



Biblical Righteousness

In Connection with God's Grace



The Two-fold Foundation of Our Relationship with God

Individual Accountability

- By one's own righteousness or sinfulness one lives or dies – Ezek. 18:20-24
- Personal accountability continues under Christ's law
 - Those who **practice** righteousness are righteous – 1 Jn. 3:7, 10
 - We are judged to be righteous or wicked, saved or lost, by what we choose to do – Rom. 14:10,12; 2 Cor. 5:10
- Conclusions we can draw:
 - The sinfulness/righteousness of a person only applies to that person and **cannot be transferred to another.**
 - We will face judgement with no one to blame for our choices/actions but ourselves

God's Justifying Work in Christ

- Though held accountable by God to live righteously, we are dependent on God to **justify** us – Rom. 8:33
 - To justify means to **make righteous**
 - Justify, justification, just, right, righteous, and righteousness come from two words—O.T. *tsedeq* and N.T. *dike*, meaning *rightness*.
- When God **justifies** us by His grace, He **pronounces us righteous** by His grace – Titus 3:4-7
 - Justification doesn't come "by works of righteousness we have done."
 - Justification comes by God's mercy and grace.
- How do we harmonize that one **lives by the righteousness he does** while one is **not justified by works of righteousness**, but **by God's grace**?



Understanding and Applying Biblical Righteousness

Bible Presents Two Ideas of Righteousness

- The two-fold foundation of our relationship with points us to this reality.
 - There is righteousness regarding *behavior* or *doing right*
 - There is righteousness regarding one's *legal status* (being truly holy/pure) before God
- Our sin destroys our claim to a right/righteous **legal status** before God.
 - True for all people everywhere – Rom. 3:9-10, 23
 - Our justification, or **being made legally right**, must come from God by **grace** through **faith** – Titus 3:7; Rom. 3:24-27; 5:1
- God requires that we *do righteous*, or *obey His commands*, before He will justify us by His grace!

Justification Comes to the Righteous

- Those who seek to **obey** God's commands **are counted as righteous and justified by God's grace.**
 - Noah – Gen. 6:9; 6:22-7:1
 - Us – Matt. 7:21
- When one does the right things of God...
 - One does his/her duty and earns nothing – Lk. 17:10
 - He/she may be *counted as righteous*, or seen as **living rightly**, before God.
- We must understand that *legal rightness* (being truly pure/holy) can only come to **sinners** by God's grace to **forgive** (justify).
- So, like Noah, both **personal righteousness** (obeying) and **God's justification** (forgiving) are involved in our salvation.

Only When We Understand the Distinctions In Biblical Righteousness...

- Can we know there is **no contradiction** when God declares “**there is none righteous,**” while also declaring one lives/saved “**by the righteousness he has done**” – Rom. 3:10; Ezek. 18
- Can we understand that only **God’s grace justifies** (forgives) **sinners**, while like with Noah God also **requires righteousness** (obeying His will) as a condition for receiving His grace.
 - God justifies sinners – Rom. 5:8-9
 - Sinners must do their *duty*, or do *righteousness* by obeying God’s commands in faith, to be recipients of His grace – Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 6:16-18; Acts 2:37-38; Heb. 11:7

Acts of Righteousness and God's Justification

- Hebrews 5:8-9 – “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation [God through Christ is the justifier] to all who obey Him [those who do righteousness]”

Acts of Righteousness and God's Justification

- Romans 6:16-18 – “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness [righteous acts are necessary for justification] ? ¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine [acted righteously] to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin [were justified by God through forgiveness], you became slaves of righteousness.”

Acts of Righteousness and God's Justification

- Acts 2:37-38 – “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [righteous acts necessary for justification] for the remission of sins sin [God justifies]; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts of Righteousness and God's Justification

- Hebrews 11:7 – “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear [acted righteously by obeying], prepared an ark for the saving of his household [righteous acts were necessary for salvation], by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith [God justifies].”