

# DOCTRINE OF THE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE JUSTICE OF GOD

## (Basic Series)

### I. Introduction

- A. This doctrine combines elementary principles of BD necessary for all believers to correctly understand and orient to God's directive will for their lives. Heb.5:12
- B. It is the foundation of understanding the Person and work of Christ on the cross and what His salvation provides in terms for men to have a maximum relationship with God. Heb.6:1
- C. It acknowledges and recognizes the divergence in the terms used for salvation and faith as they are to be interpreted and categorizes them in their proper context and frame of reference as seen in:
  - 1. Salvation or deliverance from:
    - a. Temporal, experiential or physical deliverance in time. Psa.18:48; 37:39-40; 38:22; Dan.6:27; Joh.11:12; 12:27
    - b. Deliverance from the eternal consequences and penalty of sin. Joh.3:16-17; 10:9; Act.4:12; 16:30-31; Eph.2:5,8
    - c. Deliverance from the power of sin experientially in time. 1Cor.15:2; 2Cor.2:15; 1Tim.2:14-15; 1Pet.4:18
    - d. Deliverance for the believer from loss of reward at the Bema seat, based on their works. Phi.2:12; 1Tim.4:16 cp. 1Cor.3:10-15 esp. vs.15
  - 2. Faith and its ramifications:
    - a. Inhale faith being intellectually believing the content of BD at the point of intake. Gal.3:5; Heb.4:2
    - b. Saving faith being the belief in the historical Person of Jesus Christ as God incarnate as the specific object of faith. Joh.3:15-18
    - c. Exhale faith being the application necessary to manifest our inhale faith and by such is referred to as faith plus works. Heb.13:7; cp. Jam.2:17,20,26
    - d. BD/the entire content of Scripture that is believed and called the "faith". Eph.4:5; 1Tim.4:1
- D. This doctrine also places into perspective the phases of salvation as it pertains to men and what is necessary to fulfill each phase (Ph):
  - 1. Ph<sub>1</sub> addresses man's initial act of saving faith placing them into the plan of God and securing eternal life.
  - 2. Ph<sub>2</sub> addresses the believer's Christian life and that which is necessary to experientially exploit the POG and E.L.
  - 3. Ph<sub>3</sub> relates to man's eternal niche based on Ph<sub>1</sub> and Ph<sub>2</sub> realities.
- E. In order to understand the adjustments to God, one must first know and understand the attributes of God and that He is:
  - 1. Sovereign. Rom.8:28-30
  - 2. Perfect and absolute righteousness (+R). Rom.4:3-8
  - 3. Perfect justice (+J). Deu.32:4; 1Joh.2:2

4. Love. Joh.3:16
  5. Eternal Life. Joh.3:15
  6. Omniscient. 1Kgs.8:39/ Psa.33:13-15
  7. Omnipotent. Joh.1:3; Isa.44:24
  8. Omnipresent. Psa.139:7-8; Act.17:27
  9. Immutable. Num.23:19; Psa.33:11; Heb.13:8
  10. Total veracity. Num.23:19; Deu.32:4
- F. God's righteousness and justice, taken together, make up His holiness. Isa.5:16
  - G. God's holiness is absolute; He never acts in such a way as to violate His own holiness (He always acts according to standards of absolute righteousness and justice).
  - H. God is always fair, never unfair. Deu.10:17; Rom.2:11
  - I. God's justice always fairly administers the verdict that His righteousness demands.
  - J. God is also love. Rom.5:8
  - K. However, God's love never causes Him to act in a way that violates His own righteousness, as +R/J is His first love. Psa.11:7; 33:5; Pro.15:9; Heb.1:9
  - L. God's love is filtered through His justice.
  - M. God's love is the motivation for His plan while His righteousness and justice govern the administration of His plan.
  - N. Since God is immutable, He will never compromise His own absolute righteousness and justice for even one person. (Joh.3:16; *"For God so loved the world that He gave His uniquely begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him may not perish, but will have eternal life"*. That gift is a supreme manifestation of God's love for mankind. God loves mankind, but He will not compromise His righteousness by saving even one person who rejects the free gift of salvation provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.)
  - O. Man either adjusts to God's justice through positive volition or God administers His justice to the individual through discipline and wrath. Rom.1:18
  - P. God is sovereign. Since He possesses all the facts, He makes all the rules. His rules are all according to the absolute standard of His righteousness and justice and are revealed in His Word.

