

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A GIFT FROM GOD – Rom 5:17

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Righteousness is an attribute of God. God is righteous. *Ps 11:7, Ps 119:137, Ps 145:17, Deut 32:4, Zeph 3:5, 1Jn 2:1, Jn 17:25, Rev 16:5, 2Pet 1:1.*

Righteousness is rightness of thought, word and deed, and is demonstrated to us by Jesus Christ, who is called, “Jesus Christ the righteous.” *1Jn 2:1.* He alone is the sinless One among men, *Heb 4:15.*

(“Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words” is a very great help, along with “Matthew Henry’s Commentary of the Bible”, when we are seeking to get a clear grasp of the meaning of certain words.)

“Righteousness” is a New Testament word with two main meanings.

Firstly, as a gift from God by faith, it is the character or quality of being right or just and acting in this way. (The Holy Spirit enables us to act in ways that are consistent with the righteousness of God).

It is used of God in *Romans 3:5,25,26*, of the Lord Jesus Christ in *1John 2:1, 2Pet 1:1*, and of believers who obey the commands of God. *Matthew 9:13, 1John 3:7, Ephesians 5:9, 1Timothy 6:11, 2Timothy 2:22, James 1:20, Romans 6:13,16,18,19.* **(We do not achieve righteousness by our actions. The righteousness of God is given to us through faith in Jesus Christ. But when we have received the righteousness of God, we are enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit, to act in ways that are consistent with the righteousness of God).**

Secondly, “righteousness” and those who are “righteous” in their standing before God, is used of the gracious gift of God to men whereby **all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ** are brought into a right relationship with God. The moment a person repents and puts their faith in Christ, the 100% righteousness of Jesus Christ, is imputed to them. They are “justified” and declared to be righteous before God, **“just as if they had never sinned.”** This righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man’s own, **it is obtained only by faith in Christ.** *Romans 3:21-24, Romans 4:1-5, Titus 3:5,6, Ephesians 2:8,9, 2Corinthians 5:21.*

(The bulk of what follows is about this second meaning of the word “righteousness”.)

God has surveyed all of mankind and declared, **“There is none righteous, no not one,”** *Rom 3:10.*

When God created man and woman, He created them in His image and likeness. *Gen 1:26,27.* **Man and woman were created righteous as God is righteous.**

But in *Genesis 3:1-15*, man and woman disobeyed and rebelled against God, by eating of the forbidden tree.

(*Gen 2:17*).

Adam and Eve became unrighteous, selfcentred and separated from relationship with God. *Rom 3:10-18, Eph 2:1-3, 5, 12.*

By their sin, the authority God had given to Adam and Eve to rule the world, (*Gen 1:26-28*), was transferred to satan.

Adam and Eve came under the authority of satan, who became the ruler of this world. *Jn 12:31, Jn 14:30, Eph 2:2.*

(God had originally created Adam and Eve to rule the world and establish His Kingdom in every place. *Genesis 1:26 - 28*)

When the time was right, **God sent forth His Son Jesus Christ**, born of a woman, to redeem mankind back to Himself, **and to re-establish those who believe in Jesus, in His righteousness, as His sons.**

Gal 4:4-7, Mat 1:20,21, 2Cor 5:19,21, Lk 1:68-79, Jn 1:29, 1Pet 2:24, 1Pet 3:18, Jn 3:16,17.

The moment a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, they are forgiven all their sins and are declared by God, to be one hundred percent (100%) righteous in His sight.

2Cor 5:19,21, 1Pet 3:18, 1Pet 2:24, Gen 15:6, Rom 4:1-6, 22-25, Rom 5:1,6-11, 17-19.

This process is called **“justification”**. *Rom 4:25.*

The person who believes is said to be **“justified”**. *Rom 5:1.* This means **“just-as-if-I-had-never-sinned”**.

God regards the believer as completely righteous in His sight, by faith in the Blood of Jesus.

Rom 4:3,5,6,20-25, Rom 5:1,6-11, 17-19. See especially *Rom 5:9.* **He or she is in right standing with God.**

Jesus Christ lived a sinless life of obedience to the will and direction of His Father, Almighty God. *Heb 4:15, 2Cor 5:21, 1Jn 2:1, Jn 5:19, Jn 6:38, Jn 8:28, Jn 12:49.* He is Jesus Christ the Righteous.

