

The Lord is our Righteousness (Pt.1. Righteousness)

Today we will begin a new topical study on *righteousness*. It will be different to our word studies in that we will not be looking at all 309 occurrences of the word and providing a summary of the verses, but rather looking at *righteousness* as it applies to a believer and the Lord. Let us first begin by examining the meaning of *righteousness*. According to the Oxford dictionary the word *righteous* means; "Just, upright, virtuous, law-abiding." The meaning in Scripture can be ascertained from the English translations of the various Greek words and from a brief examination of the word *righteousness* in Holy Scripture. Examples include;

- i) Greek - there are four Greek words *dikaosune*, *dikaioma*, *dikaio*s and *eubutes*,
- b) *dikaosune* is only translated righteousness.
- c) *dikaioma* is also translated judgment, justification, and ordinance.
- d) *dikaio*s is also translated justly and righteously.
- e) *eubutes* is only translated righteousness.
- ii) From the English text of the Authorised Bible we establish:-
 - a) Isa 45:19, righteousness is doing that which is right.
 - b) Prov. 11: 6, 13: 6, righteousness means upright.
 - c) Prov.11: 5, righteousness means perfect.
 - d) Rom.3: 26, righteousness means just.
 - e) Rom.6: 16, righteousness means obedient.

Therefore righteousness means, being just, obedient and upright.

Let us consider three points in this first study; (1) the Lord speaks righteousness, and (2) the law is righteous, and (3) Christ *is* our righteousness.

Let us add a little detail to our points:-

1. The Lord speaks righteousness

Isa.45: 19 *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.*

In our verse from Isaiah we confirm *righteousness* means right, and it says that the Lord God declares things that are right, He speaks righteousness. That same God is He who spoke into being the heavens and the earth, and when He looked at His handiwork He "saw that it was good" (see Gen.1: 10). It would fit in with the meaning of *righteousness* to suggest that when the heavens and earth were created they were perfect.

And then in Isaiah we learn that the Lord spoke righteousness. Hence He speaks justly, perfectly, and uprightly. Therefore, it should not surprise you to read that God does not lie (see Num.23: 19, Tit.1: 2 & Heb.6: 18). Hence, whether the Lord says He will preserve His words, or His saints, we can trust that He will do so. And that all His prophecies have either been fulfilled or *will* be fulfilled in the future, because it is impossible for God Almighty, the God of the Holy Scriptures, to lie.

Can the same be said for Allah? Does he speak forth righteousness in the Qur'an?

According to Sur.4: 111 the sinner can only sin against himself. Hence when Muslims sin they do not believe they sin against Allah. Therefore, Allah can in no wise be perfect, just, righteous or holy if man has not sinned against him. And if the Muslim believes *that*, he rejects man's fallen state before God Almighty who *is* Holy, Righteous, and Just. Such beliefs contradict the Holy Scriptures (see Jud.10: 10, 2Chr.6: 24 & 26) that were given by inspiration of God, preserved by the Holy Spirit of God and are available for us today in the English text of the 1611 Authorised Bible (AB). Hence, Allah does *not* speak forth righteousness in the Qur'an. Is it any wonder that men are attracted to the lies of the Qur'an whilst they hate the righteous words of God Almighty as preserved in the Holy Scriptures. Those who believe the Qur'an therefore, have no knowledge of transgressing the law of God, in which we have all sinned, hence the Qur'an deceives its readers who have sinned against God and Him alone (see Ps.51: 4).

God's perfect, righteous words cast out devils (see Matt.8: 16).

God's perfect, righteous words defeated Satan during Jesus' 40 days of temptation in the wilderness (see Lk.4: 10).

God's perfect, righteous words are a sword for the believer today (see Eph.6: 17).

None of His words would have *any* power over Satan if they were not righteous and perfect.

Let us pray that God will raise up believers who hold to this truth, who desire to know, teach, and preach God's righteous, perfect words that have not been infected with leaven. Because when the Lord speaks, He speaks in righteousness, He declares things that are right.

2. The law is righteous.

Rom.8: 4 *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

See also Deut.4: 8,

The law, the Ten Commandments, *are* righteous, which shouldn't surprise us, because our first point was clear, God speaks righteousness and therefore knowing that He spoke the words of the law to Moses, those words must also be righteous. And for the nation of Israel, if they were to observe every one of God's commandments, if they were to obey every one of His judgments, His statutes, they would obtain righteousness under the law. And given that no flesh *can* be justified by the deeds of the law (see Rom.3: 20), then salvation in the Old Testament must have been by works (deeds of the law) plus faith. The same righteousness that was attributed by faith plus works to Abraham (see Jam.2: 21-23).

For a Gentile today they achieve righteousness without the law (this is covered in our third point), which was witnessed by the law and the prophets (see Rom.3: 21). Hence there were times in the Old Testament when God imputed righteousness to Israel without the deeds of the law, e.g. Num.23: 21.

Today the righteous law of the Old Testament is there to bring a man to Christ (see Gal.3: 24). So if the preacher you listen to on the street, or in church preaching a gospel message to the lost, or on a gospel CD, does not mention the law, does not use the Ten Commandments in some way, then those that are listening are unlikely to come to a Biblical understanding of their sin, and their need for a Saviour. The righteous law is a schoolmaster to the lost, it teaches them, it reveals to them their need for a Saviour.

