

Grace, Mercy and Justice

Both Islam and Christianity believe that God sent His messengers to lead human beings into the right path. They do differ as to how to deal with the separation between God and man caused by the sin of men, which the Bible clearly states is evident in the whole of humankind, “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:11), for, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). In general, sin means transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4). This law exists because God is Holy and so cannot abide with evil. It is offensive to God no matter what the sinner’s excuse or how insignificant the sin.

The Qur’an also tells us that all are guilty and unworthy to be saved. If God were to judge us all according to his rules, none of us would be saved.

وَلَوْ يُوَاحِدُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ
مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ

“If Allah were to punish men for their wrongdoing, he would not leave, on the earth, a single living creature” (Sura 16:61, see also Sura 35:45).

Forgiveness

It is said in the Qur’an that God, ‘forgives

whom He pleases and punishes whom He pleases’ (Sura 3:129; 11:118; 14:4; 16:93; 19:71,72). The teachings about forgiveness in the traditions of Islam are also quite contradictory. For example, a tradition is that the forgiveness of sin depends on righteous works or good deeds. Muslims believe that on the day of judgment, God will set up a balance with an indicator and two weighing pans, on which will be weighed all the deeds of each person – their good deeds and their evil deeds. He who has more good deeds goes to Paradise and he with fewer goes to Hell. But some believe that the mere confession of the *Shahada* or *Kalimah* – the creed: “There is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah”, is a passport to full forgiveness. Yet on the other hand many believe that even total obedience does not

From one tradition of Islam (*Hadith*), we learn that our righteousness and good actions may not help us to enter Paradise: Muhammad said, “None can enter Paradise through his good deeds”. The disciples asked, “Not even you, O Allah’s Apostle?” Muhammad replied, “Not even myself, unless Allah bestows his grace and mercy on me” (*Sahih Bukhari*, Vol.7). The whole subject is full of uncertainty, giving the impression that Allah acts entirely on a whim, without reference to His promises or any other consideration.

Grace and Mercy

In the Bible, we see God as consistently generous, not capricious. He surely can do whatever He wills, but He chooses to keep His covenant and promises. Without God’s grace

‘If Allah were to punish men for their wrong-doing, he would not leave, on the earth, a single living creature’
(Sura 16:61).

necessarily ensure salvation. Other Muslim traditions in the light of some of the passages of the Qur’an state that God has already created some for Hell and others for Paradise, which no action can alter (*Mishkat al-Masabih*, vol. 1, p.27).

and mercy, no one is able to gain salvation. The Qur’an and traditions do not tell us how His grace and mercy operate, so that God may still remain a just Judge and Merciful at the same time. If He is to forgive the sinner, there must be a reason for forgiveness, which will

also satisfy His justice. If God simply forgives as if sin did not matter, then where are His holiness and justice?

Answer available

The Bible has the answer to this dilemma. According to the Scriptures, Jesus the Messiah is God's mercy for all people and is able to give us a new heart and a new nature. God sent him into this world so that "whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16). It is in him that God has fulfilled the demands of His mercy and His justice. In him we find the ransom, *fidyah*, and atonement, *kafara*, God Himself has provided the ransom as His grace and mercy for us all. He has bestowed His grace and mercy through the redemptive work, the suffering and death of Jesus the Messiah. We may try to obey all the righteous commandments of God, but He wants to see us changed through His powerful work in order to bring glory and honor to His Holy Name.

Freedom in Jesus, the Messiah

We learn from the Scriptures that by believing in Christ we become a new creation. "The old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Thus it is not because of good deeds, but by virtue of God's own mercy provided through Jesus that we will enter the

Paradise of God to be in fellowship with Him (Titus 3: 5).

Believers in Christ do not neglect doing good and righteous things. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). They follow His commandments because of their love for Him and are so grateful for his sacrifice for forgiveness of their sins that they can be in the presence and in relationship with a holy God. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32).

The Bible contains many more passages on this subject, of which only a few are mentioned above. If you would like a copy in the English language, please write to the address below.

(Steven Masood)
sm@itl-usa.org

For further information:



Published by:
Jesus to Muslims
P. O. Box 1555,
Summerfield, FL 34492

Grace, Mercy & Justice

