

November 3, 2013

## THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

### Part 1

Acts 17: 30b-31; Romans 4; 6-8; I John 2: 28-29

Look at John 20: 30-31 **“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”**

The ðbookö John is referring to is the Bible (the cannon of scripture). It is the RECORD which God has left us. Throughout this RECORD, there is one theme, one prevalent truth, one foundation which everything RECORDED rests on.

That foundation is what Christ has done to save His people. It is what Christ has done to honor God in the salvation of ungodly sinners. It is what Christ has done to make it RIGHT for God to remain Just and justify the ungodly. That foundation of everything that is RECORDED is summarized in a single phrase: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

This is not Godø essential righteousness. It is not Godø inherent righteousness. God IS righteous. He is righteous in His being. He is righteous in His character. He is righteous in all that He does. But, Godø inherent righteousness cannot be communicated to sinners.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is a righteousness that CAN be communicated to sinners. It is the righteousness worked out in the body and soul of Christ. It is the product of Christø obedience unto death. This is WHY Christ became Incarnate, walked under the law, and laid down His life. He was ðmade under the law to redeem them that were under the law.ö Gal 4: 4. Christ came to save sinners.

Look at 1 Timothy 1: 15 **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”**

ALL are sinners by nature. ALL stand in need of salvation. Look at Romans 3: 23 **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”**

We sinned in Adam. And, in ourselves we (continually) come short of the glory of God. I.e. Even in our BEST obedience, we fail to do ANYTHING that would enable God to declare us righteous because of our obedience. All have earned the ðwages of sinö, (which is eternal death), Romans 6: 23.

God DECLARES sinners righteous who by nature and by practice are altogether ungodly. Christ died for the ðungodlyö (Rom 5: 6). God justifies the ungodly (Rom 4: 5).

The question to be answered is: How can God (What makes it RIGHT for God to) save those who are sinners in all that we do; those whom He (Himself) declares ungodly? What makes it RIGHT for God to save and eternally bless ONE sinner, and yet, condemn and eternally punish ANOTHER sinner, when BOTH sinners are EQUALLY deserving of Godø eternal wrath and EQUALLY

unable (within themselves) to deliver themselves from condemnation or gain the least of God's favor?

SOMETHING (outside ourselves/apart from our obedience), MUST make it right for God to save us, keep us, and eternally bless us. That SOMETHING is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. II Corinthians 5: 21 says, Sinners are "MADE the righteousness of God in Him (i.e. in Christ)".

This term, this doctrine, this FOUNDATIONAL theme of the Bible, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, is (perhaps) the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand. What I plan for us to do in this message and another next week is explore some scriptural REASONS why that is so.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is (perhaps) the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand.

1. It is God's STANDARD of judgment.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is (perhaps) the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand (First reason) because: It is God's STANDARD of judgment.

Look at Acts 17: 30b-31 "**God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:**

**31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."**

God will "judge the world". He will "judge the world in righteousness". And, He will "judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has ordained". That Man is Christ.

God ASSURES all men that the righteousness Christ worked out by His obedience unto death is God's STANDARD of judgment. He assures them by Christ's resurrection from the dead. How? How does Christ's resurrection from the dead assure all men that the righteousness He established at the Cross is God's STANDARD of judgment both now and at the final judgment?

God's resurrection of Christ is a DECLARATION that Christ by His obedience unto death FULFILLED God's law and SATISFIED His justice. (Another way), Christ's resurrection is A DECLARATION that His death SATISFIED God's law in its PRECEPT and in its PENALTY.

Christ SATISFIED the law's demand for obedience (PRECEPT) by perfect/continual obedience from the cradle to the Cross. "He did no sin." "He knew no sin." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners". He "offered Himself WITHOUT SPOT to God".

Why is this important? Why must we KNOW that Christ was UNDEFILED with sin; that He was the UNBLEMISHED lamb of God?

We must know because if Christ was a sinner, if He was contaminated with sin, then, His death would have been the RESULT of sin (just like any other sinner).

