

Appendix A: Righteousness

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NOTE: All scripture citation and quotation are King James Version, 1769 Edition. All emphasis is in **Bold Underline** and is the author's unless otherwise noted

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Introduction

If there were ever a subject of Scripture that is obscured as to what it actually is, righteousness has to be it. As the evidence demonstrates, the commonly held ideas of righteousness, and what being righteous consists of, are convoluted, subjective, and frequently circular. This is not good considering that every person is going to be judged against the standard of righteousness. How can we possibly know where we stand with respect to righteousness, and being righteous, if we cannot concretely and objectively understand how the standard is defined? Moreover, the common belief is that a difference and distinction exists between God's righteousness and man's righteousness. Though the general understanding is that we are measured against the standard of God's righteousness, it is not understood why that actually is. The common belief is that we are measured against God's righteousness simply because He is the Creator and judge, and for little to no other reason. Though there is an acceptance that we cannot measure up to that standard, the belief is that we might be able to measure up to man's standard of righteousness. Does this seem right? Does this seem to comport with righteousness? Moreover, how can we possibly evaluate and know if any thought, behavior or event is righteous if we have no definitive, objective and testable standard for what righteousness is? Nor is it likely we will ever know, based upon the commonly held “definitions” and ideas of righteousness.

Because these questions exist, merely knowing that we must be “right” or “upright” (which is to say that we must be moral, ethical and have integrity)¹ is simply not sufficient. Rather, we must know what “right” is and why it consists of certain thoughts and behaviors, as opposed to different thoughts and behaviors. Having an objective standard is utterly necessary as societies, and generations within those societies tend to define standards of right thought and behavior differently. Because societies are this way, man's understanding of what the LORD God is requiring of him, and whether or not it is attainable outside the salvation Christ offers, differs according to time and place. Though men examine the Scriptures, they examine them with the bias of their society and their upbringing. When the examination of what righteousness is and how it is attained occurs under this influence, even though the Scripture is used, the examination is not objective, but tainted, thus the understanding of righteousness is skewed.

¹ As is clear from the definitions, being moral, ethical and having integrity are also subjective as they are defined as being “right, upright, or in conformance to moral standards.”

Without doubt having a skewed understanding of righteousness is harmful and a hindrance. However, this situation comes about as a result of misconstrued passages in Scripture. Whether it is from improperly defined words or improper emphasis on certain senses of words or the ignoring of certain senses, it is inconsequential to the fact that, ultimately, there is a misunderstanding of what righteousness is. The existence of misconstructions and erroneous emphasis on certain definitions is perceptible in the examples presented, where definitions of righteousness are given, and explanations offered to justify its meaning and significance.

Ideas of “Righteousness,” Briefly Stated

The explanations of righteousness given in the examples presented in this section are not exhaustive of every way that theologians, pastors, preachers and religious teachers attempt to explain righteousness and what it means to man. Rather, it is the majority teaching of the fundamentals of righteousness as it is understood today. Though it is tedious to examine the definitions of the various words, it is nonetheless essential for our understanding. If we are to understand where we are, we have to know what the teachers of the doctrine understand and what they impart to those who are taught by them.

In beginning, we examine the dictionaries before all else, as they record how words are commonly used in a language. Since we are a generation that does not know a time when there were no dictionaries, it is imperative that we understand: Dictionaries come about as a written record of the employment of words in a language. Thus, word entries in a dictionary come about after words are used in certain senses by a significant portion of the population. Logically, this reveals the understanding of a society concerning certain concepts. Of concern here is the concept of righteousness and what English speakers conceive as constituting righteousness.

The following definitions are the easily available definitions one can find anywhere. It is important to use them, rather than some archaic or esoteric definition that only few would know or understand, as the bulk of society will understand a concept by the generally accepted and commonly used definitions, rather than the esoteric. The Wikipedia entry also reflects the common understanding of the subject. There are also two examples excerpted from religious teachers which reflect how they attempt to teach about righteousness. Finally, there is a passage from the King James version and the Strong's Concordance word references and definitions for that passage.

These should give a reasonable understanding of how righteousness is viewed in modern English-speaking society.

The basic dictionary definitions²

righ-teous (adjective \ˈrī-chəs\)³

- 1: acting in accord with divine or moral law : free from guilt or sin
- 2 **a** : morally right or justifiable <a righteous decision>
- b** : arising from an outraged sense of justice or morality <righteous indignation>

mor-al (adjective \ˈmɒr-əl, mār-\)⁴

- 1 **a** : of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior: ETHICAL <moral judgments>
- b** : expressing or teaching a conception of right behavior <amoral poem>
- c** : conforming to a standard of right behavior
- d** : sanctioned by or operative on one's conscience or ethical judgment <a moral obligation>
- e** : capable of right and wrong action <a moral agent>
- 2: probable though not proved : VIRTUAL <a moral certainty>
- 3: perceptual or psychological rather than tangible or practical in nature or effect <a moral victory> <moral support>

eth-i-cal (adjective \ˈe-thi-kəl\)⁵

- 1: of or relating to ethics <ethical theories>
- 2: involving or expressing moral approval or disapproval <ethical judgments>
- 3: conforming to accepted standards of conduct <ethical behavior>

2 Regarding this particular subject, even the vaunted Oxford English Dictionary on a Historical Basis does not do any better than these basic definitions.

3 "Righteous." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/righteous>.

4 "Moral." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/moral>.

5 "Ethical." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethical>.

4of a drug : restricted to sale only on a doctor's prescription

Righteousness⁶

1: acting in accord with divine or moral law : free from guilt or sin

2 a : morally right or justifiable <a *righteous* decision>

b : arising from an outraged sense of justice or morality <*righteous* indignation>

From Wikipedia⁷

Righteousness (also called **rectitude**) is an important theological concept in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism (Dharma), and Zoroastrianism. It is an attribute that implies that a person's actions are justified, and can have the connotation that the person has been "judged" or "reckoned" as leading a life that is pleasing to the god/s portrayed in these belief systems.

William Tyndale (Bible translator into English in 1526) remodelled the word after an earlier word *rihtwis*, which would have yielded modern English **rightwise* or **rightways*. He used it to translate the Hebrew root צדק (TzDYQ), *tzedek*, which appears more than five hundred times in the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek word δίκαιος (*dikaïos*), which appears more than two hundred times in the New Testament.

Hebrew definition

The Hebrew word for righteousness is *tseh'-dek*, *tzedek*, Gesenius's Strong's Concordance:6664—righteous, integrity, equity, justice, straightness. The root of *tseh'-dek* is *tsaw-dak'*, Gesenius's Strong:6663—upright, just, straight, innocent, true, sincere. It is best understood as the product of upright, moral action in accordance with some form of divine plan.[*citation needed*]

One teacher's explanation⁸

What is righteousness? That question has baffled scholars and intellectuals for decades. Some men came up with many religious exercises so that they could become righteous according to their standards. Others clung to one verse in the Bible that they took out of context. People want to jump all over Romans 3:10 and say, "There is none righteous, no, not one." But you have to understand this in context. In Romans 3:9 Paul is talking about Jews and Greeks that are under sin. After this passage, in Romans 3:19, he talks about these people being under the law. So then, those that are just under the law are not righteous. What we do see though, is a man who was under that law, was counted as righteous. James 2:23 says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God." So then, even though Abraham was under the law, he believed God, and because he believed God, God treated him like he was righteous, even though he wasn't.

Now, to fully understand what this means, we need to define righteous. Righteousness is defined as without guilt or sin. We could also define it as right standing with God. So even though Abraham was under the law, and was not able to obtain this righteousness, because he believed God, God treated him like he was righteous.

The Meaning of God's Righteousness – John Piper⁹

That is the first key to understanding the argument of Romans 9:15 – the context of the quote from Exodus 33:19. Now the second key is the meaning of God's righteousness. What does Paul mean by righteousness, when he says, "There is no unrighteousness with God"? If I had time I would love to develop a long argument from the Old Testament, and from Paul's use of the "righteousness of God," to show you where I get the answer to that question. But all I have time for is to give you my conclusion and say that I will come back in three weeks with support for it.

God's righteousness is essentially his unswerving allegiance to his own name and his own glory. God is righteous to the degree that he upholds and displays the honor of his name. He is righteous when he values most what is most valuable, and what is most valuable is his own glory. Therefore God's justice, his righteousness, consists most fundamentally in doing what is consistent with the esteem and

6 "Righteous." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/righteous>.

7 "Righteousness." Wikipedia.com. Accessed August 28, 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Righteousness>

8 "What is Righteousness?" Word of Faith blog. Accessed August 25, 2014. <http://word-faith.blogspot.com/2009/05/righteousness.html>

9 ""The Freedom and Justice of God in Unconditional Election" 01/12/2002, John Piper." [desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/the-freedom-and-justice-of-god-in-unconditional-election). Accessed March 24, 2014.

demonstration of his name, his glory. God would be unrighteous if he did not uphold and display his glory as infinitely valuable.

Usages and definitions in a single passage. Definitions from Strong's Concordance¹⁰

Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: *he is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. (*Psalm 112:1-4*)

English: "upright"¹¹

3477 yashar { yaw-shawr' } from 3474; TWOT - 930a; adj

AV - right 53, upright 42, righteous 9, straight 3, convenient 2, Jasher 2, equity 1, just 1, meet 1, meetest 1, upright ones 1, uprightly 1, uprightness 1, well 1; 119

GK - 3838 { יָשָׁר } 3839 & { יֵשֶׁר }

1) straight, upright, correct, right

1a) straight, level

1b) right, pleasing, correct

1c) straightforward, just, upright, fitting, proper

1d) uprightness, righteous, upright

1e) that which is upright (subst)

English: "righteous"¹²

6662 tsaddiyq { tsad-deek' } from 6663; TWOT - 1879c; adj

AV - righteous 162, just 42, righteous man 1, lawful 1; 206

GK - 7404 { צַדִּיק }

1) just, lawful, righteous

1a) just, righteous (in government)

1b) just, right (in one's cause)

1c) just, righteous (in conduct and character)

1d) righteous (as justified and vindicated by God)

1e) right, correct, lawful

English: "righteousness"¹³

6666 ts'edaqah { tsed-aw-kaw' }

from 6663; TWOT - 1879b; n f AV - righteousness 128, justice 15, right 9, righteous acts 3, moderately 1, righteously 1; 157

GK - 7407 { צְדָקָה }

1) justice, righteousness

1a) righteousness (in government)

1a1) of judge, ruler, king

1a2) of law

1a3) of Davidic king Messiah

1b) righteousness (of God's attribute)

1c) righteousness (in a case or cause)

1d) righteousness, truthfulness

1e) righteousness (as ethically right)

1f) righteousness (as vindicated), justification, salvation

1f1) of God

1f2) prosperity (of people)

1g) righteous acts

10 *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*, electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version., Ps 112:1-4 (Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995).

