

Searching the Scriptures / 14 / God Is Righteous / Part 4

Our Bible topic for today is entitled “God is Righteous”, and we will consider these three points:

- 1. Righteousness is an Attribute of God.**
- 2. Are Men Righteous?**
- 3. Can Men be “Made” Righteous? If so, How?**

Righteousness is an Attribute of God

Righteousness is a magnificent attribute of God. It is an aspect of His basic nature. The Bible is replete with references to God’s righteousness, such as in Psa 11:7, *“For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.”* Psa 116:5 says, *“Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.”* Psa 145:17 also informs us that, *“The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”* Here we see that righteousness describes the very character of God and encompasses everything He says and does. In fact, the Bible indicates that one of His names is Righteous, or Righteousness, as we find mentioned in the New Testament in 1 John 2:1, *“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*

Are Men Righteous?

Are men righteous? The answer is a resounding, NO! Why is this? Once mankind fell into sin in the Garden of Eden, the whole human race became infected with a terrible disease – a sin nature – causing every individual to be by nature and practice wicked (although not as wicked as they could be because of God’s restraint). That is why Jer 17:9 states, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* The answer is, *“Only God knows the depth of man’s wickedness.”*

Isa 1:3-6 paints a despicable, but very accurate, portrayal of those who were identified as the people of God: *“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”*

In Job 15:14 the question is raised, *“What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight? How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”* Dan 9:5 pulls no punches either: *“We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.”*

It is true that man was created righteous, or “very good”, by His Maker. Nonetheless, God still holds man accountable for his sin. As we have just seen, the big problem that man faces in his inability to see his own sinfulness. He is blinded to it. In fact, he actually thinks he is “righteous”, or “good”. 2 Cor 4:3-4 says, *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

Worst of all man perceives that God is well-pleased with him. How utterly foolish man is! Even if man admits to being a sinner, he is incapable of doing anything about it because he is spiritually dead – even though physically he is very much alive. Eze 37:1-2 vividly depicts the deadness of man, as represented by a valley of dry bones: *“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.”*

The fact remains that man cannot be righteous by anything he does on his own. Isa 64:6 affirms, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*

Can Men be “Made” Righteous? If so, How?

Earlier in Job 15:14 the question was raised, *“What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?”* Man is in desperate need of a righteousness which can qualify him for Heaven. Tit 3:5 declares, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* Only the righteousness that God gives as a gift can accomplish that, as we read in Rev 19:8, *“And to her [the Bride of Christ] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”* The righteousness that is being mentioned is speaking about salvation, and it is compared to clean, white linen – a symbol of purity – a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The same Greek word for “white” is translated as “bright” in Rev 22:16, *“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”* We also find in Isa 61:10, *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”*

The wonderful news of the Gospel is that the Lord Jesus came to “seek and to save that which was lost”, as we find in Luke 19:10. May God open our spiritual eyes and ears that we, too, may “be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Php 3:9).