- II. God commands that all men make three adjustments to His justice.
  - A. The salvation adjustment to the justice of God (SAJG). Act.16:31
  - B. The rebound adjustment to the justice of God (R<sub>B</sub>AJG). 1Joh.1:9 cp. Eph.5:18
  - C. The maturity adjustment to the justice of God (MAJG). 2Pet.3:18

- III. Basic vocabulary words describing God's Justice.
  - A. Old Testament (Hebrew).
    1. צַדִּיק – tsadaq; to be righteous, to justify.
    2. צֶדֶק - tsedek; right (noun).
    3. צַדִּיק - tsaddiq; righteous (adjective).

4. תְּדָאָה – tsedaqah; righteousness (noun).
- B.** New Testament (Greek).
1. δικαιώω – dikaiōo; to justify, to be justified.
  2. δικαιοσύνη – dikaiosune; righteousness (noun).
  3. δίκαιος – dikaios; righteous (adjective), just.
  4. δικαίωσις – dikaiosis; justification.
  5. δικαίωμα – dikaioma; statute, ordinance of law.

**IV.** The SAJG. Rom.3:21-26

- A.** It is a free gift from God (vs.24 cp. Rom.6:23; Eph.2:8,9).
- B.** It is made possible through propitiation. Propitiation simply means satisfaction and Christ's work on the cross, satisfied (propitiated) God's righteousness and justice (vs.25 cp. Heb.2:17; 1Joh.2:2; 4:10).
- C.** It is instantaneous by means of faith in Jesus Christ (vss.22,23 cp. Act.16:31).
- D.** It is related to God's love. Joh.3:16; Rom.5:8
- E.** It results in the imputation of God's righteousness to all that believe (vss.22,26,28 cp. Gal.2:16; 3:24).
- F.** It is related to God's grace and results in eternal life for all that believe. Joh.3:16; 6:40,47 cp. Tit.3:7
- G.** The application of faith for the SAJG is believing that the object of salvation is the historical Person of Jesus Christ as God incarnate that died on the cross for the sins of mankind and 3 days later was resurrected. Joh.20:31; 1Joh.5:13
- H.** Our belief is exercised literally “into” Him as the preposition εἰς/eis so designates. Joh.3:16,18; 3:36; 4:39; 6:29; et al.
- I.** This places the individual into union with Christ and now their position in the POG is “in Him”. 1Cor.1:2; 6:11; Gal.3:26-27; Phi.1:1
- J.** That love is the motivating factor for salvation and because that love is expressed in Christ, then anyone in Him cannot be separated from that love. Joh.3:16 cp. Rom.8:35, 37-38 See Doctrine of Eternal Security
- K.** That eternal life is imparted and union in Him established upon this act of faith denotes that any judgment of eternal death or condemnation is no longer the issue. Joh.3:15,16; 3:36; 6:40,47; Rom.8:1; 1Tim.1:16
- L.** Upon making the SAJG, Ph<sub>1</sub> is completed by establishing a secured eternal relationship with God. *See Doctrine of Eternal Security*

**V.** The R<sub>B</sub>AJG. 1Joh.1:1-10

- A.** This epistle was written to believers and for believers. 1Joh.2:1
- B.** The subject in the context is fellowship between believers and believer's fellowship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (verses 3,6).
- C.** Fellowship with God must be understood in terms of two separate but related concepts:
  1. Eternal fellowship: This comes through faith in Jesus Christ and cannot be broken by the events of this life. When a person believes in Jesus Christ he cannot lose his salvation via the SAJG.

