
The Messenger



"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

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The Gospel – God’s Righteousness for Man

Part 2

by Dempsey Collins

What is the righteousness of God?

Righteousness is from Greek, dikaiousunē.

“It corresponds to the Hebrew tsedeq meaning rightness” (Zon., p. 723).

“The state acceptable to God which becomes the sinner’s possession through that faith ... offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ” (Thayer, p. 149).

“The righteousness bestowed by God ... This righteousness obligates the redeemed one to serve it faithfully (Rom. 6:13, 16, 18ff) and assures him that he will have life (Rom. 8:10) (Arndt & Gingrich on Rom. 1:17, p. 196).

“For the most part Paul uses this Greek term of that gracious gift of God to men whereby all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are brought into right relationship with God ... The man who trusts in Christ becomes the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21), i.e., becomes in Christ all that God requires of man to be, all that he could never be in himself” (Vine, p. 298).

The word righteousness is used in various ways in scriptures:

The Scriptures sometimes speak of the righteousness of God, i.e., righteousness as an attribute or characteristic of God.

Ex. 9:27 “The Lord is righteous”

II Cor. 9:9 “His righteousness endures forever”

Ps. 11:7 “for the Lord is righteous and loves righteousness”

Ps. 119:137 “Righteous are you O Lord, and righteous are your judgments”

In all of these statements God is righteous because He always acts according to His perfect standard of rightness.

Ps. 145:17 “The Lord is righteous in all His ways”
Rev. 19:2 “For true and righteous are His judgments”
Ps. 34:17 “The Lord upholds the righteous”

“Law is not simply a demand that God makes on His people; it is the way in which He administers His universe. He can be relied on to act according to law.” (Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p. 255)

The comments of Jim McGuiggan are also very helpful here:

“Pagan gods were erratic and capricious. They couldn’t be relied upon to conduct themselves lawfully. They were devious, envious, covenant breakers, lustful rapists and other such things. The God of the Bible is not only the source of law but always acts consistently with that law.” (McGuiggan, Romans, p. 14)

God is the embodiment of righteousness. As the Psalmist says, “He is righteous and He loves righteousness” (Ps. 11:7). Just as love, justice and mercy embody His character so does righteousness. God always without exception practices what He preaches and always preaches what is right and good. God always acts in perfect compliance with His own laws. Abraham understood this (Gen. 18:25); see also Moses, Ex. 9:18; David, Ps. 23:3; John, I John 1:9.

It is a great blessing that man can always count on God to act in a manner consistent with His word.

God’s Word is righteousness.

Ps. 119:172 “All your commandments are righteousness”
Isa. 45:19 “I the Lord, speak righteousness declaring things that are upright”

God’s word is righteous because it comes from the righteous God.

The Bible speaks of the righteousness of right living people.

Gen. 7:1 God said of Noah – “Thee have I seen righteous before me”

I Sam. 24:17 Saul said of David – “You are more righteous than I am”, i.e., You are more in keeping with God’s law of right than I am.

Ps. 37:21 “The righteous show mercy.” Right living people show mercy to others.

Ps. 37:25 “Right living people are not forsaken.”

Ps. 37:17 “Right living people are upheld by the Lord.”

Ps. 37:29 “Right living people will inherit the earth”

See also Prov. 10:11, 16, 21, 25, 28, 30, and 32.

I John 3:7 “A righteous man is a man that does righteousness”, i.e., strives to live according to God’s word.

Heb. 11:4 Abel was righteous because his “deeds were righteous”.

to be continued