

Encounter(ing) God

Who Will by No Means Clear the Guilty Part 9

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March 17, 2019

Review... Truly encountering God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- 1) Contrast “Knowing About” and “Encountering” God
 - a. Knowing – *aware and informed*
 - b. Encountering – *revealing (seeing) and transforming – MEETING!*
 - c. The image of God you carry around in your heart and mind affects the way you live your daily life.

We want to make sure the image of God we carry is correct!

Listen – when we talk about Encountering God, we’re talking about Encountering Who He is – His character, IN US, THROUGH US, we become image bearers, no clearer summary of His character than in Exodus 34.

Background – Moses says, “Show me Your glory” – God shows Moses His character!

If we want to know what’s glorious about God – it is Who He is!

Exodus 34:6-8

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. (*Moses obviously encountered God*).

Briefly Setting the Stage / Getting Perspective

- 1) God creates the world, and provides with it loving laws
 - a. *Light – Night – Waters – Dry Land – Plants & Trees – Sun & Moon/Seasons – Sea Creatures & Birds – Livestock/Creeping Things/Beasts*
 - b. He made it – from His very hands – therefore, it really is His!
 - c. With it, He decrees “loving laws” that honor Him and His that He has created.
- 2) God makes man and woman – in His image – and gives them the earth to enjoy/steward.
 - a. Friendship with God – enjoying the Garden created for them – naming the animals.
 - b. Work it, keep it; not eat of the tree in the middle of it.
- 3) Man and woman choose to disobey God’s loving laws and go their own way instead.
 - a. Eve took the fruit and ate, gave it to her husband, and he ate.
 - b. As God comes to them, first recording of man hiding from the presence of God.
 - c. God’s heart for them, making garments to cover their nakedness (shame; Gen. 3:21).
 - d. Sets the tone for human kind to this very day...
- 4) God, out of His love for all human kind, initiates and provides full redemption in Jesus.

Romans 3:23-24 Romans 5:8 Romans 6:23,24 1 John 1:9 2 Chronicles 7:14

- a. From Last Week: God forgives our iniquity, transgression and sin. This forgiveness is for ALL sin: all sorts and sizes, original or actual, greater or lesser, public or private, open or secret, of omission or commission, of heart, lips and life! God forgives ALL our sin!
- b. ***God's forgiveness is only unavailable to those who choose to not ask for it!***

- 5) Okay, so let's just get this straight!
 - a. The always-has-been, always-will-be Sovereign LORD of the Universe creates the world and universe!
 - b. He give this new home and playground to man and woman, whom He breathes His breath of life in!
 - c. Man and woman decide to abandon their Creator's loving laws and make the choice to go it alone!
 - d. God initiates a path of full redemption for them!

AND THEN IN RETURN...

- e. We blame Him for everything that is wrong with the world and our lives.
 - f. We make up our own rules, rights and wrongs, and, at times, even attribute these to His Word (making "our truth" equal to the very words of His mouth revealed in Scripture).
 - g. We claim that God is not all loving and wise, and declare He is not just and kind in all that He does. WOW!!!
- 6) **Exodus 34:7** – Now, with all of this as a backdrop, let's take a look at the first of our two halves today, "*but who will by no means clear the guilty...*"

God the Just Judge: Who Will by No Means Clear the Guilty

- 1) A couple of things as we head down this path of God the Just Judge.
 - a. First, I want to briefly Scripturally address the ongoing foolishness of the "don't judge" issue that continues to remain out there...
 - "Judge not, that you be not judged." **Matthew 7:1**
 - Greek word *Krino* – to rule, to determine the law, to decree, to condemn (***a function of God***)
 - "The spiritual person judges all things..." **1 Corinthians 2:15**
 - Greek word *Anakrino* – to examine, to reason, to search, to discern. (***a function of God's followers***)
 - *Discernment is different from judgment in that it recognizes truth has originated from another source - God - and aims to put it in to practice.*
 - If we don't judge *by discerning* we may be giving approval to something that goes against God's character and ways in His Word. (**Romans 1:32**)
 - b. Second, we must also realize, that being made in the image of God, we have an overwhelming sense of His justice built right within us! For example:
 - Personally – relational slights, someone cutting in line (person, car)
 - Professionally – roles, promotions, pay
 - Athletically – professional level (Saints/Rams playoff game – missed pass interference call); all the way to screaming parents at little league games!
 - Societally
 - Court cases that go wrong; consistent racial inequities
 - Story of Alan Kurdi, 3-year-old Syrian Refugee; found drowned in Turkey on September 2, 2015 while his family was trying to escape on the Mediterranean Sea to eventually get to Canada.
 - The world is often unjust (*sin, sickness, pride, selfishness, disease, death*) – yet God will always be the Just Judge!