2. Salvation Ph<sub>1</sub> is the work of God toward all who believe in His Son. God is perfect and God's perfect work cannot be improved upon, nullified, or destroyed by any member of the human race to include a recanting of faith after the fact. 2Tim.2:13
3. Temporal fellowship: This refers to the believer's fellowship with God experientially in time (this life).
  - a. When you believed in Jesus Christ you also entered into fellowship with God in this life. 1Cor.1:9
  - b. Since we continue to possess the OSN/STA, we continue to sin. Eccl.7:20
  - c. It is sin that breaks experiential fellowship with God in time. 1Joh.1:6 cp. Eph.5:18 *See Doctrine of the STA/OSN*
  - d. To restore fellowship depends on the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Eph.5:18
  - e. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the OSN/STA is neutralized/isolated and we have fellowship with God in time. Eph.5:8
- D. Fellowship with God in time is related to our walk. The term “walk/ περιπατέω – peripateo” indicates the conduct of our Christian life. 1Cor.7:17; 2Cor.5:7; Phi.3:17,18; Col.1:9,10; 2:6,7
- E. Christ is the standard for our walk. 1Joh.2:6
- F. God is absolute light and there is no darkness in Him (1Joh.1:5).
- G. God's character is such that we cannot walk in darkness and have fellowship with Him (vs.6):
  1. Walking in darkness = walking out of fellowship, under the umbrella of human viewpoint sponsored by the OSN/STA. Cp. 1Cor.3:3; 2Cor.10:2-4
  2. Walking in light = walking in fellowship, under the umbrella of Divine viewpoint and filling of God the Holy Spirit. Cp. Gal.5:16; Eph.5:6-21
  3. If we say that we have fellowship with God while under the influence of the sin nature, we are liars who do not practice the truth, which is set forth in the Word of God.
- H. If we say that we have no OSN or that we have not sinned we are making God out to be a liar and the truth of his Word is not resident in us (vss.8,10).
- I. Since we do sin and sin removes us from temporal fellowship, it follows that God has established a grace means for restoration of fellowship with Him.
- J. Confession of our sins is that grace means (vs.9; *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*).
  1. Confess “ὁμολογῶ – homologeō”, means to name or cite the sin (There is no connotation of feeling sorry in homologeō; cp. Rev.3:5; 1Tim.6:12).
  2. "If" set up a third class condition in the Greek.
    - a. The third class condition sets up a maybe yes/maybe no contingency.

- b. Maybe we will confess our sins and maybe we won't. That choice is left to our volition; we decide.
- 3. If we do confess, God does the same thing every time (He is faithful); He forgives and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.
- 4. It does not violate His righteousness and justice to forgive our sins in time because Christ paid the penalty for us.
- K. Christ's work on the cross is the frame of reference for our forgiveness and restoration to fellowship (vs.7).
- L. The result of confession is cleansing and instantaneous restoration to fellowship.
- M. Because of our continued existence as flesh/OSN/STA, R<sub>B</sub>AJG is an issue throughout the believers Ph<sub>2</sub> (this life).
- N. It is the mechanics to deliver/save the believer from the power of sin experientially in order that they can serve God in time.
- O. R<sub>B</sub> is an expression of exhale faith or an application of BD (1Joh.1:9), though the power of forgiveness is effectuated by the work of Christ on the cross and therefore it remains a work of grace, not works of men.
- P. Based on this reality, the R<sub>B</sub>AJG becomes the bridge between salvation according to faith apart from works and salvation according to faith plus works. Eph.2:8-9 cp. to Jam.2:14,17,18,20,24,26
- Q. Jesus taught this same principle of R<sub>B</sub> to His disciples in the upper room in "operation foot-washing". Joh.13:1-11

## VI. The MAJG.

- A. It is this adjustment that is to occupy the believer's Ph<sub>2</sub>.
- B. It is obviously dependent upon both the SAJG and the R<sub>B</sub>AJG being a reality in the believer's life.
- C. The MAJG answers the terms of salvation as it relates to loss of reward regarding the believer's Ph<sub>3</sub> or eternal niche.
- D. It recognizes the Biblical perceptions and comparisons of life that is considered the norm vs. abundant life (Joh.10:10) that is eternally equated with the norm of resurrection life vs. a "better" resurrection (Heb.11:35). Cp. 1Cor.9:24 – Again, this is written to believers cp. 1Cor.1:2.
- E. It also answers why some believers will "*shrink away from Him in shame at His coming*". 1Joh.2:28
- F. It demands that the application of all aspects of faith are made to include obviously saving faith (though a one time application), inhale faith, exhale faith and the content of Scripture/BD as "the faith".
- G. Believers who do not possess Bible doctrine are classified as spiritual babies by the Word of God.
- H. It is the will of God that all believers pass from this state of spiritual infancy and attain to the status of spiritual maturity; spiritual maturity is commanded. Heb.6:1,2
- I. There are three levels of growth as seen in the parable of the grain in Mar.4:26-29:
  - 1. Blade = spiritual infant.
  - 2. Formed head = believer in early stage of growth or adolescence.