11 Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Text (sic) of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence(sic) of Each Word in Regular Order.*, H3477. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

12 Ibid.H6662

13 Ibid. H6666

In examining the given examples, the desire is for the reader's understanding that I am not being flippant, but making a point when I state:

Considering the fore-going, we might actually get further if we played "Ring Around the Rosie."

The reason for the comment is this:

With the exception of the explanations addressing a "divine plan" or "divine law," all the above is circular.

Nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, in the above actually puts forth a measurable, objective standard for what righteousness is. If we note, righteousness is defined as being moral and/or ethical. Moral and ethical are defined as "conforming to a standard of right behavior" or "conforming to accepted standards of conduct," where "right behavior" and "accepted standards" are defined as "morally right or justifiable."

If we abandon the circular logic of the definitions and elect "in accordance with divine law" or the "divine plan," we fare no better. Electing the route of "in accordance with Divine law," leaves us with the problems of determining the "divine law" or "divine plan," which may or may not be knowable and/or understandable. Moreover, which version of events constitutes the "divine plan" and which set of commandments coming from which "God" constitute the "divine law?" Electing this route, we are left with John Piper's convoluted idea of God's righteousness (which is essentially self-worship), the "whatever God says, that is right" idea, or "being without guilt or sin," (whatever that means) depending upon whoever is interpreting whatever passage they think applies. Surely we can see that we get nowhere going this route, and therefore effectively remain at square one.

Righteousness as Commonly Understood is in Error

Considering that the LORD God is a God of order, wisdom, understanding and judgment, it would be strange if He chose to define righteousness, which is one of His central qualities, in such unreasonable, circular terms as we are given above. Rather, like the physical world He created, it would be easier to believe that righteousness is absolute and objectively testable. After all, if we are to be held to a standard, and that standard is of the LORD God, the Creator of all things, it would hold to reason that the standard by which we all are measured would be unchangeable, objective, and visible so that we may know where we are in relation to it.

Instead, what we are led to believe by the teaching, commonly accepted definitions, and examples given by those who claim to know is much like the following statement given by one gentleman in his attempt to explain that God is righteous, and that we can know He is righteous:

"We know that God is perfectly holy, and that whatsoever He does determines what is good; and that God Himself cannot sin."

The error of this thinking lies in the fact that this is pure circular logic. What makes the statement above circular logic is the following phrase "*whatsoever He does determines what is good*" which is to say, without any other factor or qualification, if "God" does it, it must be right. While that is true when we address the LORD God, the I AM, that is likely not true for the "God" who we do not know, and are only guessing at his person, character, and nature. Without realizing it, the gentleman gave witness that if "God" determines something is good, then it is good, regardless of any other factor - even if it is iniquity. This is obviously not the kind of thinking the LORD God wants people to engage in, as He makes clear in His word that man is to both reason and prove what is and what is not true:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (*Isaiah 1:18*)

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (*I Thessalonians 5:21*)

It ought to be clear that what John Piper and many others conceive as righteousness is not what the LORD God is testifying to in His word. On the strength of the two passages above, and the many others which speak of the LORD God as a God of equity, truth and judgment, we can categorically state that these gentlemen must be mistaken. There is no reasoning in circular logic, blind belief, believing without any evidence whatsoever, or "if God does it, it must be righteous." Rather, those are the thoughts and ideas of the unreasoning and

superstitious, and are more akin to witchcraft than the true faith granted by the LORD God to anyone who hears and considers His word. Many of those who claim Christ seem to forget that the LORD is well able to hold to a published standard of righteousness¹⁴ and incurs no harm when He sets forth a standard which His creatures are able to perceive and evaluate.

There are reasons why men don't want to perceive this standard, but prefer to cling to the circular logic espoused in virtually all of Christendom and/or the "in accordance with Divine law" idea. One of these reasons is the belief in the heart that man has a hope and prayer of being righteous outside of Christ.¹⁵ In sum, the common ideas about righteousness promote works religion and self-justification. After all, multitudes claim that they are moral and ethical, and that they follow the Divine law or the Ten Commandments, which (as they claim) proves them "righteous." However, when righteousness is perceived as an absolute, verifiable and testable standard, that which is commonly put forth as righteousness, which is entirely circular and subjective, fails in comparison. When we actually define righteousness accurately, it becomes crystal clear that we can never, of our own efforts, become righteous.

By way of understanding the weakness of righteousness as it is commonly taught and understood, we would do well to ask the following questions of ourselves and consider the answers:

1. How do you know God is perfectly holy?
 - a) After all, if you are going to make the statement, shouldn't you have some concrete, solid basis upon which to make it? Mere assertion that "the Bible says so" is not going to work.
2. What standard or test did you use to determine that?
 - a) Using circular logic or self-justifying statements is not a standard. If it is, then mere opinions are elevated to facts, simply because we assert them.
3. What differentiates "God" as you perceive him from Allah?
 - a) If you cannot determine what the LORD God's righteousness consists of, how can you determine where Allah's righteousness is in any way different?
4. How do you know God "cannot sin?"
 - a) Sin is defined as "missing the mark." If there is no objective, concrete, testable standard, how can you ever determine when you have "missed the mark?" Subjective, self-justifying standards, and opinion-based standards constantly change. Hence, where the mark or the boundary is, can and does change constantly. Hence, what may be "missing the mark" today, may be dead on-target tomorrow.
5. Again, what test did you use to determine that "whatsoever God does is righteous?"
 - a) Without some sort of objective standard, is there any way to find a conclusive, affirmative answer to any or all the previous questions?

It should be clear by this point that righteousness as it is commonly understood engenders more questions than answers, generates more angst than comfort, and generally leaves the individual at an uncomfortable loose end. It simply leaves us with an "I don't know" for an answer.

A Different Analysis

For a concept that was taken from Scripture, the commonly understood and accepted definition bears little resemblance to what the Scripture defines as righteousness. On the surface, it would seem that the religious scholars and leaders of the past did indeed get it right, but that is only from a surface reading of the usage of the word. It is clear from the flawed logic and unverifiable posits resulting from such superficial analyses, that depending on the surface reading of how "righteousness" is used for our understanding of its meaning, these analyses are wholly inadequate for conveying an accurate concept and understanding.

14 It does seem to escape many that the LORD God is righteousness, just like it seems to escape them that He is love.

15 How much of "Christendom" holds to the idea that grace itself is not sufficient, either for salvation or to maintain salvation? Even though the Scriptures repeatedly make it crystal clear that the grace of Christ alone is effective for salvation, completely without works, men still insist on adding to that grace their own works. Somewhere between 95% and 98% of all who claim Christ do so on the basis of something other than the grace of Christ alone.

Instead of examining solely on usage, words must be examined in their relationship to other words.¹⁶ Since we do not employ ancient Hebrew or Koine Greek as common languages in modern society, we must examine the context in which the translated word is used, and must further examine the origin of the English word and its meaning in its source language. Though this is a process that is often time-consuming, it yields a clearer understanding of the idea and concept being conveyed.

Though we must necessarily depend upon the translators of the Scripture with this method, there is recourse through checking contextual usage in one passage against contextual usage of the same word in another passage. With the aid of a solid unabridged dictionary and an unabridged thesaurus, insuring that context is correctly understood, it is possible to determine whether a particular translation of the Scripture is accurate and whether the translators were adequate to the task at hand.

Though it may seem advantageous to learn ancient Hebrew or Koine Greek, there are dangers inherent in this route as well. We seem to forget that, by and large, we only know what we are taught. Without some independent verification, it is impossible to know whether you are being taught the correct meanings, implications and inferences of the words in another language. Moreover, simple omission of word meanings and cultural usage (dialect usage and colloquialisms) is easily done, and not always with the intent to deceive. In this case, inadequate source materials and ignorance of the instructor are sufficient to deny the student proper understanding.

In sum, correctly determining what a proper understanding of any doctrine or concept in Scripture involves considerable time, intellectual honesty and legitimate work. However, since one's eternal destiny may well be determined by the understanding of a particular doctrine and the decisions made as a result of understanding that doctrine, it is well worth the effort to be sure and certain.

The Scriptural Definition of Righteousness

Since where we begin frequently determines whether we come to a correct understanding or not, we will begin where an equivalence is drawn between words we do know and understand, and words we wish to understand. While a passage containing an equivalence exists for the word "righteousness," it is not conclusive in providing a full understanding of the meaning. Rather, it only provides one element involved in the definition of righteousness. Since this situation exists, there are several passages of Scripture we must examine to obtain the actual definition of righteousness. From the totality of the passages which define the term, we should then be able to determine, based upon that definition, which thoughts and behaviors are righteous and which are not.

Though there are many places where we could begin in Scripture, we will begin where the equivalence exists between the words "righteousness" and "equity." That passage is found in Psalms where we are given the coming reign of Christ for our consideration:

Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. (*Psalms 98:9*)

Lest we get taken away by the use of the three different words of "earth," "world," and "people" for what the LORD God will judge, we must remember that the LORD is not going to judge the grass, trees and animals, but man only. What the verse is declaring to us is that there is no land, no region or place where He will not judge on this earth, but the entirety of it will be under His jurisdiction. If we understand this, we should be able to perceive that, as He judges the entirety of the world with righteousness, every person will be judged with equity.