- 2) God is the Just Judge – and because He is, He will by no means clear the guilty.
- a. God’s desire is that none should perish – **2 Peter 3:8-9**
 - b. Whoever does not believe in Jesus, or chose to walk in relationship w/Him – **John 3:16**
 - c. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction – **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**
 - d. Jesus when talking about the sheep and the goats – **Matthew 25:41-46**
 - e. A man reaps what He sows – **Galatians 6:6-7**
 - f. Storing up wrath – **Romans 2:2-5**
 - “God’s wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is, instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil.”¹ ~ J.I. Packer
 - “The wrath of God is God’s settled anger towards sin, expressed in the repayment of suitable vengeance on a guilty sinner.”² ~ John Piper
 - “Don’t miss how profound this is — that vengeance (*An injured party's desire for retribution, or repayment from those who harmed him, or to demonstrate his innocence against false accusations*) belongs to God. It means that woven into the fabric of reality — the fabric of the universe and this world — is God’s absolute commitment that justice be done. That every dishonor done to his glory by our sin will be punished in order that the infinite worth of God’s glory might be upheld and displayed as the ultimate good and the ultimate value — the ultimate worth and excellence and treasure — in the universe. This ultimate commitment to bring vengeance on all sin flows from God’s very being.”³ ~ John Piper

“The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord is avenging and wrathful; the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.” Nahum 1:2

“He avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries.” Deuteronomy 32:43

“He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.” Isaiah 59:17

This is God’s nature, his righteousness — his unswerving commitment to take vengeance on all that dishonors the infinite value of his glory. Without God’s commitment to avenge all sin there would have been no need for the cross, and there would be no hell.

But there was a cross. And there is a terrible prospect of everlasting torment for all who refuse it.

In **Revelation 6:10** the martyrs in heaven cry out, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will . . . avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And **Revelation 19:2** says, “His judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immoralities and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

So, it is coming. Oh, how certainly and terribly it is coming.”

- What about those who have wronged us terribly and do not repent and believe? Their sins — they have made a choice to reject Jesus, their Divine Substitute. They will have to suffer the wrath of God on themselves.

¹ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (InterVarsity Press, Oct 26, 2011) 151

² John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Multnomah Books, 1996)

³ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals* (B & H Publishing Group, Feb 1, 2013)

- ***There is vengeance. There is justice. All things will be set right. The unrepentant sinner will pay his debt in hell. Or he will repent, so that his debt is covered by what Jesus paid on the cross.***
 - Jesus, on the cross, absorbed the wrath of God for all who are in Him. But those who have turned away from Him will bear their own guilt. What a dreadful thing this is!
- 3) People do not like that God has the FINAL word on things!
 - a. Our sin nature ALWAYS wants our own way!
 - b. We don't want God to be this way – only merciful, gracious, forgiving...
 - c. Yet, if we don't embrace this truth:
 - We distort the character of God
 - We cheapen the cross of Jesus Christ
 - We grieve the Holy Spirit, who gave this in writing in the Scriptures!

God the Just Judge

“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.” Exodus 34:7

- 1) This just seems to get heavier, doesn't it?! Let's look at what the Scriptures say about this...
- 2) Four passages: **Exodus 34:7** (repeated **Numbers 14:18**); **Exodus 20:4-6** (repeated **Deuteronomy 5:9-10**)
- 3) The “iniquity of the fathers...” Remember our defining of iniquity last week?
 - a. Meaning: *Twisted, perverted, bent*
 - b. Iniquity grows into the character of an individual. Though iniquity does include the idea of sin, it involves much more than this and refers to an individual's very nature. Because iniquity is the character behind the sin, it becomes the source of the sin acts. Iniquity emerges in one's life like a “sin addiction.” (*like vines...*)
- 4) Abraham in **Genesis 12:11-13** – A famine in the land so headed to Egypt...
 - a. First off, we see Abraham operating out of fear here (this isn't laying down his life for his wife – it's just laying down!)
 - Second, born of fear, he asks his wife to lie – or half-lie – Sarah was the daughter of Abraham's deceased brother, Haran. Sister of Lot, so Sarah was his niece.
 - We see that God protects Sarah in the process but disciplines Abraham through it.
 - Fear and deception (lying).
 - b. Isaac in **Genesis 26:6-9**
 - Same pattern of fear and deception (via lying)
 - Next generation: Isaacs sons Esau & Jacob in **Genesis 27**
 - The younger son – with the help of his mother, Rebekah – out of fear of missing out on something, deceives his father, pretending to be the firstborn to steal his brother's birthright blessing!
- 5) We also see the same generational stuff in King David's family line
 - a. Psalm **51:5** – “brought forth in iniquity...” – Why mother not there when Samuel showed up?
 - b. David committing adultery with Bathsheba
 - c. David's son, Amnon raped his half-sister
 - d. David's son, Absalom puts Amnon to death, then rapes his father's concubines publicly
 - e. David's son, Solomon had 700 foreign wives and 300 concubines

A Closer Look at Generational Sin

- 1) Generational sin is a spiritual stronghold, a pattern of sin passed on from one generation to another.