3. Mature grain in the head = spiritual maturity.
- J.** This is also seen in the analogy of the three levels of human development: childhood, adolescence and adulthood in 1Joh.2:12-14:
1. In this passage John is not just addressing three physical categories of males in the church; he is referring to three separate levels of spiritual growth (Elsewhere John calls all believers his little children. So John establishes a metaphorical use of children in 1<sup>st</sup> John).
  2. Children (vs.13c,18): This refers to the first level of spiritual growth. (He is not writing to literal children.) This category is composed mainly of new converts. One of the first things that new converts must recognize is the identification of the truth of BD is necessary in order to begin the MAJG. John uses the perfect tense to show believers have locked into sound doctrine, which provides the existing results necessary to complete the maturity process. *(The term "little children/τεκνίον" of vs.12 is technical for all +V that adhere to the faith and is differentiated from the term "children/παιδίον" [vss.13c,18] that designates the 1<sup>st</sup> level of the growth pattern.)*
  3. Young men (νεανίσκος - neaniskos, young man, adolescent), vss.13b,14b. This refers to the intermediate stage of growth in believers that are no longer spiritual infants, but who have not yet reached spiritual maturity.
  4. Fathers (vss.13a,14a) speaks of the mature man or woman (females are included in all three categories).
- K.** The communication gifts were given to the church so that believers might attain to spiritual maturity. Eph.4:11-14
- L.** The communication gifts function so that we may grow up into Jesus Christ. Eph.4:15; This growth into Christ is spiritual growth which is produced through the function of the communication gifts (cp. vs.11).
- M.** The process involves growing in both the grace (SAJG & R<sub>B</sub>AJG) and knowledge (R<sub>B</sub>AJG & MAJG) of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Pet.3:18
- N.** The growth from spiritual infancy begins with the intake of sound doctrine. 1Pet.2:1-2
- O.** The apostle Paul called the carnal Corinthians babies in Christ and rebuked them for their failure to overrule the STA and make progress to more advanced doctrine (solid food versus milk). 1Cor.3:1-3
- P.** Some doctrine (solid food category) is only going to be assimilated by the mature believer who has developed a frame of reference for such material. Heb.5:11-14
1. These verses should, of course, not be used as an excuse to drop out of Bible class with the old, "I can't understand this routine."
  2. The directive which follows in the immediate context is the command to press on to spiritual maturity in Heb.6:1,2.
  3. Consistency in Bible class will give you a frame of reference for more advanced doctrines.
- Q.** Maturity is to be the objective of the ministry of the local church. Col.1:28; complete = τέλειος - teleios = mature/has the nuance of completing the spiritual growth process.

- R.** Essential ingredients in the attainment of maturity for the believer.
1. It demands an assembly/congregating of believers together under their right pastor over the long haul. Heb.10:25; 2Pet.3:18
  2. Jesus Himself designates that the system designed by God for believers to grow to maturity is a face-to-face identification and relationship between believers and their right under-shepherd in the parable of the sheep and the sheepfold. Joh.10:1-5 cp. 7,9 that denotes Jesus is the door in vs.1-5 and the shepherd in vs.2 is any pastor that utilizes Christ as the door.
  3. Maintenance of the filling of the Holy Spirit versus domination by the old sin nature combined with the truth of BD. Joh.4:23-24
  4. Application of doctrine, faith plus works, as there is no maturity adjustment apart from Divine good production (good works). Luk.8:14,15; Jam.2:14-26 *See Doctrine of Divine Good Production*
- S.** The maturity adjustment does not demand sinless perfection. 1Kgs.8:46; Pro.20:9; Eccl.7:20; Rom.3:23; 1Joh.1:10
1. However, the fact that all men are prone to failure should not lead to rationalization or indifference to STA activity on the part of the believer. 1Joh.2:1; "...that you may not sin."
  2. Bible doctrine is designed to aid the believer in avoiding sin.
  3. While the mature believer sins and recognizes it, he/she disclaims fellowship with negative volition from whom they expect to be distinguished in the course of God's plan. Psa.1; 2Cor.6:14-18
- T.** Testing and the maturity adjustment. Jam.1:2-4; *"Consider it all joy, my brothers when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. And let patience have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."*
1. These verses deal with the mental attitude dynamics that the believer is to have under testing.
  2. There is an ultimate blessing associated with enduring testing with the application of doctrine. Jam.1:12
  3. Believers are to adopt a mental attitude of +H under testing.
  4. The believer must focus on Bible doctrine in order to have this +H while under testing.
  5. Passing tests develops the quality of patience (ὕπομονή - hupomone = patience with circumstances).
  6. Patience over the long haul results in maturity (again "mature = τέλειος – teleios").
  7. A wide variety of testing and suffering awaits each believer on the glory road. 1Pet.4:12,13; Phi.1:29
  8. The sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared with the rewards which accrue to the heirs that apply the Word of God to their suffering. Rom.8:12-18
- U.** Some characteristics of the mature believer.
1. Is informed with respect to the realm of doctrine. Rom.15:14; The Roman believers were very mature in their understanding.
  2. Has an abundance of divine good production. 2Tim.3:16,17
  3. Ladies acquire the designation: Sarah's daughters. 1Pet.3:1-6

