

My Punishment Is Too Great

Genesis 4:13

I. Introduction: 1, 2

1. **3** Sin brings a terrific and horrible burden of guilt to the sinner. In response to the guilt and punishment of his sin, Cain cried out: *“My punishment is greater than I can bear!”* (Gen. 4:13)
2. Men are masters at devising excuses and rationalizations to alleviate the burden of their guilt.
3. The worst and most despicable of these excuses are clothed in the garb of religion.
4. In such cases, men seek to excuse their sins by blaming God.
5. Men blame God for their sin when they...

II. Discussion:

I. 4 Flesh Too Weak:

- A. Is man born with a “sinful nature”? Most of the denominational world believes that (at least their creeds, catechisms, and “articles of faith,” teach such a false notion)(**Psa. 51:5**: *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.”*).
- ☛ “Man is prone to sin as the sparks fly upward.”
 - ☛ “I’m just human! That’s just the way God made me.”
 - ☛ “He can’t help it, he’s always been that way.”
- B. But what does God say?
- (1) *“Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes.”* (Eccl. 7:29)
 - (2) Sin and guilt don’t come from man’s “fallen nature,” but from one’s choice to sin!
 - (a) Man was created in the “image” of God; in that regard God gave us a “free will”; He allows us to choose between right and wrong (Adam and Eve, Cain: **Gen. 4:6-7**: *“So the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’”*).
 - (b) Sin and guilt don’t come from man’s nature, but from one’s choice to sin: **Ezek. 18:20**: *“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”*
- C. Does man acquire a sinful nature? To deny man has a “sinful nature” is wrong. It is absolutely true that we have a “sinful nature.” But the question is: “Where does this sinful nature come from?” Are we born with it; are we given no choice? Or, is it something we cultivate by habit and practice?
- (1) It is not something we are born with (Ezek. 18:20).
 - (2) It is not something God “implants” in our DNA! **Jas. 1:12-15**; I Cor. 10:13: *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*
 - (3) It is something we cultivate! **Isa. 53:6**: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;”*; **Psa. 14:3**: *“They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”* (cf. Rom. 3:10-12; Eph. 2:1-3 look up commentary on these verses).

D. ** What about Jesus? He shared in our “humanity”! **Heb. 2:14-17**

- (1) Note that “in all things He had to be made like His brethren...” (v. 17). If God made man with a “sinful nature” and Jesus “in all things He had to be made like His brethren” then that theory demands He was born a sinner! Balderdash! Absolute nonsense!
- (2) **Rom. 8:3**: “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,”
- (3) **Heb. 4:15**: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (**2 Cor. 5:21**: “...He...knew no sin...”; **1 Pet. 2:22**: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth,”).
- (4) The notion then that the flesh is too weak due to some “sinful nature” given man by God is not only just plain “wrong”; it is also blasphemous because of its ramification in regards to Jesus’ being sinless. It would be impossible for Jesus to be both sinless and human if such a theory were true!

2. 5 Temptation Too Strong:

- A. Some want to blame God for their temptation and sin: “Why did God do this to me?” “Why is God tempting me with this?” James denies God tempts us to do evil (**Jas. 1:13-14**: “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.”).
- B. Some want to believe that they are just “overwhelmed” by temptation; whatever tempts them is just too strong. “It (put in whatever temptation you want) is just too strong, I can’t handle it!” “Every time such and such happens, I just can’t avoid it!”
 - (1) Paul said we are “able to bear” temptation: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. 10:13)
 - (2) To teach, or believe, we just can’t overcome any temptation is false, it’s an indictment of God’s character; it’s blasphemy because it makes God a liar.
- C. “We live in a sinful world, so we just can’t help ourselves.”
 - (1) In essence that was Adam’s flimsy excuse: “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” (Gen. 3:12)
 - (2) Rather than Adam, we need to imitate Job: “But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” (Job 2:10)
 - (3) There is no doubt the “world” exerts a powerful influence on everyone, but God expects us to overcome the world. Are the temptations of the world too strong? No...! **John 4:4**: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”; **1 John 5:4-5**: “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

3. 6 God’s Law Is Too Difficult:

- A. We cannot understand God’s word, it’s just too hard! Absolutely untrue (**Eph. 3:1-5**; **Mk. 12:37**: “...the common people heard him gladly.”; **1 Cor. 1:26**: “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.”).

