



Lie #3: “God Is Out to Get Us”

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Some people have a caricature of God in their minds. On the one hand some see him as a pitiless cosmic tyrant, just waiting for you to cross him so that he can strike you down (our focus this week). On the other hand, some see God as an indulgent grandpa in the sky, who has grown more and more fuzzy and soft on sin as time goes by (our study next week). If either of these lies stand, they do eternal damage to souls. This lesson will seek to debunk the lie that God is out to get us.

- 1.) Provide some Scriptural examples a person might cite as evidence of God “overreacting” to human sin.

- 2.) In the examples cited above, what would have been the temporal and eternal result for those involved (and around) had God done nothing—no intervention whatsoever?

Proverbs 21:15 When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

Psalms 10:13 Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, “He won’t call me to account”?

Psalms 12:8 The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men.

Isaiah 59:7-8 Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace.

- 3.) Worse still, what would any moral indifference on God’s part suggest about his character and capability?

Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.

Psalms 5:4-6 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. ⁵ The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. ⁶ You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors.

Psalm 10:14-15, 17-18 You, O God, do see trouble and grief; you consider it to take it in hand. The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. ¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness that would not be found out. ...¹⁷ You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, ¹⁸ defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

4.) Do we have any excuse for NOT knowing God's commands?

Exodus 20:1-17 And God spoke all these words...

Romans 2:14-15 When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

5.) What if God DID respond to every infraction with immediate justice?

Psalm 130:3 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

6.) What does God want to do instead of punish us for our sins? Why?

Psalm 130:3-4 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

Psalm 103:10-12 He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Exodus 34:6-7 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

God's Holiness Demands That All Sin Has Consequences

1.) What happens when people sin?

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death.

Psalm 38:4-5 My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. ⁵ My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly.

Psalm 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Job 4:8-9 As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. ⁹ At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.

Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

2.) How do we go wrong when in our human estimation God's punishment doesn't fit the crime?

Psalm 90:11 Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

Job 38:1-3; 40:8-14 Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: ² "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? ³ Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. ... ⁸ "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? ⁹ Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? ¹⁰ Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. ¹¹ Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at every proud man and bring him low, ¹² look at every proud man and humble him, crush the wicked where they stand. ¹³ Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. ¹⁴ Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you."

Psalm 73:17-18,20 ...till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. ¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. ...²⁰As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

God's Good Goals, Even in Judgment

1.) When in the mystery of his wisdom, God responds to sin with apparent judgment, what are among his good goals? What distinction does he make between believer and unbeliever?

Short/Immediate Term

Deuteronomy 20:20-21 [His parents] shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." ²¹ Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.

Exodus 32:25-28 Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. ²⁶ So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him. ²⁷ Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'" ²⁸ The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died.

2 Corinthians 7:8-10 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— ⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Hebrews 12:7-11 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰ Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Long Term

Genesis 18:16-19 When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

1 Corinthians 10:6-10 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹ We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

Eternal Term

Exodus 9:13-16 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, ¹⁴ or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. ¹⁶ But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’”

Joshua 2:8-11 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof ⁹ and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”

Romans 9:22-24 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— ²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

2 Peter 2:4-9 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

1 Timothy 2:4 [God our Savior] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2.) How would you respond to the statement, “God is just waiting for me to mess up so that he can get me!”