reluctant Jonah to them if they would have repented beforehand. If they would have responded positively to God's general revelation beforehand God would have revealed Himself to them one way or another.

Today, people who have never heard of Christ can come to know Him if they respond positively to the light they have. We hear of many testimonies of people in different countries getting the gospel via different means (a missionary, a gospel tract, a vision, etc.) after they respond positively to God's general revelation.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/16 11:47

Brother Oracio is right on with his reflection. The God of the OT, according to Scripture, has not limited His mercy and grace to only Israel. Just think about the grace extended to Egypt... Scripture repeatedly mentions Egypt in the end times as a nation saved by God.

Often times it is we who put restraints on how God saves.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/16 14:53

Prov.1:20,

"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:"

Christ laments

Matthew 23:37

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Paul speaks of Christ in this way...

1 Corinthians 1:30

"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God-and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption-"

From the moment Adam chose to eat from the tree of knowledge of both good and evil, God through Christ has extended mercy to His creation. Mercy to all in that, the wisdom of God cries out,

Proverbs 1:23

"Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you,"

For all are guilty no not one is righteous.

But:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And, that the true Light which gives

light to every man coming into the world...has become for us the wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Wisdom is learned and those who acquire this wisdom, will experience the ancient path, the light of life, and be known by the Sent One.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/16 19:39

//Today, people who have never heard of Christ can come to know Him if they respond positively to the light they have. We hear of many testimonies of people in different countries getting the gospel via different means (a missionary, a gospel tract, a vision, etc.) after they respond positively to God's general revelation.//

A child is born in squalor and poverty in a slum in New Delhi. He grows up knowing only Hinduism and his days are spent scrounging in dumps etc to find a few scraps of food for he and his siblings to eat. This is his daily existence until he dies at age 14 after being struck by a vehicle in the street.

There are countless thousands in various parts of the world just like him.

I only bring up this little vignette to demonstrate that it is very easy to say that everyone has an equal chance to respond to an unknown gospel, but in reality it's a bunch of rubbish.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/17 0:02

Todd wrote:

Quote:
-----A child is born in squalor and poverty in a slum in New Delhi. He grows up knowing only Hinduism and his days are spent scrounging in dumps etc to find a few scraps of food for he and his siblings to eat. This is his daily existence until he dies at age 14 after being struck by a vehicle in the street.

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I only bring up this little vignette to demonstrate that it is very easy to say that everyone has an equal chance to respond to an unknown gospel, but in reality it's a bunch of rubbish.

If you haven't listened to Ten Shekels and a Shirt by Paris Reidhead I highly recommend it as it addresses the issue of "the poor heathen who've never heard the gospel."

I believe there is such a thing as an age of accountability and I believe 14 yrs old is past that age. Therefore that young man would be held accountable and punished for the multitude of his sins against God and against the light he inherently had, if he did not seek the true God in sincere repentance and faith before he died. If he clung to his Hindu idol/s till his dying breath he'd have no one to blame but himself.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/17 8:02

//If he clung to his Hindu idol/s till his dying breath he'd have no one to blame but himself.//

Haha- how would he know they were idols?

Let's just say I'm glad God is the one doing the deciding. Of course I don't have the nasty view of God that some folks cling to for dear life.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/17 8:30

There are two kinds of people in the world who will suffer the wrath of God. Those who reject God revealed in the Gospel and those who reject God revealed in nature. They both are already under wrath because they suppress the truth about what can be known about God. Not that they don't know. They reject. Why, because they love their evil. This view of sinful mankind is God's view of sinful mankind. Who is sinful mankind? Those who reject God as He has mercifully revealed Himself so that they could give Him thanks and give Him glory. They are now under wrath (condemnation, anger, fury, judgement), yet He reaches out for a time with mercy.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” - John 3:16-21

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. - Romans 1:18-20

One thing many have difficulty with is accepting the utter sinfulness of mankind and yet having God's love in their heart that causes them to love that person anyway. It's more than humility that does this. It's having God's love shed abroad in your heart. When you can have someone hate you violently for bringing them the Gospel of mercy and yet love them anyway, that is when your heart matches with God's.

