

Searching the Scriptures / 85 / Man-made Righteousness Can Never Save / Part 5

Our Bible study today explains why a man-made righteousness can never provide everlasting redemption. Our three points are:

- 1. Man Thinks He Can Attain Righteousness on His Own**
- 2. Nobody Can Keep the Law of God (the Bible) Perfectly**
- 3. God Only Accepts the Righteousness of Christ—Man’s False “Righteousness” Will Be Condemned**

1. Man Thinks He Can Attain Righteousness on His Own

Rom 10:3 pinpoints man’s most basic problem: *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* By birth and nature mankind is in defiance to God and His Word, the Bible. Men abhor God’s authority and rulership and do not want to serve Him.

Luke 19:14 highlights the pride of man’s sin-sick heart: *“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us.”* Man wickedly and foolishly thinks he can somehow work for his salvation. His arrogance, however, will be sharply arrested by God’s infallible and Holy Law—the Bible—which exposes man’s guilt and degradation, and rewards him with divine retribution. Rom 3:19 pronounces, *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”* In fact, God is under divine obligation to punish all sin by consigning all who do not have a Savior to eternity in Hell.

2. Nobody Can Keep the Law of God (the Bible) Perfectly

The Bible, as the *“two-edged sword”* spoken about in Heb 4:12, can either inflict damnation (by the Law of God) or salvation (by the Grace of God) upon an individual’s soul at God’s discretion. If a person is not being drawn to salvation, he is accountable to the entire Law of God—the Bible and will be found guilty of transgressing it. This is evident by Rom 3:20, *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

Even if someone was guilty of breaking just one of God’s holy commands, he will still be subject to judgment, as Jam 2:10 highlights, *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”* The Bible as the Law of God was never intended to give life—but rather to expose our need for a Savior. Jesus Christ is the only One who could indeed keep the Law of God (the Bible) on our behalf. Gal 3:21b-25 maintains: *“... for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”*

3. God Only Accepts the Righteousness of Christ—Man’s False “Righteousness” Will Be Condemned

As we have just concluded, the only righteousness that can save one from sin, spiritual death, and Hell, is the gift of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dan 9:18 admonishes us, *“O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.”*

This gift each Christian receives is only by the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. The magnificent work of salvation that the Lord Jesus accomplished is so unique, so unparalleled, so surpassing that mere human words cannot be found to describe it—we can only turn to the words of the Bible and look in wonder and stare at Him, Who is portrayed in Isa 53:4, *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”*

Isa 59:16–17 describes the only hope that mankind has: *“And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.”*

All who do not possess the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior will hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Judge in Mat 7:22–23 echoing throughout eternity: *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*