

Insights on Righteousness from Romans

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Righteousness in the OT

- ❖ *Vocabulary* – The Hebrew nouns צְדָקָה (*tsedeq*) and צְדָקָהּ (*ts^edāqāh*) mean “justice, righteousness,” and the adjective צְדִיק (*tsaddîq*) means “just, righteous.” The idea behind these words is conformity to a moral standard. They are legal terms. Laws delineate the moral standards that men are to follow. Judges pass judgment on the actions of men in accordance with those standards.
- ❖ *God’s Righteousness* – God is righteous (Ezra 9:15; Ps 119:137, 142; Isa 45:21). He is the standard of moral perfection. He loves (Ps 11:7) and delights in righteousness (Jer 9:24). All He does is righteous (Ps 145:17; Dan 9:14). As expressions of His character, the judgments of His Word are righteous altogether (Ps 19:9; Ps 119:75). As Judge of all the earth, the Lord will do what is right (Gen 18:25).
- ❖ *Man’s Righteousness* – The righteous man meets God’s standards and His approval (Gen 6:9; Job 31). But in reality, no man living is righteous in God’s sight (Ps 143:2). There is no man who does not sin (1 Kgs 8:46). If man will obtain righteousness, God must grant it (Ps 72:1; Isa 60:21). When man believes in the Lord, it is reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). The righteous will live by his faith (Hab 2:4).
- ❖ *Summary* – the Lord is “essentially righteous in His nature, as incorporating the law of righteousness within His essential Being. Accordingly He works by a method which may be called law—He inevitably punishes evil-doing and rewards righteousness. He himself acts righteously, and He demands that His people do the same” (Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 233).

Righteousness in Romans

- ❖ *Theme of Romans* – “The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Rom 1:16–17).
- ❖ *Righteousness of God* – God possesses righteousness (1:17). He is a righteous judge (3:5–6) who is just (3:26). His Law is righteous (7:12). He is justified in all He does (3:4).
- ❖ *Unrighteousness of Man* – “There is none righteous, no not one” (3:10). Man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (1:18). He is filled with all unrighteousness (1:29). He does not carry out the righteous requirements of God (1:32).
- ❖ *Righteous Judgment of God* – God reveals His wrath against the unrighteousness of man (1:18). A day of wrath and righteous judgment is coming upon lost mankind (2:5). Wrath and indignation await those who obey unrighteousness (2:8). The God who inflicts this wrath is not unrighteous (3:5).

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punished sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, “As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!” Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted (Martin Luther’s Account of His Own Conversion).

❖ *Way of Justification* – How can an unrighteous man be justified by a righteous God?

Justification is ...

- ✓ Not by Works – By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in God’s sight (3:20). Abraham was not justified by works (4:2). Israel could not attain the righteousness of God because they pursued it by works (9:31–32). It is impossible to fully meet the righteous demands of the Law (10:3–5). Only doers of the Law are justified before God, not hearers (2:13). Justification must come apart from the works of the Law (3:28).
- ✓ By Faith – God’s righteousness is available exclusively by faith (1:16, 4:13). The righteous man shall live by faith, or the man who is righteous by faith shall live (1:17). The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe (3:22). Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned (λογίζομαι [*logizomai*], “to reckon”) to him as righteousness (4:3). David spoke of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works (4:6). The believer’s faith is reckoned as righteousness (4:5). We are justified by faith (5:1). Gentiles have attained righteousness by faith (9:30). Believing from the heart results in righteousness (10:10).
- ✓ Through the Work of Christ – We are justified by Christ’s blood (5:9) through His redemption (3:24) and resurrection (4:25). Through one act of righteousness justification resulted to men (5:18). Through the obedience of One many are made righteous (5:19). The righteous requirement of the Law is fulfilled in us who are in Christ (8:1–4). Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer (10:4).
- ✓ God’s Gift – Believers receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (5:17). We are justified as a gift of God’s grace (3:24). The free gift results in justification (5:16).
- ✓ For Sinners – God justifies the ungodly (4:5).

❖ *Results of Justification* –

- ✓ For Man – Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:1). The gift of righteousness through Christ brings eternal life (5:17, 18, 21). Though our body is dead, our spirit is alive because of righteousness (8:10). Those God justifies He glorifies (8:30). Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies (8:33).
- ✓ For God – Since God demonstrated His righteousness by displaying Christ publicly as a propitiation (removal of wrath) in His blood through faith, God remains just as the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (3:25–26).

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, “In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’” There I began to

understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith ... Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.... And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word “righteousness of God.” Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise (Martin Luther’s Account of His Own Conversion).

- ❖ *Life of the Justified* – When we were slaves of sin, we were free in regard to righteousness (6:20). Having been freed from sin, we became slaves of righteousness (6:18). We must not present the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead and our members as instruments of righteousness to God (6:13). Presenting ourselves to God as slaves of obedience results in righteousness (6:16). Presenting our members as slaves to righteousness results in sanctification (6:19).