By stating Psalm 98:9 this way, the LORD drew an equivalence between the words "righteousness" and "equity," making them equal in meaning, at least in the area of judgment. But as mentioned earlier, the verse in Psalms is not the only reference in which righteousness is defined. In the following passage from Hebrews, the LORD delineates two things He deems in opposition one to the other:

But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. **Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;** therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. (*Hebrews 1:8-9*)

¹⁶ This is commonly called "context" which is (or was) commonly taught in high school English grammar classes. However, in religious studies, the context in which words are used is frequently thrown out in favor of any other method which yields the result most in line with the established doctrine of the particular school, church, or denomination.

Note here that the LORD God expresses strong feelings for righteousness (Thou hast loved righteousness) and equally strong feelings against iniquity (hated iniquity). By juxtaposing the two and expressing feelings which are in direct opposition (positive for righteousness and negative for iniquity), He is in as much defining righteousness and iniquity as opposites.

However, we must go further and examine what was preserved through the work and ministry of the prophet Ezekiel. During Ezekiel's ministry the LORD God plainly showed Judah what was wrong with what they were doing and why He judged them the way He did. In so doing, Ezekiel records for everyone who cares to observe and consider, an explanation of what righteousness and its opposite, which is iniquity, consist of:

Yet ye say, **The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.** Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. **Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. (Ezekiel 18:25-30)**

And again in Ezekiel 33:

Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, **The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression;** as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; **neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.** When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; **if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.** Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. **Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.** But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, **The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways. (Ezekiel 33:12-20)**

It is abundantly clear throughout Scripture that the LORD God states He is righteous. Those statements will not be repeated here, as evidence for this is without question. However, the LORD merely making the assertion does not prove it to man, who He is asking to trust in Him for salvation and the totality of the individual's life. So it is that through the prophet Ezekiel, the LORD begins to provide the evidence, and the means to evaluate that evidence. In the above passage from Ezekiel 33, we find the operative phrase as to why the LORD God states that He is righteous:

“are not my ways equal?”

He follows this question with a blunt assessment of why Israel is not righteous by contrasting the above question with another question that draws an immediate distinction:

“are not your ways unequal?”

In so doing He sets forth the reason Israel was to be judged and destroyed if it failed to repent. But in this He also defines for us the central tenet of the quality of righteousness. However, for us to correctly understand righteousness, we must understand other concepts, beginning with what is meant by a person's “way.” We must also understand what iniquity is and how it differs from both transgression and sin.

The “way”

In the above passages from Ezekiel, it is clear that the problem lies in the “way” of an individual, and whether that “way” is equal or unequal. To the end of understanding the significance of the “way,” and why the LORD God compared and contrasted “are not my ways equal?” with “are not your ways unequal,” we must examine the following definitions for the word “way.” It is needful that we pay particular attention to senses 3, 4a, 5a, 7 and 9, as we find them applicable to both the LORD God and man. The LORD's use of the word in the plural, and the specific definitions which relate to aspects of both His being and ours bear directly upon our understanding:

Way – noun \ˈwā\ ¹⁷

1 a: a thoroughfare for travel or transportation from place to place

b: an opening for passage <this door is the only way out of the room>

2: the course traveled from one place to another : ROUTE <asked the way to the museum>

3 a : a course (as a series of actions or sequence of events) leading in a direction or toward an objective <led the way to eventual open heart operations — Current Biography>

b (1) : a course of action <took the easy way out> (2) : opportunity, capability, or fact of doing as one pleases <always manages to get her own way>

c : a possible decision, action, or outcome: POSSIBILITY <they were rude—no two ways about it>

4 a : manner or method of doing or happening <admired her way of thinking>; also : method of accomplishing : MEANS<that's the way to do it>

b : FEATURE, RESPECT <in no way resembles her mother>

c : a usually specified degree of participation in an activity or enterprise <active in real estate in a small way>

5 a : characteristic, regular, or habitual manner or mode of being, behaving, or happening <knows nothing of the ways of women>

b : ability to get along well or perform well <she has a way with kids> <a way with words>

6: the length of a course : DISTANCE <has come a long way in her studies> <still have a way to go>

7: movement or progress along a course <worked her way up the corporate ladder>

8 a : DIRECTION <is coming this way>

b : PARTICIPANT —usually used in combination <three-way discussion>

9: state of affairs : CONDITION, STATE <that's the way things are>

10 a plural but sometimes sing in constr: an inclined structure upon which a ship is built or supported in launching

b plural : the guiding surfaces on the bed of a machine along which a table or carriage moves

11: CATEGORY, KIND —usually used in the phrase in the way of <doesn't require much in the way of expensive equipment — Forbes>

12: motion or speed of a ship or boat through the water

Understanding that one's “ways” encompass more than the mere outward actions is essential here. The “ways” the LORD refers to here are the ground and bottom of the heart, the subsequent thoughts and intents which spring from that ground, and the outworking of those thoughts and intents. It also includes the process of thinking as well. Although everyone may see or perceive the same information, how any particular individual perceives that information is dependent upon what they know about the world around them. Additionally, how that information is processed and the conclusions drawn from that, lead to intents, thoughts and actions. This whole process is inclusive of the “way” of the individual.

Hence the “way” includes the process of reasoning. This process is roughly defined as the taking of information, applying significance (or weight) to that information, then determining, in accordance with how that information is perceived to “fit” in the existence of the individual, what thoughts or actions should follow. If any part of this process is unequal to the reality which actually exists (weighting, fitting and successive actions), then the outcome of those logical operations and how they are applied, which are used to arrive at a conclusion, is also unequal. Logic dictates that if any part of the process of arriving at an outcome is unequal, then the end result of that process will be unequal as well.

¹⁷ “Way.” Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/way>.

It is imperative to remember that we, that is all of us individually, suffer from the limitation of having to reason or figure things out. This is due to the simple fact that we do not know all things which could be known. In fact, we actually know very little of what could be known. Hence, we have to gather information and “think” about that information. Thus, in the gathering of information and subsequent processing of that information, there exists ample opportunity to be unequal to the reality which actually exists, particularly in the realm of the spiritual. In contrast, this situation does not exist with the LORD God. We would do well to remember that the LORD God is omniscient, which is “all-knowing” and thus does not “think” as man thinks. The LORD God does not have to “figure things out” as we do. Rather, He already knows and understands all the ramifications of that knowledge. Moreover, He knows that He knows all things. This knowledge precludes thinking as we understand it.

A comparison of ways

We note in the passages in Ezekiel that the disagreement is over the issue of “ways,” and whose “ways” are “equal” and whose “ways” are “not equal” or unequal. In this disagreement the LORD states that His ways are equal, and thus righteous, and that Israel's ways are “not equal” and that “iniquity” would be their ruin. For our understanding, the operative statements that concern us are the following:

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

In the above passage the LORD compares the “way” of the LORD with the “way” of Israel. Finding fault with them, the LORD declares that He will judge the “ways” of Israel. Here He also explicitly warns that a failure to turn from those “ways” will allow iniquity to be their ruin. By making this comparison, the LORD draws an antithesis or oppositional equivalence between His ways which are “equal” and Israel's which are “not equal,” which He then refers to as “iniquity.” Thus the contrast is between how the LORD God is, and subsequently does what He does, and Israel, which exists because of the LORD's promise to Abraham, and how it chooses to be – despite that blessing, and despite repeated warnings to not persist in this “way.”

The relationship of these elements becomes clearer when we extract certain phrases and examine them. There is an oppositional, contrasting relationship of the LORD's ways and Israel's ways. The declaration of judgment of Israel's way, and finally summing up Israel's situation with a call to repentance, else iniquity would be the ruin of them, plainly demonstrate that iniquity is the property, or attribute of being unequal in one's ways:

“are not **my ways equal?** are not **your ways unequal**
“**I will judge** you, . . . , every one **according to his ways**”
“**turn yourselves from** all **your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.**”

Though the definitions of the words “righteous,” and “righteousness” never mentioned being equal, or equal in one's ways, the source or root, which is the etymology of the word “iniquity,” is expressly concerned with equality. In examining how iniquity is defined, we see that it is referred to as having a lack of righteousness, or it is wickedness, injustice. It is also called a “wicked act; sin.” Those definitions would seem to take us right back to the problems existent with the way righteousness is defined. However, when we observe the etymology of the word, it supports exactly what the Scripture describes in Ezekiel, and is in direct opposition to how the Scripture describes righteousness. Note that the Latin etymology of the word is expressly a conjunction of two Latin words “in” (meaning “not”) and “aequus” (meaning “equal”).

Iniquity iniquity [ɪˈnɪkwɪti] *n pl -ties*¹⁸

1. lack of justice or righteousness; wickedness; injustice
2. a wicked act; sin

[from Latin *inīquitās*, from *inīquus* unfair, from IN-¹ + *aequus* even, level; see EQUAL]

iniquitous *adj*

iniquitously *adv*

iniquitousness *n*

¹⁸ “Iniquity.” CollinsDictionary.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/iniquity>

in-iq-ui-ty (ĩ-nĩk'wĩ-tē) *n. pl. in-iq-ui-ties*¹⁹

1. Gross immorality or injustice; wickedness.

2. A grossly immoral act; a sin.

[Middle English iniquite, from Old French, from Latin inīquitās, from inīquus, *unjust, harmful* : in-, *not*; see in-¹ + aequus, *equal*.]

iniquus²⁰

Latin

Etymology: *in-* (“not”) + *aequus* (“equal, even, fair”)

Pronunciation: (*Classical*) IPA(key): /iˈniː.kʷus/

Adjective: inīquus *m* (*feminine inīqua, neuter inīquum*); *first/second declension*

1. unjust, unfair
2. uneven
3. unfavourable, disadvantageous
4. unkind, hostile
5. unsuitable

The difference between “iniquity,” “transgression,” and “sin”

If we understand the foregoing explanation about iniquity, we arrive at the place where many raise question over the issue of iniquity and transgression, and the relationship between the two. It is clear and unmistakable in Ezekiel 33, that both iniquity and transgression are included in the LORD's warning to Israel:

“turn *yourselves* from all **your transgressions**; **so iniquity** shall not be your ruin.”

