

God is Just

(Genesis 19:14-26; Numbers 20:3-12)

Introduction

We've been learning about God's attributes. An *attribute* is a character trait or quality about someone.

What are some of things that we've learned about God already?

- God is **the great creator**—He created the whole universe! We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created.

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

- God is **holy**—He is without sin; He is perfect in every way.
Who is like you among the gods, O LORD—glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders? (Exodus 15:11)

There are many wonderful things about God: God is **good**, He is **loving, forgiving, and faithful**. Today we're going to focus our attention on the fact that God is **just**.

Have any of you ever received consequences (good or bad) for something you have done? [Discuss what happened and if they felt the consequences were fair. Try to get examples of both *good* consequences (for example, getting thanks for doing a kind deed or getting paid for doing a job) and *bad* consequences.]

What do you think it means that God is **just**?

[Write the following on the board:]

God is Just –

- God sets the standard for right and wrong
- God judges all behavior fairly
- God punishes sin

- God rewards obedience
- God punishes or rewards as quickly or slowly as He wants to

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You that You are a God of love. But, to really appreciate the fact that You are a gracious and merciful God, help us to grasp what it means that You are also a just God who must punish sin. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Lesson

In the book of Genesis, we learn that God had called Abraham to leave his country (present day Iraq) and move to the Promised Land, present day Israel.) Abraham brought his nephew, Lot, with him.

Abram was a very rich man. He and Lot had so much livestock that the land could not support them all. So, they parted company, and Lot moved to a place in the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley.

Genesis 13:12-13

So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. (13) But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the Lord.

The people in Sodom and its neighboring city of Gomorrah were so evil that God had to destroy them.

Genesis 18:20

So the Lord told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant.

God sent two angels (appearing as men) to warn Lot and his family to get out of the city. When the angels arrived, they found Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom.

Genesis 19:1

That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground.

The angels told Lot what God was about to do and told them to run for their lives.

Genesis 19:12-13

Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. "Do you have any other relatives here in the city?" they asked. "Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. (13) For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the Lord, and he has sent us to destroy it."

The angels told Lot to get his family out of the city. And God expected them to obey His warnings.

Genesis 19:14

So Lot rushed out to tell his daughter's fiancés, "Quick, get out of the city! The Lord is about to destroy it." But the young men thought he was only joking.

Lot's sons-in-law mocked (made fun of) the angels' warnings. They didn't take them seriously.

Do you believe God when He says that *the wages for sin is death?* (Romans 6:23) He's not kidding! He says that there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22). We deserve to be punished for our sins.

Genesis 19:15-17

At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out

right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!" (16) When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. (17) When they were safely out of the city, one of the angels ordered, "Run for your lives! And don't look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away!"

God, fortunately for us, is not only just, but He is merciful! Isn't it wonderful to know that God provides a way of escape?

When you are tempted to do ungodly things by the kids at school or by the characters on TV, remember what God's Word says,

1 Timothy 6:11

But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

God's word here is telling us to run for our lives from wrong, just like the angels told Lot to run from Sodom.

This means that you need to say "*No, thank you*" when tempted to sin; switch the channel or turn off the TV instead of allowing yourself to be amused and entertained by immoral ideas. Pursue (or choose) what is right: Read God's Word so you know right from wrong; listen carefully to wise parents and teachers who want to protect you from being hurt. If you have friends that tempt you to do wrong things, make new friends who love God. Otherwise, you may face terrible consequences that you will live to regret.

Although Lot was spared when God sent fire from heaven to destroy the cities of the plain, he lost everything.

Genesis 19:23-25

Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. (24) Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. (25) He utterly destroyed them, along with the

other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation.

Lot lost all of his possessions and even some of his family.

Genesis 19:26

But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt.

Back in verse 17, the angels warned Lot not to look back or stop, but to run for his life. Why do you think Lot's wife looked back? (She didn't believe God, she was curious to see what was happening; Lot was very rich so she probably had a beautiful home with servants and lovely possessions that she might have longed to hold on to.)

This is an example of when God chose to issue immediate consequences for disobedience. Lot's wife was punished immediately when she disobeyed God's warning.

