

How Can God Be Both Just and Loving?

Selected Scripture

“Jonah wants a God of his own making, a God who simply smites the bad people, for instance, the wicked Ninevites and blesses the good people, for instance, Jonah and his countrymen. When the real God—not Jonah’s counterfeit—keeps showing up, Jonah is thrown into fury or despair.”

- Tim Keller

“Jonah finds the real God to be [mysterious] because he cannot reconcile the mercy of God with his justice. How, Jonah asks, can God be merciful and forgiving to people who have done such violence and evil? How can God be both merciful and just?”

- Tim Keller

I. Our Heavenly Father is a Just God.

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If we receive justice, we get exactly what we deserve – nothing more or less.

God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you.

He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (2 Thessalonians 1:6, 8)

“Contrary to popular opinion, with God there's no such thing as mere forgiveness. There is only justice.”

- Jerry Bridges

II. Our Heavenly Father is a Loving God.

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In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

Propitiation: “a sacrifice that bears the wrath of God and turns God’s wrath to favor.”

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
(John 3:16)*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).