Which raises the question:

Isn't it the transgression which is unequal, and not iniquity?

Or, framed differently:

Isn't it that iniquity and transgression have meanings so closely related that you are splitting hairs and engaging in argument simply for the sake of doing so?

In fact, that was a view expressed concerning the distinction made between the words “iniquity,” “transgression,” and “sin” when conversing with a gentleman via email:

“While you have made a difference between sin, transgression, and iniquity, I attempted to keep it more simple; **and while we could “split hairs” over their interrelated meanings**, that was never my purpose.”²¹

However common the man's view is held in religious circles, it is not supported by Scripture or by reason. Unless you believe the LORD likes being redundant, or that the penmen or translators of the Scripture liked and added redundancy, then it stands to reason that there is some genuine distinction and difference between “iniquity,” “transgression,” and “sin,” and the words really cannot be used interchangeably.

In the following passage from Exodus, where the LORD God proclaims Himself before Moses, it is clear from the structure of the LORD's statement that a difference exists between “iniquity,” “transgression,” and “sin:”

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin**, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.
(Exodus 34:6-7)

19 “Iniquity.” ahdictionary.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=iniquity&submit.x=69&submit.y=29>

20 “iniquus.” wikionary.org. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://en.wikionary.org/wiki/iniquus>

21 Personal communication via email over the issue of the origin of sin.

It is not reasonable to say that it is “splitting hairs over interrelated meanings” when the LORD God Himself, in declaring what he will and won't forgive, draws a distinction between “iniquity,” “transgression,” and “sin.” Quite obviously, there is a significant enough difference between the three that the LORD God, who is not known for wasting words, delineates between them. It is up to us then, utilizing the information given us in His word, to be willing to see what the difference is.

To that end, let us examine briefly what the LORD told Jeremiah in chapter 33:

And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, **whereby** they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, **whereby** they have sinned, and **whereby** they have transgressed against me.
(*Jeremiah 33:8*)

We see that the above verse consists of two major clauses, separated by a semi-colon. In the first clause, ending with a comma is the first phrase, which states “And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity,” which is then continued through the employment of the word “whereby” at the beginning of the second phrase. The second major clause begins similarly to the first with “and I will pardon all their iniquities,” and is also continued through the use of the word “whereby” in both phrases which follow. To understand what is done here, it is essential to understand the word “whereby.”

where•by (hwâr-bĪ', wâr-) *conj.*²²
In accordance with which; by or through which.

whereby (wɛə'baɪ) *pron*²³
1. by or because of which: *the means whereby he took his life.*
adv
2. how? by what means?: *whereby does he recognize me?.*

where•by (ˈwɛər'baɪ, wɛər-) *conj.*
1. by what or by which; under the terms of which.
adv.
2. Obs. by what? How? [1150–1200]

In the preceding definition, there are two possible senses which fit contextually. However, the correct usage, given the example above, would be the pronoun usage of the word. The given meaning of that usage is “*by or because of which*” yielding the following rewritten verse:

And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, *because of which* they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, *because of which* they have sinned, and *because of which* they have transgressed against me.

Thus, in using the word “whereby,” which means “*by or because of which*,”²⁴ the LORD God is imparting to us the understanding that transgression and sin come about as a result of iniquity. Since we know that iniquity, transgression and sin are three entirely different words, and we know that sin is already defined as “*missing the mark*.” However, transgression is defined as “*The exceeding of due bounds or limits*,” as we can see in the following definition:²⁵

trans•gres•sion²⁶
(trăns-grêsh'ən, trănz-) *n.*

22 “Whereby.” [ahdictionary.com](https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=whereby&submit.x=49&submit.y=24). Accessed September 1, 2014. <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=whereby&submit.x=49&submit.y=24>

23 “Whereby.” [CollinsDictionary.com](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/whereby). Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/whereby>

24 Though we could use “by which” in the place of “whereby,” it is clearer, though the meaning is the same, to use “because of which.” Hence, “because of which” is used here.

25 We define “transgression” this way because it is the “whereby” in how we “miss the mark.” It is logically out of order to say we “missed the mark” then went “out of the bound.” Rather, we go “out of the bound,” and because we did so, we “missed the mark.”

26 “Transgression.” [thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/transgression). Accessed December 24, 2014. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/transgression>. Quoting the American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2011 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

1. A violation of a law, principle, or duty.
2. **The exceeding of due bounds or limits.**
3. A relative rise in sea level resulting in deposition of marine strata over terrestrial strata.

Which can also be stated as “*going beyond or crossing the bounds or limits,*” leaving us with the clear conclusion that the inequality the LORD speaks of in Ezekiel 18 and 33 is not transgression or sin. Rather, it is iniquity that is defined in both passages as 'inequality,' or being “not equal” in one's ways.

Unlike the idea the gentleman holds that any differences in iniquity, transgression, and sin are minor and the meanings of the three words are interrelated, the Scripture defines them as part of a “*cause and effect*” relationship. What is demonstrated in the verse from Jeremiah 33 is that “iniquity,” which is the property or attribute of being unequal in one's ways, is the cause (“*because of which*”) of transgression and sin. Relationally, iniquity causes transgression. Since transgression is crossing the bound, it is inherent in that action of crossing the boundary, that one has missed the mark (which is sin). Though we are tempted to say that sin and transgression are synonymous, we must remember that the law is not particularly a target, and neither is it particularly a set of boundaries. Rather, the law consists of parameters (conditions) which define its extent and applicability. It is important to keep this distinction as the LORD God is careful throughout His word to maintain it.

Thus, if one is unequal in one's ways, it should be of no surprise that one's perception and cogitations would also be unequal to the reality which is. If one misperceives and also errs in the processes of thinking, it should be of no surprise also that crossing the bound is going to happen at some point in time. When that crossing the bound happens, one will have missed the mark simply because perception and cognitive processes were distorted. Hence, though intentions are to perform that which is good, the intended end is not achieved, as the means by which to arrive at that end is misunderstood through misperception, distorted logic, and flawed logic processes. In fact, even the end we think we want to arrive at is frequently not clearly perceived or understood.

Though we might wish that this absolves us of responsibility for our intents, thoughts, decisions and subsequent actions, it does not for a couple of reasons. Beginning from Adam, who knowingly violated the commandment with regard to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and extending unto us this day, we are cognizant of the fact that we misperceive, misunderstand and err in our interactions in this world. That knowledge, and our willful failure to address it in any meaningful manner, places the burden of guilt squarely upon each of us individually. Moreover, since man obtained the knowledge of good and evil, which is the understanding of why one thing is righteous and another unrighteous, we are aware of when our thoughts and intents and any resulting words and behaviors are unequal. Though we may not perceive it perfectly, we perceive it well enough to be assured that what we are thinking and/or doing is indeed unrighteous.

In returning to the point at hand, which is the relationship between iniquity, transgression and sin, we would do well to remember that being unequal in our ways is the root cause of all transgressions we commit. It is those transgressions that immediately result in missing the mark, (which is sin) and are counted against us. However, lest we think that if we do not transgress and thus do not sin, that we are somehow guiltless, we are reminded in Scripture that the LORD God cannot have iniquity in His presence:

*Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, **and canst not look on iniquity**: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is* more righteous than he? (Habakkuk 1:12-13)*

In disagreement with this, there are those who would have us believe that sin is the problem instead of focusing on the inherent iniquity. The following example from a synopsis of the book “*Don't Blame God! A Biblical Answer to the Problem of Evil, Sin, and Suffering*” demonstrates this quite adequately:

“The sub-title of this 210-page book is “A Biblical Answer to the Problem of Evil, Sin, and Suffering.”

It addresses what is probably the number one question most people have about God: If He is a loving God, why is there such rampant human suffering?

This book shows biblically that God is not at all to blame, that the cause of all suffering is sin, and it shows whose sin.²⁷ It shows why Jesus Christ is the fulcrum of history in this regard, and resolves the seemingly apparent contradiction between the nature of the Old Testament God and that of the New Testament God, which, of course are the same changeless God.²⁸

And again from a lesson delivered at Common Ground Church:

“First, sin doesn’t discriminate. It has hit everyone. We don’t even have to do anything to be affected by it. Because Adam sinned, and we are all descended from him, we all have received his fallen nature. Adam’s sin impacted everyone. Even if a person had never committed a sinful act, everyone is guilty because our spiritual makeup is flawed. Because of Adam’s sin, we all have an inborn selfishness that automatically rebels against God and his righteous laws.²⁹ Paul calls our condition “sarx”, or being “in the flesh”. The New Living Translation translates this word as “sinful nature”. Paul isn’t referring to flesh and blood. There is nothing evil about muscle, tendons, and bones. We shouldn’t misunderstand him to be saying there is something inherently evil about the body.”³⁰

But the above is not what we are told in Habakkuk, and neither is it what we are told in a number of other passages of Scripture. Nevertheless, there is a passage that some may grasp upon as proof that sin is the core problem. The following passage from Romans, chapter 7 speaks to the problem of sin and its effects:

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, **sold under sin**. For that which I do I allow not: **for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.** If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but **sin that dwelleth in me.** (*Romans 7:14-17*)

Here we should understand that, unlike Jeremiah 33:8, there is no cause and effect relationship defined wherein sin is stated to cause iniquity and vice versa. Were it so, we could say the two were interchangeable. Rather, the cause and effect relationship defined here is of inward propensity to outward action. The inward propensity, which dwells in the flesh, is sin. The “sin” which is spoken of here, in its underlying Greek word, is the following:

hamartia: a sin, failure³¹

Original Word:

Definition: prop: missing the mark; hence: (a) guilt, sin, (b) a fault, failure (in an ethical sense), sinful deed.

