

Justice and Faith on the Earth

By PAUL J. SCHARF

In Luke 18:1-8, we find a parable taught by Jesus that was uniquely recorded by Luke.

Interestingly, the parable revolves entirely around the concept of *justice*—perhaps the hottest topic going today.

Social justice, racial justice, economic justice—it seems that everyone today wants to be (or, at least, appear to be) sold out for all of them! Some will even go so far as to attempt to say, or even do, the most radical things possible to show that they are a life-and-death-kind-of-serious about justice.

I just have a question about the types of justice mentioned above, as well as any other varieties being discussed: What do these terms mean? Can anyone actually define them, or are they just catchphrases designed to make us all feel and look better?

Furthermore—and much more importantly—are the definitions offered rooted in Biblical truth?

When Jesus spoke about *justice*, or *righteousness*, in this parable, He was obviously grounding His statements in the Mosaic Law. It is morally impossible to take the word *justice* and simply fill it with a meaning that is devoid of any Biblical roots. We must also be concerned lest we find ourselves uttering phrases—like *social justice*—which are packed with historical meaning of which we might not even be aware.

My point in this article is to make a few basic observations from Jesus' parable.

First, we find that there will always be an “unjust judge” (v. 6). No amount of teaching, preaching, posting, marching or even civil unrest will change that fact, in a fallen world, until Jesus Himself returns to reign on the earth for 1,000 years (see Rev. 20:1-6).

Secondly, the mind, heart and soul of fallen men and women will always cry for a form of justice that will elude them in this life (v. 3). Of course, most of us do not desire that justice be extracted from us for the evils that we have committed. However, all of us, at least at times, wish to exact justice from those who have committed wrongs (real or perceived) against us. Our pleas for such justice are often right and necessary. At other times, they are inherently unrighteous.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the Lord God is the final arbiter and will “judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24). However, such justice may not come—indeed, will not fully come—immediately, or even in this life at all. “He bears long with them” (v. 7).

As believers, we are to proceed through life, bearing with injustice when it occurs, knowing that God is bearing with us and will set all things right in eternity. This ought to motivate us to “continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Col.

4:2). That is the whole point of this parable (v. 1)! Those who hope for perfect justice in this world set themselves up for debilitating disappointment.

But then Jesus closed with a most amazing question: “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (v. 8).

We know that there will be believers on the earth when Christ returns (at both the rapture and the second coming), so that cannot be Jesus’ point here.

In the original language, Jesus is discussing “the faith.” I think He is talking about “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)—the entire body of Divine truth revealed to man. As my theological mentor, Dr. John Whitcomb, would put it, When the Son of Man returns, will there really be anyone left who believes the whole Bible?

Will there still be at least one person who—in spite of ecumenical, church growth and all other manmade programs for the church—remains committed to everything from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, literally interpreted?

Will be there be at least one person who—having met this criterion—remains committed to properly carrying out our Lord’s Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), which was restated by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2?

It appears to me that the current unrest is doing little to promote these ultimate necessities to any great extent within Christ’s church. Instead, it seems to be causing vast confusion in some cases—and revealing a shallowness of commitment to Biblical truth in others.

My own desire is to remain faithful, hopeful and prayerful.

We are living through one of the most turbulent times in the history of the United States of America. The true church—committed to the whole Bible—has never been needed more than it is at this moment.

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