If Christ was a sinner, He would be DISQUALIFIED as a Substitute. He could NOT bear the Legal guilt/penalty/punishment of others, because He would be bearing HIS OWN legal guilt and punishment. But, He was no sinner. He was perfectly/continually obedient from the cradle to the Cross. He SATISFIED the law's demand for obedience. He SATISFIED the PRECEPT of the law.

Now, BECAUSE Christ SATISFIED the PRECEPT of the law; BECAUSE He SATISFIED the law's demand for perfect/continual obedience, He could and did SATISFY the law's demand for punishment. BECAUSE He SATISFIED the law's PRECEPT, He could and did SUBSTITUTE Himself in the place of OTHERS. BECAUSE He SATISFIED the law's PRECEPT, He could and did bear the (legal guilt) of OTHERS. BECAUSE He SATISFIED the law's PRECEPT, He could and did suffer the PUNISHMENT due unto His sheep. By the sinless sacrifice of Himself, and as a SUBSTITUTE for those He was given, He SATISFIED the PENALTY of the law.

Look at Isaiah 53: 4-5 “**Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**”

How did Christ bear our griefs and carry our sorrows? He bore them by IMPUTATION. (Leave Isaiah 53: 4-5). Look at II Corinthians 5: 21 “**For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**”

God (the Father) MADE God (the Son) (legally constituted/accounted) Him to be sin. The sins of Christ's sheep were laid to His charge. He bore their legal guilt. He answered the CHARGES of sin against His people.

That last phrase I underlined in Isaiah 53: 5 is speaking of Christ's SATISFACTION to Divine Justice. The stripes of Christ have forever healed those Christ died for from the punishment of Divine Justice. Because of Christ's death, Justice is SATISFIED.

God will NEVER demand the punishment (eternal death) of ANY sinner Christ died for. They have FOREVER been delivered from the legal guilt, the penalty, the punishment of their sins. Christ bore their sins (legal guilt, punishment, penalty) in His body on the tree and SATISFIED Justice on their behalf. Their ransom is paid. (Song) “We are redeemed, the price is paid, Halleluia, what a Savior.”

How can we know that Christ's obedience unto death SATISFIED the law and justice of God? We can KNOW because God raised Him from the dead. Christ's resurrection is a DECLARATION from God that Christ has upheld His STANDARD. It is a DECLARATION that law and justice are SATISFIED. It is a DECLARATION that RIGHTEOUSNESS is established in the earth. And, it is a DECLARATION that by THAT Righteousness, God will judge men (now and at final judgment).

Look at Romans 10: 4 “**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.**”

Christ is the ðendö, (He is the FULFILMENT), of the law for righteousness. If you are looking for righteousness, there is only ONE place to find it. Find it in Christ! If you find yourself in need of righteousness, you won't find it within. Look to Christ! The PURSUIT of righteousness ends when a sinner ðbelievesö in Christ. Every ðbelievingö sinner finds their righteousness in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

Christ's resurrection from the dead is NOT just God giving life to a previously dead body. It is God giving life to One who died, NOT as the RESULT of sin; but, God giving life to ONE who died under the CHARGE of sin (i.e. under the legal guilt of IMPUTED sin). Christ's death was NOT the RESULT of sin.

He did not die because of HIS sin (i.e. because HE was a sinner). Christ died under the PENALTY (the PUNISHMENT) of sin. He died because the sins of His sheep were IMPUTED to Him. They were CHARGED to Him. He was raised again because He answered ALL charges.

The RESULT of Christ's death is righteousness. The RESULT of Christ's death is TROG. And, TROG is God's STANDARD of judgment, now and at final judgment.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is (perhaps) the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand.

1. It is God's STANDARD of judgment.
2. **It is the ONLY Righteousness that can be communicated to sinners.**

This brings us to another reason why THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand because: TROG is the ONLY Righteousness that can be communicated to sinners.

Sinners (by nature) have NO righteousness. Romans 3: 10 **“As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one.”**

All our attempts to be righteous are ðfilthyö in God's sight. Look at Isaiah 64: 6 **“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”**

We are NOT righteous by nature. And, all our attempts to BE righteous (accepted, favored) before God are ðfilthyö. We NEED righteousness. God's STANDARD of judgment is righteousness. His STANDARD is TROG.