An example of God delaying his punishment for sin is when Moses sinned against God.

When Moses was leading the Israelites through the desert from Egypt to the Promised Land, the people often grumbled and complained. One time they were hot and tired and thirsty. They needed water.

God wanted to use this as an opportunity to teach the people about His mighty power, provision, and protection.

Numbers 20:8

"You and Aaron must take the staff and assemble the entire community. As the people watch, speak to the rock over there, and it will pour out its water. You will provide enough water from the rock to satisfy the whole community and their livestock."

What did God tell Moses to do? (*Speak* to the rock and it would pour out water.) Let's see if Moses did what God told him to do.

Numbers 20:9-10

So Moses did as he was told. He took the staff from the place where it was kept before the LORD. (10) Then he and Aaron summoned the people to come and gather at the rock. "Listen, you rebels!" he shouted. "Must we bring you water from this rock?"

Moses got the rod and went back to the people and called them to come together at the rock. But he was very, very angry...

Numbers 20:11

Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the staff, and water gushed out. So the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.

Why do you think Moses struck the rock?

When you're angry you don't always think straight, do you? Moses was so angry he didn't *speak* to the rock as God had told him to do; he struck the rock with the rod, not once, but twice!

God loved the people so much he made the water gush out of the rock so that they and their animals could drink. But Moses had disobeyed God.

Do you think that God would have to punish Moses for disobeying Him? Yes! All sin must be punished. Let's see how God punished Moses for being disobedient.

Numbers 20:12

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust Me enough to demonstrate My holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!"

Not go into the Promised Land! After all those years of traveling over dusty sand! Moses must have wept many bitter tears. How he must have regretted not obeying God!

Even though Moses obeyed God many times before, God expected him to set an example for the people he was leading.

God expects you and me to set a good example to others, too. When you do naughty things that brings disgrace to God's name. You are not being a good example to others. God wants you to lead others to Him.

Do you think that God loved Moses less for being disobedient? God still loved Moses even though he had sinned against Him. God loved him with a Father's love; just like he loves you.

There is always forgiveness with God. If you do anything that displeases God all you need to do is go to Him in prayer and ask Him to forgive you. Then you must stop doing those things that are not God pleasing.

But, you have to understand, that even though God forgives you for your sin, sin *must be* punished. There *are* consequences to your sin. Some sins have bigger and longer lasting consequences. For Moses, he was never allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Do you think that was fair of God? [Teacher, let the children discuss.]

Did Moses throw a fit and quit serving God because he couldn't go into the land? No, he knew he had done wrong. He kept right on loving and serving God. Moses knew God to be fair. He would trust God with his punishment.

In accepting his punishment without complaint, he became a good example to the people following him. He showed people that he still believed in God and trusted Him.

This is an example of when God chose to issue delayed consequence for disobedience. Moses wandered the desert faithfully with the Israelites and after forty years was not allowed to take them into the Promised Land.

God is still the same just God that He was in the time of Lot and Moses. He still punishes sin and rewards obedience.

Hebrews 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

God is a just God and nothing can escape Him.

Romans 14:10b

Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

We will all stand before God some day and have to give Him an account.

Ecclesiastes 11:9

Young people, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do.

He rewards obedience and punishes sin.

What are you doing to be sure that you are following God's way? Are you living a life that is pleasing before the Lord?

What are your three favorite TV shows? [Teacher, ask: How do the characters feel about God? How can you tell? What kinds of things do the characters do that are wrong? How does this TV show remind you of something you learned about God?]

Sin is serious to God.

God is always fair. He always makes the right decision. When you learn that God is just, you will realize that God must punish your sin. But, because of God's love, His justice works perfectly with His mercy.

That's why He sent Jesus to pay for all sin on the cross. Now because the price is paid, God is "just" NOT to give us the punishment that we deserve if we will turn to Him.

Romans 3:23-26

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (24) Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. (25) For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, (26) for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

However, if someone doesn't turn their life over to Him, He must and will punish those who insist on going their own way instead of His. God's punishment for sin is eternal separation from Him.