While this causes the flesh to do that which the apostle hates and has difficulty controlling, it speaks nothing about the deeper problem of iniquity, which is the cause of the inward propensity to miss the mark. This puts us at the issue of why we missed the mark in the first place. There is a root cause for why we have a propensity for missing the mark, and we would do well to focus on it instead.

In returning to that root cause of our problem, the following passages demonstrate that there is a considerable focus on iniquity in Scripture. Moreover, that focus addresses iniquity as a fundamental problem that is in direct opposition to righteousness, and not as another aspect of sin and/or transgression:

*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. **Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;** therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. (*Hebrews 1:8-9*)*

27 Unfortunately, I don't see how the book is going to help anyone, as it completely misses the point and assigns the cause of all problems to the wrong source. However, this should be of no surprise as the gentleman that emailed me (a different fellow from the author of the book), who thought there was little difference between iniquity, transgression, and sin, has over 40 years in the ministry, and cannot see the difference between the three.

28 “Don’t Blame God! A Biblical Answer to the Problem of Evil, Sin, and Suffering.” truthorthtradition.com. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://www.truthorthtradition.com/articles/dont-blame-god-a-biblical-answer-to-the-problem-of-evil-sin-and-suffering>

29 Here he is so close, yet so far away. What he is describing is the property or attribute of iniquity, yet he does not realize it.

30 “Romans, Week 2- Themes: Sin...” “Sin is the Problem.” cgnaz.org. Accessed September 1, 2014. <http://cgnaz.org/september-16-2012-sermon-by-kevin/>

31 “hamartia.” biblehub.com. Accessed December 5, 2014. <http://biblehub.com/greek/266.htm>

For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: **thou hatest all workers of iniquity.** (*Psalms 5:4-5*)

Interestingly enough, never once in the Scripture does the LORD God say He hates sinners or hates sin.³² Now this can be explained two ways. But first, we must understand that all sin, by its nature, is unequal or iniquity. All transgression, by its nature, is also unequal or iniquity. Hence, all sin and transgression fall under the auspices of iniquity, and are iniquity by their very nature. Therefore, to refer to sin and transgression as iniquity is entirely correct, but can be confusing. However, not all iniquity is transgression and/or sin. In understanding this, we might use the example of not being able to work calculus. In other words, we are not equal to, or up to doing calculus. We have iniquity with regard to calculus. Nevertheless, if we never attempt to work a calculus problem, and indeed never encounter one, we have not transgressed and subsequently sinned with regard to calculus. Why? Because we never engaged the the action in which our iniquity would cause us to fall short and sin. Nevertheless, our iniquity remains, it simply has not had opportunity to manifest itself in the symptoms of transgression and sin.

Thus it may be that the LORD God is referring to the “workers of iniquity” as all sinners, but that is an extrapolation of the phrase “all workers of iniquity” to cover “all sinners” which cannot be supported by the balance of Scripture. What we find in Romans 5 is a statement that relates to us the LORD God’s love for all His creation, even the wicked who hate Him:

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. **But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** (*Romans 5:7-8*)

Which is reinforced in Ezekiel 33, verse 11, in which the LORD God states plainly:

Say unto them, **As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:** turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (*Ezekiel 33:11*)

Therefore, by the direct contradiction of these passages, the concept that the “workers of iniquity” are all sinners cannot stand. Rather, it must mean a certain set or class of sinners which have pushed the point to the extreme in opposition to the LORD. Without going off topic, we can gain some insight into who that might be by examining the following passages of Scripture:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!³³ for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness. **Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.** (*Matthew 23:25-28*)

And again in John 8:44:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (*John 8:44*)

And yet again from Matthew 12, verses 24-32:

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And

32 Now this is true for the King James Version. Who knows what is in all other versions which purport to be Scripture. It is worth remembering that if Satan can get us focused on the outward sin, we will miss the greater issue of our inward iniquity, and never address it.

33 It may seem pointless to direct attention to this most obvious point, but it is needful nonetheless: It is inherent in being a hypocrite, that one works iniquity.

if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. **Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.** And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: **but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.** (*Matthew 12:24-32*)

Lest we think this class of persons, the workers of iniquity, died out with the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day, we ought to remember that the referencing of them in Psalm 5 was long before the Pharisees existed. Without doubt, they exist today.

In returning to the point at hand, what this does show us is that iniquity is of particular interest to the LORD God, as it is how His creatures go "off the rails" or 'leave their estate' as it were. That is shown in the fall of Lucifer in Ezekiel 28:

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, **till iniquity was found in thee.** (*Ezekiel 28:15*)

It was not sin that was Lucifer's problem, but iniquity. All Lucifer did was compare himself to the LORD on the throne, and think he was better than the LORD whom he was created to glorify.³⁴ Sin is also not the stated reason why the Lord Jesus said that "the love of many shall wax cold." Rather, it is the much more insidious iniquity:

And **because iniquity shall abound**, the love of many shall wax cold. (*Matthew 24:12*)

Iniquity is insidious, as it is being unequal in our "ways." Which is to say that it is so much a part of us, and we are so accustomed to it, that we virtually never notice how our iniquitous thinking and behavior are negatively affecting those around us. Whether we like it or not, not a one of us is far from those the LORD God condemns so vigorously in II Peter:

But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, **following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity:** the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. (*II Peter 2:12-16*)

It was iniquity that was Balaam's problem, and it is the problem of those the LORD is condemning. It was also the problem of one Simon that Peter had to rebuke when he wanted to misappropriate the gift of the Holy Ghost:

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. **Repent therefore of this thy wickedness**, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. **For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.** (*Acts 8:21-23*)

Where Peter speaks of the "bond of iniquity," he is referring to the fact that Simon is held in iniquity and unable to escape iniquity by his own ability. However, this does not apply to just Simon. Rather, because of the very nature

34 There is yet an entire discussion as to how the first sin occurred that could be brought up here. However, we would likely never reach the point which we wish to reach in this appendix, which addresses the issue of righteousness and what it is. Rather, the issue of the origin of sin is left to Appendix B: The Origin of Sin, in which the fall of Lucifer is discussed more fully.

of iniquity and the distortion of everything about a person once they have become unequal in their ways, it is impossible for them to escape that bondage by their own efforts.

Why? Because of misperception, flawed thinking and thought processes. As referenced earlier, if our vision and perception are distorted, and our thinking is also distorted, how can any of us ever expect, of our own distorted and faulty abilities, to escape the cage of being unequal? How can any of us perceive accurately what we must do, if our vision and perception are not functioning correctly to perceive what actually is?

This is why the LORD states in Jeremiah 33 that He, and He alone will cleanse Israel from their iniquity. However, that cleansing is not limited to Israel, as all mankind are shapen in iniquity. Iniquity is the condition in which every person is formed in the womb, and we have no power in and of ourselves to cleanse ourselves from it. Rather, that takes place through the salvation which is in the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone.

And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, **whereby they have sinned**, and **whereby they have transgressed** against me.
(*Jeremiah 33:8*)

In comprehending the above passage, there are two separate issues the LORD God addresses:

1. The iniquity inherent in the individual.
2. The sin which results from that iniquity – which is the cognizant thought, or outward action.

As an aid to our understanding we must comprehend that both iniquity and the resultant sin must be swept away for the individual to be completely clean. Simply taking care of one and ignoring the other will still render one guilty before the LORD. It is imperative that two things occur before we are held guiltless:

1. Have the cause of our going astray removed – which is the iniquity.
2. The transgressions and sins accounted for and payment made for those violations of the Person of the LORD God, clearing the debt the individual owes.

It would appear from a number of passages of Scripture that sin is the problem. However, to believe this is true is no different than believing that the runny nose is the actual problem in a person who has allergies or a cold. Rather, like the runny nose, sin is the symptom and iniquity is the real problem. Iniquity is the root cause of transgression and sin. To claim that sin is the real problem is also like answering as to why you missed a target you were aiming at with the statement “Because I missed the target.” Sin is defined as missing the mark, but there is a reason for missing the mark. That reason is found in Ezekiel, chapters 18 and 33 – and it is the quality of being unequal in our ways.

Lastly, we should understand that we, as the race of man, are driven toward an end that will arrive whether we like it or not. That end is the destruction of all good and order in society and the subsequent rise to preeminence of wickedness and evil – simply because of iniquity:

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. (*II Thessalonians 2:7*)

We must understand: Even as we would work an equation in math, so it is with the passage of time and the outworking of all things with man. Once an inequality is introduced in the equation, it makes the equation unequal and the outcome in error. If we do not realize what we have done, we will arrive at an answer that we think is right, but is completely wrong. Moreover, the longer and more complex the equation, the greater the inequality in the equation becomes. In short, inequality begets more inequality. As time passes, and actions are performed which are unequal to what is, then iniquity grows. If we multiply that by every person on the earth, and none of us actually realize the inequalities we introduce into the working of all things, we can surely see how the mystery of iniquity works – without our really perceiving or understanding it.

The LORD God is equal in all His ways

In contrast to the way man is in his present state, the LORD God sets forth that He is equal in all His ways, and thus righteous. We could, as many have, simply accept the LORD's claim and let it go, leaving unanswered certain questions which the LORD God seems to have given us a way to answer.

If we recall that the LORD God identified equity as the essential part of righteousness along with specifying that a person must have this characteristic or attribute of equity in his "ways," then we can understand that He put before man the means by which man can make an informed determination about the righteousness of God within the limitations of man's existence. Let us recall that the "way" of someone is how they are habitually, which is how they think and act as a matter of course. We need also to remember that being equal as a state of existence is absolute. That is, for one to be "equal," then one must be equal in all their ways (that is, everything that they are as an individual). One cannot be equal in one thing, and be unequal in another, and be considered righteous or without inequality. For one to have equity, that is, being equal as an attribute of their being, that person must be completely consistent and uniform throughout.

Therefore, righteousness is the property of being equal in **all** one's ways, and iniquity is the property of being unequal in **any** of one's ways. It is of necessity true that if righteousness requires for all ways to be equal, that being (or becoming) unequal in any of one's ways means that one has iniquity. Moreover, like the math equation, being unequal in one part spreads to every other part -- and that inequality grows.

