

Systematic Theology session 16
The Doctrine of God, "I Am Who I Am," Part 10

- The definition of divine justice:
 - Justice is a communicable attribute of God's goodness.
 - "That perfection of his nature whereby he is infinitely righteous in himself and in all he does, the righteousness of the divine nature exercised in his moral government."
 - Wilhelmus a Brakel defined divine justice as: "God giving each his worthy due, either by punishment or reward."
 - Jonathan Edwards gave this definition: "The disposition of the divine nature to render to every one their own."
- Justice is part of the essential nature of God.
 - God cannot overlook sin.
- God is just in Himself, and He is just in all His works.
 - God is just in Himself, as shown in the fact that His word is true, right, and equitable.
 - Justice is not independent of God; God is not just because He perfectly follows a rule book that He didn't write. There is no standard of justice independent of God. What is good and just reflects what God's nature already is.
 - God is just in all His works.
 - Psalm 119:68, "You are good and do good, teach me your statutes."
 - Because God is good, He inevitably does good. God is just in Himself, and He is just in all His works.
- God's qualifications as the perfect and ultimate judge.
 - God is the perfect and ultimate judge because He is perfectly righteous.
 - God is the perfect and ultimate judge because He is omniscient, and fully knows the heart of man.
 - God is the perfect and ultimate judge because He is the Lawgiver, and therefore is the perfect interpreter of the law and its intent.
 - God is the perfect and ultimate judge because He is perfectly impartial.
- God is the judge of all.
 - God judges on the macro level (nations and people groups).
 - God judges on the micro level (individuals).
- Categories of divine justice.
 - Legislative justice: God has proclaimed His law, and He requires mankind to conform to His law.
 - Distributive justice: God distributes either reward or punishment as His justice demands.
 - Remunerative justice: God grants reward for obedience.
 - Punitive justice: God righteously gives the punishment (wrath) that must come as a result of sin.
 - Mercy interacts with punitive justice in two ways:
 - God chooses, in His mercy, to postpone the fulness of His wrath until the final day.
 - For Christians, God has poured the wrath that our sins deserve upon Christ at the cross; punitive justice is transferred from Christians to Christ as our substitute. Christians receive mercy rather than wrath, because for Christians, divine justice was satisfied at the cross.
 - God grants remunerative justice (rewards) to Christians not because we perfectly obey, but based on God's just fulfillment of His promises. This is possible because for Christians, the curse of our sin, along with punitive justice, was transferred to Christ on the cross as our substitute.