4. Places a higher premium on pleasing God than pleasing men. Gal.1:10; 1Thess.2:3-6
  5. Demonstrates control of the tongue. Jam.3:2
  6. Has maximum confidence in the Word of God as manifested in Christ with maximum grace orientation towards themselves and others. 1Joh.2:13a,14a
- V. The following verses articulates the importance of BD as it relates to the MAJG:
1. Heb.4:12; *“For the word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing into the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*
  2. 2Tim.3:16-17; *“All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine/teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be mature thoroughly furnished for all good work.”*
  3. 2Tim.2:15; *“Study to show yourself approved unto God a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
- VII. Jesus teaches the principles of the three adjustments as part of the Divine design and POG for men, in the parable of the shepherd and the sheepfold in Joh.10:9:
- A. Jesus has identified Himself as the door of vs.1.
  - B. He establishes three future realities for any that choose to express positive volition towards His Person as the door and *“enters through Me”*.
  - C. The initial entrance into the sheepfold denotes the initial act of saving faith by the individual and represents the SAJG.
  - D. The first promise is that they *“shall be saved”*.
  - E. This denotes their salvation from eternal condemnation via their position in Christ, to include the experiential freedom this salvation provides.
  - F. That freedom is exercised under the terms *“and shall go in and out”*.
  - G. As believers in Christ, they are free in time to exploit what salvation has to offer.
  - H. To go back into the sheepfold represents the believer utilizing the work of Christ on the cross for forgiveness of sins experientially and represents the R<sub>B</sub>AJG.
  - I. This allows them deliverance from the power of sin in time to “go out” and operate in fellowship with God as Christians.
  - J. This in turn points to the third reality and ultimate focus for the believer that is making the R<sub>B</sub>AJG and that is to *“find pasture”*.
  - K. Pasture is representative of spiritual food or the intake of BD.
  - L. As the opening of the parable in vss.1-5 makes clear, sheep are led to pasture under their right pastor through the teaching of sound BD.
  - M. Being lead to spiritual food then is representative of the MAJG, which provides salvation for the believer from loss of rewards in eternity.

N. And that life through Christ has more to offer than just salvation from eternal condemnation is made clear in vs.10 as Jesus states, *“I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly”*.

**VIII.** Individuals who make all three adjustments to the justice of God are examples of maximum positive volition in the Angelic Conflict.

**IX.** Alternatives to adjustment to the Justice of God (negative volition).

**A.** For the unbeliever (failure to make the SAJG by believing in Christ).

1. Temporal judgment. Rom.1:18-32
2. Eternal condemnation. Joh.3:18; 5:24; Rev.20:11-15

**B.** For the reversionistic believer (failure to make R<sub>B</sub>AJG and/or MAJG).

1. Divine discipline in time. Heb.12:1-12; Pro.3:11,12; 6:20-23; 15:10
2. Loss of eternal rewards. 1Cor.11-15
3. Sin unto death. 1Cor.3:16-17; 1Joh.5:16-17

**C.** When men refuse to adjust to God's justice, then His justice must be applied to them in the form of cursing or Divine discipline. Deu.11:26-28

*“Evil men do not understand justice,  
But those who seek the Lord  
understand all things.”  
Pro.28:5*