

November 3, 2021

Righteousness Cannot Save, Part II

The righteousness of man refers to that which is just and right in the eyes of man. It is man's attempt to do right, to be a good person and falls far short of God's standard of absolute righteousness. Thankfully, we do not have to rely on our own righteousness. Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, died on Calvary's cross in my stead. When a person places their faith in Jesus Christ, God saves them from their sin and clothes them in the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness of God. In **Romans 10:3**, Paul said of the Jews, they had a zeal of God, but lacked knowledge. They were ignorant of the righteousness of God and had not submitted themselves to it. According to **Philippians 3:8-9**, what righteousness was Paul resting in? How is this righteousness obtained? It is not the righteousness of Christ that saves us, but faith in Christ. When we put our faith in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is then applied to our account, so God sees Christ's righteousness and not our own. According to **II Corinthians 5:21**, in order for us to receive the righteousness of Christ, what did Christ have to become for us?

Turn back to **Romans 3:19-26**. The law condemns us as guilty, for whosoever offendeth in one point, is guilty of all, **James 2:10**. But the righteousness of God is not obtained by the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. What does the word propitiation mean in verse 25? How did Christ atone for our sin and appease the wrath of God?

The righteousness of God denotes the perfection of His nature and sets before us the fact that God is holy and just in Himself and in all His dealings with His creatures. The law demands absolute righteousness, but as we cannot meet such a high demand, by grace, God gives us the righteousness of His only begotten Son. Nothing less will satisfy the character and demand of God. The faintest stain of sin must be excluded from the presence of God, therefore the only righteousness that can appear in His presence must be absolute. It is this righteousness of God, apart from any righteousness of our own, that makes us accepted in the beloved.

In **Isaiah 61:10-11**, Isaiah the prophet mentions the garments of salvation, which includes the robe of righteousness. As a bride adorned for her husband, we are to be adorned in the righteousness of Christ. How does one receive this garment? Only through faith in Jesus Christ. At the moment of salvation, my filthy garments, the garments of my righteousness, are exchanged for Christ's righteousness. What does **Isaiah 64:6** call our righteousness?

Last week we defined righteousness as the state or quality of being or doing that which is right or just, according to a rule, standard, or test, thereby distinguishing it from wrong. The law or rule that determines what is right must then be used to judge that which is wrong. When you stand before the judgment bar of God, what righteousness do you want to be judged by, your own or Christ's? In **Psalms 35:24** David said, "Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness."

Let us conclude with the Old Testament example of Abraham. **Hebrews 11:8-10,17-19** make it clear that Abraham was a man of faith. According to this passage, how did Abraham demonstrate his faith in God? According to Galatians 3:6-9, what was accounted to Abraham as a result of his belief or faith in God? What was the gospel that was preached unto Abraham?

Paul comes back to this blessing in **Galatians 3:14**. The promise was given to Abraham and his seed. According to **Galatians 3:26, 29**, how does this apply to us as Gentiles? Abraham was not saved by his own righteousness, but through faith in God. His faith was then accounted to him for righteousness. The same is true today. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, His righteousness is applied to our account. **Ephesians 2:8-9** and **Titus 2:5** remind us that salvation is by grace through faith, not of works of righteousness which we have done.