If there is no law in the message, and the person comes to Christ and says they believe, then it is *likely* they have come to Christ in vain and it is equally *likely* that they have no knowledge of why they came, and so fall away.

If there is no law in the gospel message then the preacher is offering a salvation that is more appetising to the flesh, which does not want to know its sinfulness. No one (especially a young adolescent) likes preachers, teachers, or anyone in authority that tells them how bad they are, that points out their sin. The Scriptures say that "everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (Jn.3: 20). So no one wants to have the light shining on their iniquity, on their filthiness. How would hoarders feel when the cameras come into their home and show the world their mess, their filth? Perhaps sick to the stomach. Now, how would they feel if the camera-man came into their home and criticised them in front of the camera for living in such a pigsty? Perhaps they would feel condemned and try and retaliate.

Can you see a parallel with a preacher who walks up to a person and criticises them for being a homosexual, or a liar, or a thief? Perhaps the person would feel condemned and try and retaliate. Whereas, when the preacher quotes what the Bibles says "that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3: 23), then the sinner is more likely to recognise his iniquity and come to the Lord. Just as the hoarder, who is not criticised, but is shown their filth and desires to clean up.

I have heard preachers call out to Sodomites and say that their sin is an abomination before God. And they are correct, it is, but is that a charitable way to use the law to bring a person to Christ?

I have heard preachers call out to drunkards on a bus and say their sin of drunkenness will cause them to spend an eternity in hell. And they are correct, it will. But is that a charitable way to use the law to bring a person to Christ?

In each of the examples above, is there not the possibility that the person being preached to will want to abuse the preacher for specifically pointing out their sin, or put up a wall to listening any more? Which if that happens, is not the Holy Spirit of God being quenched? Whereas, if a man preaches the Ten Commandments, then everyone listening, whether he is a liar, sodomite, thief, or adulterer, will know that they are sinful and guilty before God.

Why? Because the law is righteous, and when the law is used lawfully, it is good (see 1Tim.1: 8), and with the Holy Spirit, convicts a man of sin, righteousness and judgment, because the law is righteous.

3. Christ is our righteousness

Rom 3:22 *Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

See also Rom.10: 4

The book of Romans is about the righteousness of God without the deeds of the law, it is about a sinful man obtaining righteousness through the acceptable sacrifice of a sinless Man who obeyed the righteousness of the law and fulfilled the righteousness of the law in Himself. That man is Christ Jesus, who was God manifest in the flesh (see 1Tim.3: 16), He is the end of the law for righteousness (see Rom.10: 4). Christ is known as the Branch of righteousness (see Jer.33: 15), He is our example of righteousness (see 1Jn2: 1), and a man today, a lost sinful man who hears of his iniquity, and knows his sin by the preaching of the righteous law, is made righteous, is imputed with Christ's righteousness, when he believes that his sin is on Christ on Calvary, and he can do nothing to atone for

his own sin before God who is righteous. Our verse in Rom.3: 22 says, that we have access to the righteousness of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. This righteousness is available to *all* men, Jew or Gentile, Greek, Muslim, Monk, Jehovah Witness, Mormon and Roman Catholic, and it is available to them all, when they hear the gospel that is preached and believe (see Rom.10: 14). And how do they believe? Verse 14 continues, they believe in their heart unto righteousness. That belief qualifies them to receive Christ's perfect righteousness, that He proved by His perfect obedience to the righteous law. Hence, when we receive Christ, we no longer need the schoolmaster which is the law.

That is a brief look at Christ our righteousness.

But how should His righteousness affect a person's life?

For the lost person to hear about Christ's righteousness should be in the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Hence, Christ's right standing, His perfect law-abiding actions would, through the Holy Spirit, convict a man of his own sinfulness.

For the saved person, they are in the body of Christ because they have responded to the gospel and believed in their heart unto righteousness. When they hear that *Christ* is their righteousness, when this knowledge sinks into their heart and they belong to a Seventh-Day Adventist church, they would then realise that they are no longer required to keep the sabbath in the law, because Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; therefore, they can worship on any day of the week.

When a believer that is deceived and snared by the devil, by any false religion, hears that Christ is their righteousness, then unless they have believed the gospel in vain, they will have been imputed with His righteousness, and such knowledge is life-changing. They would desire to die to their sin, as Paul died daily, and stop doing works to off-set their sin, because they would now know of their judicial right-standing before God. Their life would be changed from believing a lie, to believing their sin was on Christ, His blood washed them clean, and they received His righteousness.

When this reality struck me I was initially confused because I keep transgressing the law, but then I realised the significance of the biblical truth of our daily battle with sin and need to die to our sin, the need to wash ourselves in prayer each day and being renewed by the Holy Spirit as we read the word of God (see Jn.17: 17-19). Finally, there was clarity for me that God had done His part, the most significant part, and when that which is impossible with man is made possible by God, we are then called to do justly (see Hos.6: 6) and live each moment in Christ-crucified, as we really are clothed with His righteousness.

Let each one of us live as if this biblical truth was a reality. That in doing so, our reality of transgressing God's law every day, would gradually change, as we die daily and live in the knowledge that we are clothed, we are imputed, with Christ's righteousness.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our first study on the topic of *righteousness*, we have covered three points which include; (1) the Lord speaks righteousness, and (2) the law is righteous, and (3) Christ *is* our righteousness.