I want to add this. We can love the idea of mercy to mankind because we can think there is something inherently good in man, or we can love mercy because there is nothing good in mankind but something so praiseworthy in the mercy and goodness of God towards completely undeserving mankind. This may seem obvious but there seems to be a dividing line in Christendom between God being merciful because of the good in man and God being merciful solely because of the goodness in God.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/17 9:43

Thanks Robert,

Can I add a WHY men are sinful?

When Paul discovered the “law of sin” in his members producing all kinds of evil desires within him and making him do what he did not want to do and hindered him from doing what he agreed with the Law was good to do, He was able to say this - “IT IS NO LONGER I - but SIN in Me”.

The only thing valuable in men is that they have been made in the image and likeness of God. SIN entering the world has corrupted that original image and likeness. Men sin because of SIN in the flesh. This is why the Law was weak and unable to establish righteousness.

The good news of Jesus Christ is that He has both power and mercy to overcome SIN in the flesh. We can preach the g

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Where God's proactive effort and man's response meet

Good news that men can become united with Christ in His death to SIN and be freed from slavery to the law of sin and death. The old man (under bondage to SIN) will be rendered inoperative and the spirit of life in Jesus Christ will create a NEW man created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Men are evil BECAUSE OF SIN. Christ came to set men free from slavery to SIN. Judgment will come not because men are "sinners" - it will come because they refuse the offer of pardon and release through Jesus Christ.

Mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/17 10:04

Mak, you are right that Scripture says men are slaves to sin. Do you also agree that Scripture says that men are sinners because they have a nature that loves or desires sin?

Your response might lead some to think that men are sinners because of forced servitude. I think the John 19-21 verses clearly establish that man refuses to come to God because they love sin. Am I misreading your response or what the John verses say? Man's conscience may strive against sin but his evil desires are willing participants or so Scripture seems to say.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/17 12:11

Quote:
-----Haha- how would he know they were idols?

Let's just say I'm glad God is the one doing the deciding. Of course I don't have the nasty view of God that some folks cling to for dear life.

Hi Todd, not sure if you saw Fletcher's post in the thread about those who've never heard. It was about a monk who separated himself from Buddhism and his whole community in order to seek the true and living God, and about how God revealed His name to him through a missionary. Very encouraging account. It lines up with the truth of God's Word that God condemns idolaters and their idolatry and holds them accountable and without excuse regardless of whether or not they ever hear the gospel.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2020/5/17 12:15

Todd wrote:

"I only bring up this little vignette to demonstrate that it is very easy to say that everyone has an equal chance to respond to an unknown gospel, but in reality it's a bunch of rubbish."

Colossians 1:15-17

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn one of all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

Todd, if one says that Christ does not reveal to creation that He exists, is Christ responsible for those who you believe do not have an "equal" chance to be saved? In other words, are you saying that Christ depends on man to preach the Gospel?

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/17 12:52

Thanks for the question Robert. It is worthy of clarification. We are both victims of SIN entering the world and accomplices for cooperating with SIN.

Romans 6 makes this clear - "Just as you used to offer your members in slavery to sin , so now offer your members in slavery to righteousness."

Discovering that it is not "I" but "SIN" in me still leaves me the wretched man. But, it helped Paul understand SIN in his members. I have found that this helps sinners who are wrestling like Paul with the contradictions of their stated purpose and their actions.

God is willing to forgive our cooperation with SIN, but He is unwilling to give our lack of cooperation with His Spirit.