But God has made a way of escape for you. The Lord Jesus Christ took the punishment for your sin when He shed His blood on the cross.

Jesus died but is alive in heaven today. He will give you His free gift of forgiveness and everlasting life if you believe and trust in Him and what He did on the cross.

John 3:16

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

If you do not turn your life over to God, Satan will destroy your life. But you can choose God's way.

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to really grasp the fact that You hate our sin. You said that all sin must be punished and if we don't trust and believe that You took our punishment for us, then we will be doomed to eternal life without You. Help us to fall down on our knees and thank You for providing the way of escape for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Work Sheet

Making God's Word Personal

(See the attached worksheet.)

Game Center

Knock Knock

Preparation:

Write the following words (or others you can think of) on index cards, one word on each card, and place the cards in a shoebox or basket. Repeat the words as needed to have enough cards for each child.

- KINDNESS
- FRIENDLY
- COMPASSION
- PEACE
- GENTLENESS
- PATIENCE
- FORGIVENESS
- LOVE

Play:

Select one child to be king (or queen). Have the King sit on a chair (throne) at one end of the room, and have the remaining kids draw

one card from the basket. Then have them line up in front of the king. The object is for children to come up with a situation that describes the word on their card. For example, if they picked the card KINDNESS, the child may say something like "*My little brother wanted to play with my toys, so I let him. This is Kindness.*" The king will judge if the situation truly described the word kindness, and if so, will let the child enter the kingdom.

What you will do:

(After selecting the king and lining up the children with their cards...) The king is a very wise king. He wants to be sure you know what is pleasing to God before he lets you enter his kingdom. That is why the king gave each of you a word. You must show the king you know the meaning of the word by giving an example of something you can do that matches the word. For example, if your word is CARING, you could give me an example like "*My grandma was sick, so I help her by cleaning her house.*" If the king agrees that your example describes being CARING, he will let you enter the kingdom. If he does not agree, you pick another word from the basket, go to the end of the line and try again.

The play starts with each of you saying, "*Knock-Knock.*" The king will ask, "*What word do you have?*" then each of you, in turn, will say your word and then your example. If the king accepts your example, he will say, "*Please enter my kingdom.*" If the king does not accept it, he will say, "*Sorry, be away with you.*"

The make-believe kingdom in this game may resemble heaven, but it is not heaven. There is no way to get to heaven on our own, not by what we know or what we do. That's because heaven is a free gift. Only by receiving Jesus in our heart do we receive this wonderful gift.

However, as children it is important to know what behaviors are Godly and what behaviors are a result of a sinful nature. By knowing the difference, we can begin to recognize there is a lot of sin in our life. When we admit we are sinners, we begin to understand the need for God's grace and forgiveness.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Have you ever received a good consequence for something you have done?
2. Have you ever received a bad consequence for something you have done?
3. What does it mean that God is just? (He is righteous and fair.)
4. Does God always issue consequences for our behavior immediately? (No)
5. Why did God have to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? (The people were evil.)
6. God says that all sin must be punished. What did God say was required for Him to forgive sin? (The shedding of blood)
7. When you are tempted to do ungodly things, what does God's word tell you to do in 1 Timothy 6:11? (Run from wrong; choose to do the right thing.)
8. Why did Lot's wife look back? (She hated to leave that city of sin.)
9. What did God tell Moses to do to get water for the people? (Speak to the rock and it would pour out water.)
10. What did Moses do? Was he obedient to God? (No, he struck the rock.)
11. Why did Moses strike the rock? (He was angry.)
12. Why did God punish Moses for striking the rock? (God expected him to set a good example for the people he was leading.)

13. Was that fair of God to punish Moses? (All sin must be punished.)
14. Do you think God loved Moses less for being disobedient? (God still loved Moses even though he had sinned against Him.)
15. Why is God just to NOT give us the punishment that we deserve for our sins? (He sent His own Son to pay for all sin on the cross. Jesus paid the price for our sin.)
16. Does Jesus' death on the cross pay for all people's sin? (John 3:16 says that "*God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*" You must believe.)
17. What happens to people that don't trust in what Jesus did for them on the cross? (They spend all of eternity separated from God.)

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]