- a. At its core, generational sin is spiritual. A spiritual bondage or stuck place.
 - Spiritually stuck –
 - “When you know something is contrary to the will of God and you feel powerless to change it.”⁴ ~ Ed Silvano
 - A “vein” of sin, a weakness, tendency or “bent” towards a specific sin
 - It can also find expression in passed along DNA:
 - Physically
 - Mentally & Emotionally
 - Attitudinally (think generational modeling)
 - Habits, etc.
- b. Generational sin can be passed down from either side of your family line.
- c. Generational sin acts as a snare that holds you back from walking in freedom.
- d. Pay attention to recurring patterns in your life, and that of your family.
- e. *Lest you misunderstand – you are responsible for your sin – not an excuse; breaking something that has been passed down generationally!*

2) Illustration: Jukes vs. Edwards

In 1874, Richard Dugdale worked for the New York Prison Commission. As he visited the prisons he was surprised to find that inmates in six different locations were descended from the very same family.

This led him to study their relatives, both living and dead. He looked at court and prison records, reports of town poorhouses, and the testimony of old neighbors and employers.

Mr. Dugdale studied the details of 540 descendants of “Max” (the name given to the patriarch born about 1720) throughout five generations. Including the 169 people who married into the family, he found a total of 1,200 people linked to the “Jukes” family (Jukes was not the real name of the family).

This family was described in the following way:

“The almost universal traits of the family were idleness, ignorance, and vulgarity. They would not work, they could not be made to study, and they loved vulgarity...It is very difficult to find anyone who is honest and industrious, pure and prosperous.”

In 1897, an educator and pastor, named A.E. Winship, was asked by a scholarly organization to prepare a paper on the life of revivalist and pastor, Jonathan Edwards (birth 1703). During his studies, Pastor Winship discovered the godly deliberateness in which Jonathan & Sarah Edwards disciplined their family.

He also learned that the descendants of Edwards presided over the New York Prison Commission when it employed Mr. Dugdale to make a study of the Jukes! The contrast of these two generational lines led to a book written by Winship (*Jukes-Edwards: A Study in Education and Heredity*, 1900). The contrast is quite astounding!

Jukes Generational Line

- + 310 were professional vagrants.
- + 300 died in infancy, lack of good conditions and care.
- + 50 women lived lives of “notorious debauchery”.
- + 440 were physically wrecked early by their own wickedness.
- + 60 were habitual thieves average of twelve years in prison.
- + 130 were criminals convicted of crime; 7 were murderers.
- + Not one made a significant contribution to society.

⁴ Ed Silvano, *Strongholds: What They Are and How to Pull Them Down* (Chosen Books, Aug 21, 2018)

Edwards Generational Line

- + 1 Vice-President (*Aaron Burr*)
- + 3 U.S. Senators / 3 Governors / 3 Mayors
- + 30 Judges
- + 100 Lawyers
- + 80 Public Office Holders
- + 13 College Presidents / 65 Professors
- + 100 Pastors, Missionaries and Theologians

- 3) My Own Story (*to understand Dave's story, watch the sermon video*)
 - 1) Pride and Fear (Cheryl)
 - 2) Toronto (1994) & Tacoma (2004) – freedom from abandonment
 - a. Toronto – orphaned; purple robe of Sonship
 - b. Tacoma – freedom prayer over me
- 4) Breaking Off Generational Sin
 - a. A Scriptural Freedom Pathway: *Repent – Receive – Resist – Replace*
- 5) Turning the Generational Tide
 - a. **Psalm 79:8-9** – “Do not remember against us our former iniquities; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins for your name's sake!”
 - b. **Psalm 103:2-5** – “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, *who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*”
- 6) God Desires for Us to Walk in the Full Freedom available in Jesus
 - a. **John 8:31-32** – So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 - b. **Galatians 5:1** – “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore...”

A Few Takeaways for Today

- 1) We must fully embrace this truth of God's character, like we have the other aspects of **Exodus 34:5-8**.
- 2) It needs to impact how we relate to lost people. Have you invited Jesus to be your redeemer from sin?
- 3) As a follower of Jesus, is there any generational sin you need to break free from? What did the Holy Spirit reveal to you today?
- 4) A Spiritual Pathway to Freedom: *Repent – Receive – Resist – Replace*

Discussion Questions

1. To whom is God's forgiveness not available?
2. What does it mean, “Judge not, that you be not judged”? Matthew 7:1?
3. Why can we believe that God's vengeance will take care of injustices against us as individuals? What does that mean that we have to do?
4. How are we assured that God will not clear the guilty of those groups committing great crimes or atrocities?
5. Are there any generational patterns of sins or spiritual strongholds that you are aware of in your life, or in the life of your family?