God made Him Who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God. *2Cor 5:21, 1Pet 2:24, 1Pet 3:18.*

When we repent and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are baptised into Christ, we become the righteousness of God in Christ. *Mk 1:15, Gal 3:27, Rom 6:3, 2Cor 5:21.*

On the Cross, Jesus Christ bore our sin. *1Pet 2:24, 1Pet 3:18.* He was made to be sin for us. *2Cor 5:21.* When we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, God reckons or imputes His righteousness to us. *Rom 4:3,5-6,20-25, Rom 5:1,6-11,17-19.* The righteousness of Christ is imputed or reckoned to the believer, so that he/she is one hundred percent righteous in God's sight. *Heb 10:14, Rom 5:9,10, 1Pet 3:18.*

The believer "becomes in Christ all that God requires a man or woman to be, all that he/she could never be in themselves". (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words".)

This gift of righteousness to the believer in Jesus Christ is a powerful force. *Rom 5:17.*

By it we are able to **overcome every voice of condemnation**, as we serve the Lord our God. *Is 54:17, Lk 13:14-17.*

By it we are able to **overcome accusations of guilt**, as we serve the Lord, and obey the Holy Spirit. *Rev 12:10,11.*

By it we have the right to **receive the fulfilment of all God's promises**. *2Cor 1:20, 2Cor 7:1, 2Pet 1:3,4.*

By it we have **boldness to be a witness to Jesus Christ** and the Gospel. *Acts 1:8, Lk 4:18,19, Acts 4:29.*

By it we have **boldness to come into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus**, and worship God. *Heb 10:19.*

By it we have **full assurance of faith**. *Heb 10:22.*

By it we have the **right to receive every spiritual blessing** in heavenly places in Jesus Christ, *Eph 1:3*, and to **be filled with the Holy Spirit**. *Lk 11:13, 1Jn 2:27.*

By it we have **strong confidence** to cast out demons, resist the devil and heal the sick. *Lk 10:19,*

Mk 16:17,18, Jam 4:7.

Righteousness and holiness are different. *1Cor 1:30, Lk 1:75, Eph 4:24.* (Both mentioned in the same verse.)

"Holiness" and "holy" have the same meaning as "sanctification" and "sanctified".

1Pet 1:2,15,16, 1Thes 4:3,4,7, 1The 3:13, Heb 10:14, 2Cor 7:1, 1Cor 6:11.

Both have the meaning of **being set apart**. i.e. set apart **from** sin, satan, and the world, **unto** a close relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Holiness is achieved by the process of being set apart. *Heb 10:14.* "By One Offering He has perfected for ever", (= justification/righteousness), "those who are being sanctified". (= the process of being made holy).

Holiness and sanctification are to do with our behaviour.

By faith in the promises of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to overcome habits of sin.

Rom 6:3,4,6,11,14. This is a part of the process of being made holy or sanctified. *2Cor 7:1.*

By faith in the promises of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to overcome the spirits and

works of satan that have influenced us and be set apart unto God. *Jam 4:7,1Jn 4:4, Lk 10:19, Mk 16:17,*

Rev 12:9-11.

By faith in the promises of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to overcome the world and be set apart unto God. *1Jn 5:4,5, Jn 16:33.*

This process of being set apart from sin, satan and the world unto God is the process of being made holy or being sanctified. *Acts 26:18, Acts 15:9, Acts 20:32.*

During this process of being made holy, our righteousness or right standing before God remains unchanged, due to our continued faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord. *Heb 10:14, Rom 4:1-7.* In our battle of faith to be sanctified, made holy, we have times of defeat and failure until we break through and walk in victory.

Holiness or sanctification is required of us by God. *Heb 12:14, 1Thes 4:3,4,1Jn 3:3, 1Cor 6:9-11, Mat 22:11-12, Rev 19:7-9.*

As we are sanctified and set apart unto God, the resulting life steadily produces increasing acts of obedience to God and righteousness of behaviour.