Let's take a moment to explain why this righteousness is ALWAYS referred to as TROG. It is NEVER referred to as Christ's righteousness. Although Christ, the Incarnate Son of God produced this righteousness, it is NEVER called in scripture the righteous of Christ.

TROG is owned by the triune God. God, the Father PROVIDED it when He appointed Christ the Substitute and Surety of a people chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. God, the Son PRODUCED this righteousness by His Incarnation and obedience unto death. God, the Holy Spirit

PROMOTES this (specific) righteousness, (and this righteousness ALONE). He will not point sinners toward any other (supposed) righteousness. He will not speak of Himself, but will glorify Christ.

How is THIS righteousness communicated to sinners? It is RECKONED. It is ACCOUNTED. It is IMPUTED.

Look again at II Corinthians 5: 21 **“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”**

Some people have a problem with HOW God communicates the righteousness He provided; the one Christ established by His obedience unto death, some have a problem with how God communicates His righteous to sinners. But, it is not complicated. It is not confusing or ambiguous in any way. It is PLAIN and CLEAR in the scriptures.

**Look at Romans 4: 6 “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,**

The õblessed manõ is the man to whom God IMPUTES righteousness. He takes the righteousness Christ established and charges it to the account of the sinner. And, because He IMPUTES righteousness to the sinner, He will NOT impute sin.

**Look at Romans 4: 7-8 “ Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”**

The language here is strong. The word õnotõ means NEVER. It means CERTAINLY NOT. It means by NO MEANS. The õblessed man is the man to whom the Lord will IN NO WISE impute sin. It is like a double negative in our vernacular.

Why will God NEVER (impute) sin to the õblessed manõ. It is because the õblessed manõ is the man to whom God has õIMPUTED righteousness without worksõ. God will NEVER (impute) sin to the õblessed manõ because this man is justified (declared righteous) by God on the basis on Christõs righteousness IMPUTED.

**Look at Romans 8: 33 “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”**

Rather than have a problem with IMPUTATION, I thank God for it. IMPUTATION is how Christ was õmadeõ sin. And, IMPUTATION is how sinners are õmade the righteousness of God in Himõ. None of us have a righteousness of our own. Christõs inherent righteousness cannot be communicated to us. But, thank God, Christ established a righteousness by His obedience unto death that can be reckoned, accounted, IMPUTED to sinners like you and me.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is Godõs STANDARD of judgment. It is the ONLY righteous that can be communicated to sinners. And, the DEMAND of THAT (specific) righteousness is life (eternal).

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is (perhaps) the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand.

1. It is God's STANDARD of judgment.
2. It is the ONLY Righteousness that can be communicated to sinners.
3. **It is the SOURCE (basis/ground) of (spiritual/eternal) life.**

This brings us to another reason why THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD is the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand because: It is the SOURCE (basis/ground) of (spiritual/eternal) life.

Here is my point: The righteousness Christ established by His obedience unto death demanded His resurrection. It DEMANDED (His) life from the dead. And, it (and it ALONE) DEMANDS the eternal life of every sinner He represented. Eternal life is the fruit/result of that righteousness established by the life and death of the Incarnate Son of God. It is the result of Christ's righteousness IMPUTED. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, is the SOURCE of (spiritual/eternal) life.

Look at some scriptures that speak of Christ as the SOURCE of life.

(Put these up together) Look at I Corinthians 15: 45 **“The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (life giving spirit) spirit”**. Look at John 1: 1&4. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”**

Look at John 10: 27-28 **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”**

Look at John 11: 25-26 **“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”**

Look at John 8: 10 **“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”**

Look at John 17: 1-3 **“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”**

Look at I John 2: 28-29 **“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”**

TROG is the SOURCE (basis/ground) of (eternal) life. The Spirit imparts (spiritual/eternal) life ONLY under the preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel ALONE is the ðpower of God unto salvationö because in the Gospel (and nowhere else) is the ðrighteousness of God revealed from faith to faithö.

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