Vocabulary of Righteousness in Romans

The words in this group are related to **δίκη** (*dikē*), “justice,” personified in Greek religion as the goddess Dike, daughter of Zeus, who shared in his government of the world (see reference to her in Acts 28:4).

- **δίκαιος** (*dikaios*) – adjective: “upright, just, righteous”

1:17 “**THE RIGHTEOUS** *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH”
 2:13 for not the hearers of the Law are **just** before God
 3:10 as it is written, “**THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS**, NOT EVEN ONE
 3:26 that He might be **just** and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus
 5:7 one will hardly die for a **righteous** man
 5:19 through the obedience of the One the many will be made **righteous**
 7:12 the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and **righteous** and good

- **δικαιοσύνη** (*dikaiousunē*) – noun: “righteousness, uprightness”

1:17 in [the gospel] *the* **righteousness** of God is revealed from faith to faith
 3:5 if our unrighteousness demonstrates the **righteousness** of God, what shall we say
 3:21 now apart from the Law *the* **righteousness** of God has been manifested
 3:22 even *the* **righteousness** of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe
 3:25 whom God displayed ... as a propitiation in His blood ... to demonstrate His **righteousness**
 3:26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His **righteousness** at the present time
 4:3 “**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS**”
 4:5 to the one who ... believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as **righteousness**
 4:6 David ... speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons **righteousness** apart from works
 4:9 we say, “**FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS**”
 4:11 circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of ... faith ... that **righteousness** might be reckoned to them
 4:13 the promise to Abraham ... was not through the Law, but through the **righteousness** of faith
 4:22 Therefore also **IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 5:17 those who receive the ... gift of **righteousness** will reign in life through ... Jesus Christ
 5:21 as sin reigned in death ... so grace might reign through **righteousness** to eternal life

6:13 present ... your members *as* instruments of **righteousness** to God
 6:16 when you present yourselves ... you are slaves ... of obedience resulting in **righteousness**
 6:18 having been freed from sin, you became slaves of **righteousness**
 6:19 present your members *as* slaves to **righteousness**, resulting in sanctification
 6:20 when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to **righteousness**
 8:10 if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of **righteousness**
 9:30 Gentiles, who did not pursue **righteousness**, attained **righteousness** ... **righteousness** ... by faith
 9:31 Israel, pursuing a law of **righteousness**, did not arrive at *that* law
 10:3 not knowing ... God's **righteousness** ... they did not subject themselves to the **righteousness** of God
 10:4 Christ is the end of the law for **righteousness** to everyone who believes
 10:5 the man who practices the **righteousness** which is based on law shall live by that **righteousness**
 10:6 the **righteousness** based on faith speaks thus
 10:10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in **righteousness**
 14:17 the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but **righteousness** and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

- **δικαιῶ** (*dikaioō*) – verb: “to justify, vindicate, treat as just”

2:13 for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be **justified**
 3:4 “THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE **JUSTIFIED** IN THY WORDS, AND ... PREVAIL WHEN ... JUDGED”
 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be **justified** in His sight
 3:24 being **justified** as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus
 3:26 that He might be ... the **justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus
 3:28 we maintain that a man is **justified** by faith apart from works of the Law
 3:30 since indeed God who will **justify** the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one
 4:2 if Abraham was **justified** by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God
 4:5 to the one who ... believes in Him who **justifies** the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness
 5:1 having been **justified** by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
 5:9 having now been **justified** by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath *of God* through Him
 6:7 for he who has died is **freed** from sin
 8:30 whom He called, these He also **justified**; and whom He **justified**, these He also glorified
 8:33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who **justifies**

- **δικαίωμα** (*dikaiōma*) – noun: “righteous requirement, righteous deed, righteousness”

1:32 although they know the **ordinance** of God
 2:26 If therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the **requirements** of the Law
 5:16 the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in **justification** (compare **δικαιοσύνη**)
 5:18 one **act of righteousness** resulted in the justification of life to all men
 8:4 in order that the **requirement** of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who ... walk according to ... Spirit

- **δικαίωσις** (*dikaiōsis*) – noun: “justification, vindication, acquittal”

4:25 *He* who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our **justification**

5:18 through one act of righteousness there resulted **justification** of life to all men

- **δικαιοκρισία** (*dikaiokrisia*) – noun: “righteous judgment”

2:5 in the day of wrath and revelation of the **righteous judgment** of God

- **ἀδικία** (*adikia*) – noun: “disregard for what is right, unrighteousness, wrongdoing”

1:18 wrath of God is revealed ... against ... **unrighteousness** of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness

1:29 being filled with all **unrighteousness**

2:8 to those who ... obey **unrighteousness**, wrath and indignation

3:5 our **unrighteousness** demonstrates the righteousness of God

3:5 the God who inflicts wrath is not **unrighteous**

6:13 do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of **unrighteousness**

Outline of the Book of Romans

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