

RIGHTEOUSNESS

What is righteousness?

What constitutes righteousness?

What do we have to have or to do to be righteous?

I. Essence of righteousness. - Character of God

God is righteous!

Ps. 11:7 - "the Lord is righteous; He loves righteousness"

Ps. 119:137,142 - "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgements. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness"

I Jn. 2:29 - "He is righteous"

I Jn. 3:7 - "He is righteous"

In the perfection and purity of His character God is absolutely and essentially good, holy, love, etc. Acting in accord with His character (He does what He does, only because He is who He is), God is always righteous and just, and always acts in grace.

Attributes of God (series of studies). Transferable? Communicable? What God is, only God is. Only God can manifest, demonstrate, express His character.

II. Expression of righteousness -

Must come from God. *ek theos*. Derived righteousness - (bkl). Only God can express Who He is.

Jesus Christ is the Righteous One - The personified Expresser of God's Righteousness. Prophesied to be such (Isa. 9:7; 45:24,25; 53:11; Jere. 23:5,6; 33:16; Zech. 9:9 etc.). Declared to be the fulfillment of such (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; Rom. 3:21,22; I Jn. 2:1)

Man can only be righteous and behave righteously as the Righteous character of God is present within and manifested through man.

Man is incapable of producing righteousness. Not self-generative.

Man keeps trying to set up his own standards of righteousness. Back in Garden of Eden, tempted to become his own center of reference, "Like God..." Whatever he determines to be righteous will be righteous. "Do it right!" - our way!

Satan relativizes righteousness as but the social consensus of what the majority thinks to be right, by have established themselves as their own center of reference. Satan falsified righteousness as but the keeping of right religious rules - legalism, proceduralism, techniquism

Religious righteousness = performance righteousness = self-righteousness = unrighteousness.

Phil. 3:6-10 - "not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law.."

Isa. 64:6 - "all our righteous deeds are as a filthy rag"

Rom. 3:10 - "None righteous, no not one" - Ps. 14:1; 53:1

No one made righteous by keeping Law, rules and regulations, behavior modification, codes of conduct, morality, ethics

Rom. 3:20 - "by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight"

Rom. 9:31 - "Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law"

Rom. 10:3 - "seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God"

Gal. 2:16 - "a man is not justified by the works of the Law".."justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."

Gal. 2:21 - "if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly"

Gal. 3:11 - "no one is justified by the Law before God"

We are accountable to God to allow for the expression of His character of righteousness.

III. Historical survey of teaching on righteousness.

Judaism - In old covenant the character of God was expressed in the Law - this is the character of God, but you cannot achieve such or produce such - reveals man's unrighteousness (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:20; Phil. 3:9,10). Result of Law-orientation, rules and regulations, Thou shalt, Thou shalt not, casts righteousness into legal, judicial and forensic setting. Right standing with God, and righteous behavior understood as result of adherence to the commands and statements of the Law. OT personages said to be righteous (Abel-Matt. 23:35; Heb. 11:4; I Jn 3:12), Noah (Hb. 11:7; II Pt 2:5); Abraham (Rom. 4:3,9,22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23); Rahab. They trusted God to choose the "right" way, and thus be in "right" relationship with God. Gained God's approval (Heb. 11:2,4,5,39). OT prophets recognized as insufficient (Isa. 64:6), to be superseded (Isa. 46:13; 51:5; Jere. 23:5,6; 33:15,16).

All of the concepts of righteousness in the world into which Christ came were performance righteousness; meritorious righteousness. Greek concept of righteousness: proper alignment with the civil law of the land; civility, custom. Roman concept of righteousness - proper alignment with Roman law, being a good Roman citizen, admiring the Emperor. Judaic concept of righteousness - proper alignment with God by keeping the reveal Mosaic Law of God, and all interpretations thereof. Righteousness acc. to Law (Phil. 3:6,9; Gal. 3:21) does not make man righteous (Rom. 9:31; 10:3). Couldn't be freed from sin through Law of Moses (Acts 13:39)

Christian teaching - to establish right-ness with God, to live righteously, is NOT based on our performance, or alignment with a codification of behavioral regulations. (cf. Rom. 3:20,28; Gal. 2:16,21; 3:11,21; Phil. 3:9; Titus 3:5. Rather, right standing with God and the expression of righteous behavior are based on Christ's performance: His works, not ours. Righteousness is a Person, who performed on our behalf. Righteousness is the expression of the character of the Person of God in Christ.