In the following passages, the LORD God testifies to man what He is about and what His end for man is. Understanding this is essential for us to come to some definitive conclusion about the character, nature and Person of the LORD God so that we may trust Him and His plan and purpose for man, which He accomplishes in Christ Jesus:

The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The LORD *is* great in Zion; and he *is* high above all the people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; *for it is* holy. **The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.** (*Psalms 99:1-4*)

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: **But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:** and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (*Isaiah 11:1-4*)

Jesus saith unto him, **I am** the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (*John 14:6*)

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. **To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.** (*John 18:37*)

It is imperative for us to come to the understanding that the Old Testament is there for us to see and evaluate man's thinking and subsequent behavior, and consequences for that thinking and behavior. In practical examples, the Old Testament records events, the thoughts and actions of the individuals that precipitated them, and the LORD God's interaction with His creatures in those events.

One of the things we must be assured of is the LORD God's ability to maintain His own righteousness. This is an issue for us, as we cannot maintain righteousness for any period of time at all. Moreover, we are asked by the LORD to place our full, unreserved trust and confidence in the way He has chosen to justify man before Himself, absolve man of his guilt for sin, and cleanse man of all iniquity. If there exists any shred of doubt on our part about the actions and intentions of the LORD God, then we will not trust in any meaningful way. We must be assured that once purchased by the LORD God through the Lord Jesus Christ and His work, we will not be "let go," abandoned, or denied in the judgment.

It is essential that we understand the LORD God is well able to maintain His righteousness, which is the equality of all His ways in and of Himself.

Without realizing it, most individuals, including Christians, pass by the LORD God's omniscience (which is the knowing of all things), without so much as a second thought as to what that really means. This is not merely having all knowledge (which we typically think of as mere information) but includes all understanding of that information and all wisdom to properly apply that information. We must understand that having knowledge, which is information of one sort or another, is not enough, but the significance of that information must be known. This is called understanding. Moreover, individually, we must also know how to apply the information to everything that concerns us. This is called wisdom. The Scripture expresses that the LORD God's understanding is infinite. We should note that it does not use the word "complete," which could be construed as limiting, but specifically states His understanding is infinite. This relates to us that His understanding extends with no end, which should convey to us the fullness of omniscience.

*Great is our Lord, and of great power: **his understanding is infinite.** (Psalm 147:5)*

We should grasp that understanding is in itself a kind of knowledge. It does not simply pertain to raw information, but addresses the significance of that information. This is to say that He knows what that information means and how it relates to everything else. In sum, it is information about information. Understanding is essential to wisdom. Without understanding there is simply no way to determine the weight or significance of one thing versus another and whether something is to be of concern, can be ignored, or is of lesser significance.

Hence, we are led to wisdom, which is essential for the construct of things. Wisdom in itself is a kind of knowledge. It is the knowledge of how information is to be applied and how it will work out as things interact. Without it, it would have been impossible for the LORD God to create anything that worked. And yet, so wise is the LORD in His creation that even in a corrupted state, it still is a wonder to behold and works quite well.

To him **that by wisdom made the heavens:** for his mercy *endureth* for ever. (Psalm 136:5)

The LORD **by wisdom hath founded the earth;** by understanding hath he established the heavens. (Proverbs 3:19)

Thus, when we say the LORD God is omniscient, in practical terms, that means the LORD God knows all that exists, knows all the significance of everything, and is able to properly weight that information and thus apply it properly and correctly to every situation that exists or could exist, for all eternity.

In sum, the LORD God knows all things, and all possible out-workings of those things and their interaction with all other things, for all time and eternity. Moreover, He knows that He knows all things which are, and knows that He knows all out-workings that are and will be. Additionally, the LORD God knows there is nothing else to know that can be known.

Without this knowledge and understanding, maintaining His righteousness would be impossible as He must know the actual end, and all other possible ends of everything that is or could be. For it to be otherwise, there exists the possibility of an action made by the LORD God ending up unequal in its end. This would yield unrighteousness, which the LORD God declares is impossible with Him.

A love for righteousness

We should understand that omniscience is not enough to maintain righteousness. It is not sufficient to merely have all knowledge so that in all workings accomplished, the end of all is known. Rather, one must also love equity or equality:

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that **I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight,** saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The LORD trieth the righteous: **but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul**

hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the portion of their cup. **For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness;** his countenance doth behold the upright. (*Psalms 11:4-7*)

We must assuredly understand the following:

Without a love for righteousness, there is no motivator to be righteous, though one may know all things which exist and all actions which could occur, and the outworking of them all.

By the testimony of His word, the LORD God delights in equity in all things and in all His ways. It is His greatest pleasure to see things which are equal, balanced and true. Whether that equity, which is righteousness, is from the things He makes directly or from His creatures, it is a delight to His soul to behold them. Without this love for equity, righteousness and truth, which is in and of Himself, there exists no possibility of maintaining His righteousness.

Hence, this leads us to two questions:

Do we see righteousness in the things the LORD God created, even though they are in their present state corrupted by our iniquity?

Do we perceive righteousness in the interaction of the LORD God with His creatures: the angels, the devils, and man?

Before we answer those questions, we must remember that we, as fallen creatures given to iniquity, are attempting to ascertain and understand the actions of the LORD God as He deals with creatures which (as all recorded history proves) are wicked, uncaring and self-centered. This is of great difficulty, and entirely dependent upon the honesty of each individual heart and the intellectual honesty of the mind. Moreover, much of what we are attempting to understand is spiritual, which cannot be seen and is not easily perceived. This leaves man very little to work with in determining anything about the righteousness of the LORD God.

However, there are some things which we can perceive and understand, which should be obvious to all. Here we turn to the only testable environment we have available – the physical. Because of the system the LORD God has set up, there are some simple “tests” which can be performed by anyone possessing an honest heart and mind. Contrary to the thoughts of some, one does not have to be born again, that is, in Christ, to perceive and understand this. The reason for this is the LORD's desire that man come to trust Him freely and of his own volition.

Righteousness in Application

Though it would be convenient to test the physical creation, we find that an impossibility for certain reasons. The first of which is our inability to accurately document anything from the moment of creation. Rather, we must rely on the testimony of Scripture, which for our test, we cannot do. Second, man has yet to find the end of all that is created. And, third, it is patently obvious that disease and corruption are present in the materials of this universe. If we are to test for righteousness using those materials, the conditions required are not present. Thus, for the foregoing three reasons, we cannot use the formation and constitution of the physical universe to determine anything about righteousness and its existence. However, there are two environments which do present themselves suitable for testing:

Relationships between men and between man and the LORD God.

The physical laws which govern the universe. This is not the material of which it consists, but the principles which make it function, and by which the physical processes operate.

It is generally accepted that righteousness consists of the things you do or refrain from doing, or of being born again in Christ, making one righteous inwardly. However those things relate to righteousness, they do not convey in any comprehensive sense, a practical expression of the effect of righteousness. Rather, those things are either impossible to perceive, or are scattered, incidental happenings that someone would have to be present to observe. This does not give us any assurance of the existence of righteousness, as random acts prove nothing concerning righteousness. The fact that it is manifestly impossible to observe the heart, which is

spiritual, assists us in no way in determining the existence of righteousness either. However, it is not so with the following, which is the second commandment:

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (*Mark 12:30*)

How is it that we can say this commandment is the basis of righteousness in application? It is quite simple: Righteousness is the quality of being equal in all one's ways. Hence, the outworking of that is treating everyone equally – that is, treating everyone like you would like to be treated. It truly is this simple.

The Everyone Test

At this point we will play on the field of the opponents of the LORD God, which is the ground of the flesh. The reason it is the ground of the opponents of the LORD God is due to the focus of both man and Satan on things of the flesh and the fact that they are enamored of them. If on this ground they are proven wrong, then it is unquestionably and undeniably true that neither man nor Satan have anything to offer in the way of understanding or justification.

It is the issue of behavior which we must address here, as there is an unwillingness by man to confront certain behaviors as inherently destructive. Rather than call those behaviors out and ensure that everyone knows those particular behaviors are wrong, many opt out of responding, leaving such behaviors unchallenged. In fact, there is a general attitude in this generation that all behaviors, unless they are immediately dangerous to life and health, are essentially equal and there is no real consequence for engaging in one particular behavior over another.

This thinking comes about because the moral absolutes have been generally discarded in favor of a subjective approach that inherently denies there are behaviors which are always evil in their consequence. These behaviors could not come about except the persons which engage in them abandon reason and consideration for others in favor of self and the immediate gratification of self. They do so because it appears to them that such actions are without consequence.

Naturally, this would seem to violate a principle which everyone observes from their earliest age:

That every action, no matter how minor and insignificant it may appear, has at least one consequence.

However, because the consequences of some actions are realized much later than the consequences of others, it appears (especially to those who deliberately blind themselves) that certain actions have no real consequence. Due to this, the belief is that those actions can be engaged in with impunity. However, this does appear to conflict with the above observed principle, giving rise to a couple of questions worthy of consideration:

How can we determine or know if a way of thinking and its consequent behavior is right and proper to do (hence righteous), and some other way of thinking and behavior is wrong and destructive in its end (hence, wicked and evil)?

And:

Can we establish by proving out and weighing the ends of actions, whether the system we live in is borne out of random chance or was indeed created by a righteous God?

A corollary to that is the proof that righteousness either exists or it doesn't. If we truly live in a designed system in which certain thoughts and actions are classed as righteous and others not, then we should see a pattern in the system and be able to determine the laws for that system.

If, on the other hand, the entirety of this creation came about by chance, then the very nature of chance dictates that there can be no set laws to govern the outcomes of thoughts and behaviors. This is due to the very nature of chance – that it is random in both cause and effect. Hence, an action which yields a certain outcome one time may not yield that same outcome another time. The reason for this is chance or randomness in application of existent conditions.