Mak

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/5/17 13:28

Hi Mak, it might go deeper than "accomplices". IT is more Biblical I find to say that the sin we succumb to is a part of our soul, our body, mind and heart, a part of our nature, and a part of our character. Here are some testimonies of God about me before a new birth which attest to this reality even if I didn't have this testimony about myself in my own estimation:

The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes. - Proverbs 21:10

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44-46

among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. - Ephesians 2:3

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? - Jeremiah 17:9

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. - Genesis 6:5

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2020/5/17 13:40

Robert wrote:

Quote:
-----This may seem obvious but there seems to be a dividing line in Christendom between God being merciful because of the good in man and God being merciful solely because of the goodness in God.

Yes, I agree. We cannot pamper the depravity of man in his unconverted state. During real revivals of the past the preaching was such that it humbled man in his rebellion against God and exalted the holiness, righteousness and justice of God, while offering the remedy of Christ crucified and risen.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/17 13:58

Jeff wrote:

// is Christ responsible for those who you believe do not have an "equal" chance to be saved?/

Yes! Thank goodness for that, because Christ ALWAYS does what is right.

First I want to clarify that I DO believe God reveals himself in nature. But that is a very far cry from growing up in a Christian home or listening to Tozer preach.

I guess it possibly boils down to whether one believes God is fair. I think so, which is why I can't accept that God w

ould do outrageous things, like holding persons accountable for facts they do not know exist.

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2020/5/17 14:24

Thank you Robert. No disagreement here from me.

Mak

Re: Brother Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2020/5/17 15:17

Quote;

I guess it possibly boils down to whether one believes God is fair. I think so, which is why I can't accept that God would do outrageous things, like holding persons accountable for facts they do not know exist. '

Yes but... 'fair' is a very subjective term whereas the scriptures use the phrase 'impartial', which God is in fact impartial and/or 'not a respecter of persons'.

Which is another way of acknowledging that God has given everyone a 'measure, gift, or talent of faith' and (my understanding) is that we are ultimately judged based on what we did with that measure of faith or how we invested the talent He gave us.

I believe we agree that a man will be judged according to the 'light' he has and as such a person whom had access to the whole council of the word would be in a position to more thoroughly exercise himself unto godliness than a person whom never heard the gospel in a formal respect but only insofar as he chooses to do so. If the man who has a little light uses it to its fullest capacity and another person has lots of light and only uses it in part to grow in godliness then the judgement would indeed be fair and impartial based on the response to the gift.

Many parables speak to this end...

Ten talents

Pearl of great price

Treasure buried in a field

Vinedressers mistreatments of those sent

The King calling those for His Sons wedding

Etc...

So while my intention is not to in any way diminish the role of knowledge or wisdom or virtue or prudence, it is also important to understand they are to be added to our faith which itself is a gift from God.

2 Peter 1 - outlines this as a dynamic structural framework to plot out our growth unto godliness.

Again,... 'faith' Hence Hebrews 11 -

So my current understanding is that the Lord gave us all a measure of faith and we will all use it,... either to grow and thereby exercise ourselves unto godliness or to grow and exercise our flesh 'old man' unto religious activities. (And by 'religious' I mean anything we do religiously)

I'm liking very much how Mak parsed this out when he submitted that the Lord will forgive our 'compliance' with sin but will not be so forgiving of our unwillingness to respond likewise to His grace which (if we respond in faith) will lead us out of sin as a conceptual framework for our lives effectively dethroning our 'old man' and turning our eyes from a life of self focus to see Jesus high and lifted up whereby the Holy Spirit can lead us into an intimate fellowship ultimately consummating in our communion with God in Christ Jesus :) But each and every step we take with or toward this end is exclusively by faith and even a mustard seeds worth

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/5/17 15:52

Fletcher -Iâ€™m going to respond in the â€œwhat about those that donâ€™t knowâ€ thread.

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2020/5/17 17:01

May I interject Brother Gbile Akanniâ€™s here ?

I listened to this message this morning, and realized that what he is saying, is so fitting with the conversation that you are having...

so would you allow him to share his voice w/ us ?

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elizabeth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wruXGzbd0AA&feature=share>

02, â€œTransformation, Translation, Not Twisting â€œ
Gbile Akanni