

Greetings church,

To this juncture, this sixth chapter written by Joshua M. Greever is my favorite chapter. His methodical processing of the concepts of justice and injustice as presented in scripture are easy to follow and very compelling. His premise is as follows: “injustice is present and rampant within humanity for two reasons. First, the root of injustice lies deep within the human heart and is pervasive and has its way in human behavior. Second, in the Old Testament, there was no one - whether from Israel or the nations - who was able to overcome the problem of sin and deliver humanity from their injustices”¹. Greever goes on to underscore this point with multiple citations from the Old Testament, his premise being that the aforementioned twofold problem is established all throughout the OT; which it is (as seen multiple times in Genesis, Ecclesiastes, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Jeremiah, Amos, Obadiah, Isaiah, 1 & 2 Chronicles). The human heart, though made good, is corrupted thereby rendering just human leadership impossible. This reality of the corrupted human heart is underscored and corroborated by Jesus when he explains that what defiles a person is *not* what one puts into one’s mouth, but what comes out. What comes out of the mouth comes from the heart and the heart is where evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, pride and foolishness come from. Thus Jesus, as expected, is consistent in keeping with the teachings of the Old Testament.

Greever goes on to communicate that the Old Testament does offer a twofold solution for its twofold problem of injustice. “God would restore Edenic justice only through a new covenant, in which he would give his people new hearts so that they would know and love God and his just ways. Corresponding to this new covenant would be the arrival of a just Davidic king who would rule God’s people with perfect justice and righteousness.”² These solutions are rife throughout the prophetic texts, major and minor alike. Moses and the prophets call upon the people to circumcise their hearts. While ceremonial circumcision of every male is an outward reflection of covenantal commitment, true adherence to God’s covenant is expressed through hearts directed away from injustice and towards justice and righteousness. This *heart change* is the prophetic hope that is offered. Salvation is the made-good-though-now-corrupted human heart being turned away from injustice and back towards God who is just and righteous. This is something that the human heart needs to be led to and instructed in.

This being the case thus far, Greever concludes his essay by submitting that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope for a turning, a saving, of the human heart. How do we know? “Unlike Israel’s leaders, Jesus was committed to ‘the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy, and faithfulness.’”³ The corrupted human heart likes to believe that the law is about consequences; about intimidation, preventing further bad behavior by making an example of those who perpetrate bad behavior (unless they can pay their way out). God’s law is about equity, justice, mercy and staying faithful to God and God’s ways. This is how Jesus lived and led. It’s not just the human heart that needs saving but human leadership; there is no one able to lead in the ways of God. The law, being external to the corrupted human heart, could never hope to save it. The human heart has to be led by the human heart into the just, merciful, and righteous ways of God. Thank you Jesus.

¹Greever, Joshua M. *Justice in the New Covenant* in Let Justice Flow Like Water: Toward a Theology of Biblical Justice.

Editors Josha M. Greever, D.A. Horton, and Justin McLendon. B&H Academic, Brentwood, TN; 2025. p140

²ibid, p147

³ibid, p154

What are the ramifications of all this? What are we to do while we wait for the culmination of Christ's reign? We persist. We seek to course correct where we are able. "Unlike human rulers and kingdoms, Jesus's reign is characterized by justice and righteousness."⁴ Truer words have, perhaps, never been spoken. "On the one hand, the pervasiveness of sin in the human heart should temper our optimism for solving injustice in the broader society. On the other hand, the reality of the gospel creates and sustains an appropriate optimism for justice around us."⁵ This optimism is what compels us to persist in our pursuit of justice and righteousness at a broader societal level. While we cannot rely upon any governmental entity to ensure justice and righteousness (external entities cannot solve a problem that is internal to every human being) that doesn't mean we give up in working to promote justice and righteousness through the systems that are provided to us. "... Christians should promote the right treatment of others in society ... Christians must not be silent about injustice, but rather speak and work against it with appropriate wisdom and biblical fidelity."⁶ Amen Mr. Greever. Our hope for final consummation and our training in Jesus equips and enables us to pursue the justice and righteousness of God with made-good-though-now-corrupted human hearts turned God-ward.

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Eddie

⁴Greever, Joshua M. *Justice in the New Covenant in Let Justice Flow Like Water: Toward a Theology of Biblical Justice*. Editors Joshua M. Greever, D.A. Horton, and Justin McLendon. B&H Academic, Brentwood, TN; 2025. p161

⁵ibid, p161

⁶ibid p163