Since it is obvious that proving something which occurred by chance cannot be done with any degree of certainty, we must test that which claims to be reliable, which is the system described in Scripture. Thus, the following questions also arise:

Can we actually design a test wherein the existence, or lack thereof, of the system described in Scripture, which is a system originally formed in righteousness, is proved or disproved?

And, can the test prove or disprove whether the governing laws of that system are also righteous?

Since we cannot prove or disprove – or even design a test for the evolutionary/atheistic model, as it is based upon a world formed by chance, we now turn to the Scriptural model. The supposition is:

If the LORD God did not design the system we live in, and there is no such thing as righteousness, this test will fail. If he does exist, and righteousness is indeed operative, then the test will succeed.

Success and failure of the test are defined by the standards the LORD set in the Scripture, and are evident in the commandments:

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying, Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (*Matthew 22:34-40*)

And again:

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.** (*Romans 13:8-10*)

According to the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are two preeminent commandments which everything else in the system is dependent upon. They are:

- Love the LORD God with all your being.
- Love your neighbor as yourself.

In the passage from Romans, the apostle Paul explains that “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour:” By this he defines “love” as a characteristic which is beneficial to everyone. Which, in turn, fulfills the law. Since it is clear and plain that Scripture declares the LORD God created man, it consequently declares that man should love his Creator. Since one can do nothing to either benefit or harm the LORD God, it becomes obvious that love expressed toward the LORD is seen in obedience, and hatred for the LORD in disobedience.³⁵

In further explaining what behaviors are and are not acceptable, the apostle Paul set forth two lists in his epistle to the church at Galatia. In these lists, he states that those who engage in the behaviors of one “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” meaning they are against the law of God, and contrary to righteousness. But in the second list, there is another set of behaviors that he sets forth as “against such there is no law” thus declaring these are thoughts and actions which accord with righteousness:

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

35 It should be implicitly understood that an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent LORD and God cannot be added to, detracted from, or affected in any way by the His creatures. After all, how do you benefit or add to that which is infinite?

Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things **shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: **against such there is no law.** (*Galatians 5:19-23*)

Hence, there are two major things which are apparent here:

1. The “love” defined by the Apostle Paul in Romans 13 is expressed in those actions set forth in the epistle to the Galatians, of which it is stated “against such there is no law.”
2. The system set up in the Scripture is such that when we engage in the right behaviors it is beneficial to everyone, and when we engage in the wrong behaviors it is a detriment to everyone.

Given the consistency of the assertions concerning our behavior, we are confident that if the system in which we exist was indeed set up by the LORD God, it is testable and will yield a consistent result. By reason we understand that if everyone engages in a certain behavior it will yield predicable results regardless of whether that behavior is proper or improper.

Since the Scripture makes such declaration, we set the test parameter thus:

If an action or behavior is proper and right to do, and everyone does it, then it will have a positive effect upon everyone and benefit mankind as a whole.

Conversely:

If the action or behavior is evil and wicked, and everyone does it, it will have a destructive effect.

Thus, all we have to do is think:

“What would happen if everyone on the earth did “xyz?” What would be the outcome of that?”

Additionally, we could apply it to our own thinking and behavior:

“If everyone on the earth thought like I think, what would the outcome of that be?”

Or:

“If everyone had the thoughts I am having right now, what would the outcome be?”

And:

If everyone on the earth did what I am going to do, or am doing right now, what would the outcome of that be?”

For instance:

If everyone lied (and did nothing but lie) to everyone else, what would the outcome of that be?

Consider this:

- *You take your car in to have the brakes repaired – and you don’t tell the truth about the brakes and what you have experienced with the car. Will that help or hinder the repair of your vehicle?*
- *The shop quotes you a price for the repair, but they lie and deliberately do not give you an accurate quote. Will it help or hinder you and your finances?*

- *When you get the vehicle back, the shop lies about an unsafe problem, declaring they “fixed it” when in actuality they did nothing. Would that help you or be detrimental to you?*

Again, if we take another behavior for an example, such as homosexuality, and apply the test to it:

If everyone engaged in homosexual behavior to the exclusion of heterosexual behavior, what would be the result?

At this point it is necessary to address an issue which the advocates of homosexual behavior have broached – which is artificial insemination. They believe this offsets the natural consequences of their behavior with regard to the survival of the race. However, by their very argument they contradict themselves by the admission that such a process is not natural. It is entirely true that artificial insemination is not available naturally and does not naturally occur. They forget that no other behavior would have this advantage. This would be like everyone killing everyone else, yet no one dying. We could call such a process “artificial death.” This is of course, manifestly impossible. Rather, for the test of righteousness to be applied correctly and be valid, we must let the naturally occurring outcome take place.

In the case of homosexual behavior, it should take about 100 years and the human race will be extinct.

- *What if every woman aborted her child? What would the outcome of that be?*
- *What if everyone stole to get what they wanted or needed: No one labored to produce anything, they simply stole it from someone else? How well would that work out?*
- *What if everyone exercised wrath and stayed angry all the time?*

Conversely, ask the “What if everyone...” question about the following behaviors:

- *Love*
- *Joy*
- *Peace*
- *Longsuffering*
- *Gentleness*
- *Goodness*
- *Faith*
- *Meekness*
- *Temperance*

Additionally:

- *What if all children honored their parents?*
- *What if everyone told the truth all the time?*
- *What if everyone honored their commitments all the time?*

Interesting how it works out, isn't it? All the behaviors the LORD states are good for us benefit everyone – even when everyone engages in them. Conversely, when the LORD states a behavior is bad, we can see that it would be very detrimental if everyone engaged in it.

What does this prove?

That we live in a system that is designed to work a certain way – and no other. The system we live in does indeed work the way the Scripture states it works. And will not work any other way.

In sum:

We are created beings, not evolved through time and chance. The system we live in was created to function a certain specific way – it did not come about as a result of chance. If it did, then you would not be able to reason out the outcomes of the behaviors listed above – which we all can certainly do.

Further, this also proves that all behaviors are not equal, and there are behaviors that no one should ever engage in, as they are clearly destructive to the entire human race. This speaks volumes about the shortsightedness and selfishness of certain individuals in this world. After all, why would you engage in a behavior that we all can easily reason out and determine to be ultimately destructive to mankind?

The test also speaks volumes about the existence of righteousness and whether this physical realm was created by a righteous and holy God. Without doubt, the test would fail if righteousness did not exist, as it is righteous to apply the exact same conditions to everyone and obtain a result consistent with the conditions applied.

This also demonstrates in a comprehensive way what would happen if everyone abided by those things the LORD God declares are righteous. If in fact we all simply abided by the second commandment, the world would be a much better and more livable place. It would certainly be far more peaceful.

What we are left with at this point are two questions which appear to be unanswerable.

Answering our “unanswerable” questions

Near the beginning of this appendix I quoted two questions which I asked a gentleman via email. They are:

How do you know God is perfectly holy?

And:

How do you know God "cannot sin?"

Both these questions center around what is considered “proof” and having “proven” something. Seeing we are limited in our ability to investigate every aspect of the LORD God in all His infinity, we are tempted to say these questions will remain unanswered. However, we are not asking for absolute proof. Absolute proof is nearly impossible in all but the most controlled situations as there will always be some element which, if we are honest, has some measure of variability, some unknown. To accomplish complete control of all variables is impossible except in the most limited of circumstances as it requires knowing every piece of information that bears on a subject or action. If we are truthful with ourselves, we must admit that we do not have every single bit of information available for the vast majority of subjects or events which exist. Moreover, we are creatures of iniquity. Being so, we must first overcome our own inequality or negate its influence in some way.

Nevertheless, this situation is not impossible. There are methods which yield proof, even as there are ways to check certain tools and instruments against themselves. For instance, how could we be assured that a level used for checking the foundation of a house, or the setting up of a table is actually accurate? The method used is to check it against itself. By cleaning the surface we will test it on, and then carefully setting the level in place, we mark its position and note the bubble position. We then rotate the level 180 degrees carefully setting it in the exact spot that we had it initially. Now we check the bubble position. Does it have the same deviation it had in the first position? If so, then the level is accurate. If not, the level is not accurate and cannot yield proper readings.

Even so it is with this. Logic dictates that unequal things do not bring forth equal things. In like manner, beings and persons which are unequal in their ways do not create equal things and do not make laws which equally apply in all instances. Moreover, they are not interested in the balancing or the leveling out of unequal situations to make them equal. This principle alone provides nearly all the evidence required for proof. Yet, it is not all that is available to us. Let us think back to all the previous explanation on righteousness and understand the logic of it all.

It is manifest that for anyone to be equal, they must be equal in all their ways and all their works. In this, we understand that the property or attribute of righteousness is absolute and cannot stand any taint or hint of

iniquity. We find that any being that is not righteous will be inconsistent in its interaction with others and its behavior in things it elects to do of itself, independent of any interaction with others.

Moreover, in understanding righteousness, it is associated with truth and the concept of trueness. It is also associated in certain senses with the concepts of balance, straightness, and squareness. All of these speak to absolutes in which the thing measured either meets or does not meet an exacting condition.

Knowing this, we can examine certain events and happenings and make determinations, based on logic, as to what kind of creation we live in and whether it was created and is still upheld by a holy and righteous LORD and God.