Roman Catholicism - "infused grace" or "infused righteousness" (infused = "to pour in") gives the Xn the needed boost to be righteous in accord with ecclesiastical law. Some divine provisional "umph" so man could self-generate righteousness. Performance righteousness at least a secondary basis of being right with God, and manifesting righteous behavior. Working hard to live up to church expectations. Ecclesiological righteousness. Keeping the "church law." Can't measure up- so purchase indulgences, do penance, practice sacraments, etc. to get back in "right standing" with church. Still performance righteousness, works.

Protestant Reformation. Knee-jerk reaction. Opposite extreme to avoid any sense of performance righteousness; went so far as to fail to consider behavioral righteousness. (One post-reformation Catholic writer said that if a Protestant ever were to live righteously, he must of necessity consider such to have been done by 'works'.) Righteousness conceived in total objectivity; judicial, forensic, legal, positional, reckoned on the books. Still Law-oriented. Justification seen as acquittal, exoneration, vindication, forgiveness; "just-as-if-I'd" not sinned. Punctiliar reckoning and declaration of righteousness, not strung out in continued performance. Working hard to understand the doctrines. Epistemological righteousness - based on logical belief-system. Paranoid idealism, that produced little righteous behavior. (One Reformed Protestant - Robt. Dunzweiler - "H.S. enables me to produce godliness, holiness and righteousness." -Same as "infused righteousness")

IV. Perspectives of righteousness and unrighteousness

A. Righteousness

1. Objective - judicial, abstract/rhetorical, alien, forensic.
imputed - (to credit, ascribe, consider)

- a. Standing

Declared, positional, reckoned, Rom. 4:5,6,11,24 - "faith is reckoned as righteousness"; righteousness reckoned to us
Reconciled. - Rom. 5:10,11
Pronounced "righteous" in Christ at the beginning of the

- course; not just at the end, based on our performance.
 - b. Bookkeeping - credit column instead of debit column of God's heavenly ledger book; no longer a liability, but an asset; Is God adjusting ("cooking") the books? More than just "forgiven sinners," "sinners saved by grace," but invested with the very character of Christ, "made righteous."
 - 2. Subjective - vital, real, proper, practical, dynamic (Dynamic series)
 - a. Spiritual condition - presence of the Righteous One, J.C.; being, nature, identity
 - Rom. 5:18 - "righteousness of life to all men"
 - Rom. 5:19 - "many shall be made righteous"
 - Rom. 5:21 - "grace might reign through righteousness"
 - Rom. 8:10 - "spirit is alive because of righteousness"
 - Rom. 10:10 - "man believes, resulting in righteousness"
 - Gal. 3:21 - "impart life...righteousness"
 - I Cor. 1:30 - "Christ has become to us righteousness"
 - II Cor. 5:21 - "we might become the righteousness of God in Him"
 - Gal. 3:24 - "justified by faith"
 - Eph. 4:24 - "created in righteousness and holiness of the truth"
 - Phil. 3:9 - "righteousness through faith in Christ"
 - I Pt 2:24 - "we might die to sin and live to righteousness"
 - I Jn. 3:7 - "is righteous"
 - b. Behavioral expression - behavior, conduct,
 - Rom. 1:17 - "righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith"
 - Rom. 6:13-19 - "present members as instruments of righteousness"
 - Rom. 8:4 - "righteous requirement of the Law fulfilled in us"
 - Rom. 14:17 - "kgdm of God is...righteousness and joy and peace in the H.S."
 - Eph. 5:9 - "fruit of light consists in ..righteousness"
 - Phil. 1:11 - "fruit of righteousness which comes through J.C."
 - I Tim. 6:11 - "pursue righteousness, godliness"
 - Titus 2:12 - "live sensibly, righteously and godly in present age"
 - Heb. 12:11 - "peaceful fruit of righteousness"
 - I Jn. 2:29 - "he who practices righteousness is born of Him"
 - I Jn. 3:7 - "practices righteousness is righteous..."
 - I Jn. 3:10 - "does not practice righteousness is not of God"
- Dynamic, ontological expression of the righteousness of God; derived by faith.

B. Unrighteousness

- 1. Objective
 - a. Standing
 - b. Bookkeeping
- 2. Subjective
 - a. Spiritual condition
 - b. Behavioral expression

Protestant theology has historically emphasized the objective concepts of righteousness and unrighteousness, and often failed to recognize the subjective elements.