B. We cannot keep God's Word? It's just too hard! Some argue long and loud that one cannot keep God's Word.

- (1) Moses told the children of Israel otherwise: **Deut. 29:29:** *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."*
- (2) God's instructions and commandments are not too difficult to understand and obey (**Deut. 30:11-14**).
- (3) Moses' words are repeated in the New Testament concerning the New Covenant (**Rom. 10:6-10**).

4. **7** *Judgment Is Too Hard:*

A. God is just too hard on us?

- (1) The one talent man thought so: **Matt. 25:24-25:** *"Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours."*
- (2) The accusation was completely untrue: God had...
 - (a) Given them His goods.
 - (b) Given to each of them according to his ability.
 - (c) Only reaped where He had sown.
 - (d) Expected no more from each servant than his ability.
 - (e) Richly rewarded those who were faithful over just a few things.
 - (f) Expected no more from the "one talent" man, then he expected from his other servants.
- (3) The one talent man has the audacity to accuse his master of being hard, when in reality his master had been most fair and generous.
- (4) Many today accuse God of the same thing...of being too hard:
 - (a) "You mean everyone has to be baptized to be saved? That's too hard!"
 - (b) "You can only remarry if your wife/husband committed adultery? That's too hard!"
 - (c) "God just doesn't want us to have any fun!"
- (5) Does He demand obedience from all? Yes! **Acts 17:30-31:** *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*
- (6) Does He just leave us to fumble around on our own? No! **Acts 17:26-27:** *"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;"*

B. **8** God's way is not fair?

- (1) "How can God expect everyone to obey the gospel in order to be saved? What about that savage in the dark, deep jungle? That's unfair; if God's that unfair I don't want anything to do with Him!"
- (2) "How can God expect Christians to repent and confess of every sin they commit? This is too hard!"
- (3) The Jews accused God of unfairness:

- (a) **Ezek. 18:25:** “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair?”
- (b) God’s fairness is seen in his righteous judgment and provision for repentance: **Ezek. 33:17-20:** “Yet the children of your people say, ‘The way of the LORD is not fair.’ But it is their way which is not fair! 18 When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. 19 But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it. 20 Yet you say, ‘The way of the LORD is not fair.’ O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you according to his own ways.”

C. God’s judgment is too harsh?

- (1) Some complain that for God to judge us upon what we have done is too harsh (e.g., William Barclay).
- (2) I once studied the Bible with a lady that objected that God would judge us for what we’ve done, so I turned to Romans 2.
 - (a) God plainly and clearly tells us we will be judged upon the basis of our deeds and that there will be those rewarded for doing good and those who will be punished for not doing good (**Rom. 2:5b-11**).
 - (b) There are a whole host of passages that teach a “final judgment” followed by an eternity in heaven or hell. There is no doctrine more clearly taught than the notion all men will face a “final judgment” where their Creator will determine their eternal fate based on the “deeds” they’ve done! Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 4:5; Jude 14-15; Rev. 20:11-15 (****Acts 17:30-31:** “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”).

III. Conclusion: 9

1. When we sin let’s not further compound our mistake by trying to excuse our sin, blaming others, rationalizing, or blaming God.
2. It is a sinful and dangerous thing to claim the flesh is too weak, the temptation too strong, the law or commandment too hard to obey, or too difficult to understand.
3. Instead, we should humbly confess our sin before God and ask His forgiveness. He promises to forgive! What a wondrous and amazing thing!

1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 2:1-2: “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

- (a) If you’re not a Christian you need to: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)
- (b) If you’re a Christian and in sin, you need to: “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” (Acts 8:22)

Adapted from a sermon (*Blaming God*) by Wayne Greeson in *Sowing the Seed* 3, pp. 25-28