Let us then observe the creation itself and examine the principles of equality and inequality. Let us examine what the LORD God testifies of man and determine whether the LORD God has told the truth about man.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. (Psalm 19:1-9)*

The statement "it doesn't take a rocket scientist" is entirely applicable here. Some simple and common observations of the world we live in prove that it is an ordered and orderly creation that is self-correcting, and even correcting of man's blunders and errors. It is of no small note that the processes of nature (as it were) seek equilibrium. Moreover, in all that we observe, everything is applied equally. There is not one physical law applicable to only one part of the universe, and not another. Rather, the entire universe seeks equilibrium, and there is equal application of the governing laws across the universe. We can see this stated in the laws of gravitation and motion as observed and stated by Newton and Euler:³⁶

Newton's law of universal gravitation states that any two bodies in the universe attract each other with a force that is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them.³⁷

The laws of motion

First law: When viewed in an inertial reference frame, an object either remains at rest or continues to move at a constant velocity, unless acted upon by an external force.³⁸

Second law: The vector sum of the forces F on an object is equal to the mass m of that object multiplied by the acceleration vector a of the object: $F = ma$.³⁹

Third law: When one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction on the first body.⁴⁰

Euler's first law states that the linear momentum of a body, p (also denoted G) is equal to the product of the mass of the body m and the velocity of its center of mass v_{cm} :⁴¹

36 We should note here that Isaac Newton did not believe that Christ is God manifest in the flesh, and Euler believed as most Protestants believed. This is to say that it is certain Newton never knew the LORD, and Euler likely didn't either. Mere belief in "God" is not sufficient for salvation. Believing the Scripture to be divinely inspired is helpful to the individual, but that alone will not justify one before the LORD, and indicates nothing about that individual's relationship to Christ. What the recognition of the physical laws by these men does say is that the outworking of the righteousness of the LORD God is easy to identify and know. In short, it is obvious and cannot be missed.

37 "Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation." wikipedia.org. Accessed December 5, 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newton%27s_law_of_universal_gravitation

38 "Newton's Laws of Motion." wikipedia.org. Accessed December 5, 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newton%27s_laws_of_motion

39 ibid

40 ibid

41 "Euler's Laws of Motion." wikipedia.org. Accessed December 5, 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euler%27s_laws_of_motion

Euler's second law states that the rate of change of angular momentum L (also denoted H) about a point that is fixed in an inertial reference frame, or is the mass center of the body, is equal to the sum of the external moments of force (torques) M (also denoted τ or Γ) about that point.⁴²

The mere fact these natural, physical laws exist, separate, distinct and above man's intervention, demonstrates that the physical universe we live in did not come about by chance or randomness. We should understand that natural, physical laws are not changeable by normal, natural means,⁴³ neither can they be touched or altered by man and his efforts. These laws are utterly dependable to render the observer able to accurately predict the outcome of any action or event governed by them. The description of natural, physical law from the Wikipedia site⁴⁴ suffices here, as it is sufficiently and accurately cited:

A **physical law** or **scientific law** "is a theoretical principle deduced from particular facts, applicable to a defined group or class of phenomena, and expressible by the statement that a particular phenomenon always occurs if certain conditions be present." [1] Physical laws are typically conclusions based on repeated scientific experiments and observations over many years and which have become accepted universally within the scientific community. The production of a summary description of our environment in the form of such laws is a fundamental aim of science. These terms are not used the same way by all authors.

The distinction between natural law in the political-legal sense and law of nature or physical law in the scientific sense is a modern one, both concepts being equally derived from *physis*, the Greek word (translated into Latin as *natura*) for *nature*.⁴⁵

Description

Several general properties of physical laws have been identified (see Davies (1992) and Feynman (1965) as noted, although each of the characterizations are not necessarily original to them). Physical laws are:

- True, at least within their regime of validity. By definition, there have never been repeatable contradicting observations.
- Universal. They appear to apply everywhere in the universe. (Davies, 1992:82)
- Simple. They are typically expressed in terms of a single mathematical equation. (Davies)
- Absolute. Nothing in the universe appears to affect them. (Davies, 1992:82)
- Stable. Unchanged since first discovered (although they may have been shown to be approximations of more accurate laws—see "Laws as approximations" below),
- Omnipotent. Everything in the universe apparently must comply with them (according to observations). (Davies, 1992:83)
- Generally conservative of quantity. (Feynman, 1965:59)
- Often expressions of existing homogeneities (symmetries) of space and time. (Feynman)
- Typically theoretically reversible in time (if non-quantum), although time itself is irreversible. (Feynman)

Physical laws are distinguished from scientific theories by their simplicity. Scientific theories are generally more complex than laws; they have many component parts, and are more likely to be changed as the body of available experimental data and analysis develops. This is because a physical law is a summary observation of strictly empirical matters, whereas a theory is a model

42 ibid

43 This is the point of the miracles described in Scripture. The natural laws were suspended or held in abeyance for a brief time to demonstrate to man the power of the LORD God over the physical processes He created and set in motion. Primarily, this was done because man worshiped the physical creation and thought it all powerful. Nonetheless, however spectacular those miracles were, they were not then, nor are they now, a substitute for the spiritual instrument which is faith.

44 Though some may argue with the use of the Wikipedia site for any reference, the charge is baseless as any reference work is only as good as the source material and the validity of the citations therein. Some articles on the Wikipedia site are absolute junk, being slanted politically and socially, and others are quite high quality with accurate, proper context quotations and citations. In short, there is no substitute for verifying the information.

45 Some modern philosophers, e.g. Norman Swartz, use "physical law" to mean the laws of nature as they truly are and not as they are inferred by scientists. See Norman Swartz, *The Concept of Physical Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1985. Second edition available online [1]. (<http://www.sfu.ca/~swartz/physical-law/>)

that accounts for the observation, explains it, relates it to other observations, and makes testable predictions based upon it. Simply stated, while a **law** notes *that* something happens, a **theory** explains *why* and *how* something happens.

Of course we can compare the above description of what constitutes physical law with the following definition of “chance” from the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary and discern whether the two have anything in common at all:

Full Definition of CHANCE⁴⁶

- 1 **a** : **something that happens unpredictably without discernible human intention or observable cause**
 b : **the assumed impersonal purposeless determiner of unaccountable happenings** : LUCK <an outcome decided by chance>
 c : the fortuitous or incalculable element in existence : CONTINGENCY
- 2 : a situation favoring some purpose : OPPORTUNITY <needed a chance to relax>
- 3 : a fielding opportunity in baseball
- 4 **a** : the possibility of a particular outcome in an uncertain situation; also : the degree of likelihood of such an outcome<a small chance of success>
 b plural : the more likely indications <chances are he's already gone>
- 5 **a** : RISK <not taking any chances>
 b : a raffle ticket
 — chance adjective
 — by chance
 : in the haphazard course of events <they met by chance>

Whether it is obvious that there exists no intersection between the physical laws and chance is largely dependent upon what any particular person is willing to observe and admit to. However, objectively, there is no intersection to be found. That men will engage in the most tortured of reasoning to avoid admitting to the existence of a God is beyond question. That men know the physical laws implicitly declare God exists is also obvious. A read through the article “Natural Laws Are Descriptions, not Rules” from the “LessWrong” blog (http://lesswrong.com/lw/ct3/natural_laws_are_descriptions_not_rules/) is sufficient to convince us that men will indeed torture their consciences to avoid any hint of the physical laws implying that God is real and does exist.

In returning to the example of the laws of motion and gravitation, and indeed all physical laws, we should be able to observe and logically conclude that the laws do not come about by the actions of a being that has iniquity. Rather, the creation of principles and laws that apply equally across the span of the universe (that is, everything we have yet observed of it – but all things being consistent thus far, there is little reason to believe we would encounter anything different), and the desire of every physical thing to seek equilibrium, speak directly to a righteous Creator. It is notable that however much man's iniquity has corrupted this physical universe, the laws and principles which govern it are not corrupted. This speaks directly to the fact that the law is transcendent, rising above mere place, time, and circumstance. It also speaks to the fact that the spiritual is higher than the physical, with all things being governed by law.

Yet, when we observe mankind, we find a vastly different testimony. In the following passages we find the LORD God's testimony of man, and the condition He knows man to be in:

What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: **that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.** (*Romans 3:9-19*)

46 "Chance." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed December 3, 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chance>.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*)

If we doubt the LORD's testimony concerning us, all we have to do is read history honestly. Anyone taking an honest assessment of the history of man has no choice but to conclude that the race of man is every bit as wicked and evil as the LORD God states we (as the race of man), individually and collectively are. Were the LORD God in any way unrighteous, He would convey to us no different testimony than the Greco-Roman and Norse mythologies give us of their gods. He would turn the same blind eye those supposed gods did and engage in the same petty behavior as they. Instead, what we find of the LORD God is a setting forth of a lawful and righteous foundation for everything He does. Moreover, unlike those supposed gods who played favorites with men, the LORD God condemns the transgressions of those who serve Him just as He does those who refuse to serve Him. There is no difference with the LORD – were this not the case, He would be no different than the gods of mythology who behaved just like the men they supposedly ruled over. The fact that man created mythical gods of various types and their behavior is no better than the men who worship them, speaks volumes about the willingness of man to justify himself anyway he can, without regard to righteousness. Thus, what we are given in the reading of the Scriptures matches what we know of history – that the situation of mankind is exactly as the LORD God testifies.

What We Can Conclude

Thus, without being infinite we are able to make determinations concerning the righteousness of God. It is within our ability to grasp and understand that, were the LORD God to ever allow any iniquity to touch Him, this creation would come to an abrupt end as it would not sustain the imbalance and inequality. The situation would be no different in principle and practice than a spinning shaft becoming out of balance. Left alone, it will destroy itself in short order. So it is with this creation – the LORD God maintains His own righteousness, and works to limit the damage done by our iniquity:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power**, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (*Hebrews 1:1-4*)

Nevertheless, however much evidence exists in the testimony of creation, logic, the history of man, and Scripture, there will be those on this earth who will never accept the fact that the LORD God is entirely and completely holy and righteous. They will never accept that the LORD God is equal in all His ways, and that they are consumed with iniquity. They, in the inequality of their way, cannot and will not perceive that which is just and equal.

However, if we are willing to perceive, we can know and be assured that the LORD God is completely holy and righteous, without iniquity, transgression and sin. Moreover, we are able to do so, not blindly or superstitiously, but with reason and logic. Nevertheless, without the instrument of faith, we will never perceive that which is beyond the physical and accurately understand things in the realm of the spiritual. This is particularly true of those things which are involved in our salvation and justification before the LORD God. Whether we realize it or not, the totality of witness concerning righteousness should convey to us that choosing to blindly or superstitiously believe is not acceptable to the LORD God. He, being righteous, will not accept us if we engage in such iniquity when clear evidence is set before us, easily perceptible to those who care to observe.

Finis