

# **The Righteousness of God**

(Rom 1:16-17)

- I. Paul is not ashamed of Gospel:
  - A) Because it is “good news”
  - B) Because it provides a full salvation
  - C) Because it is God’s ordained plan
  - D) Because it is the power of God
  - E) Because it is effectual
- II. Because it is the righteousness of God “revealed”
  - A) Read verse 17 in other translations to give a sense of the old English phrase
  - B) Revealed- “laid open”, “made clear”, “to fully uncover what had been partially veiled”
    - 1. Many false ideas have arisen in the last 200 years concerning this “revelation”
      - i. It is not something entirely new and never before seen at all
        - a) “As it is written” in v.17 disproves that
        - b) Rom 1:1-4 disproves that
        - c) Rom 3:19-22 disproves that
        - d) Rom 4 disproves that
        - e) Rom 16:25-26 disproves that
      - ii. John 8:56- “Abraham saw My day”
      - iii. 1 Pet 1:10-12- O/T prophets saw it through a glass darkly, and they also revealed it that way
    - 2. “Revealed” also doesn’t mean it has now been laid open before mankind for him to consider
      - i. Revealed refers to the power of God and what He is performing
        - a) Phil 1:6
        - b) Phil 2:12-13
- III. Because it contains the “righteousness of God”
  - A) In many ways this phrase in v.17 is the center and core of true Christianity
  - B) It was this theme that produced the Protestant Reformation
  - C) What is meant by “the righteousness of God?”
    - 1. It cannot mean simply an expression of the holy and righteous nature of God, for then the gospel becomes the “worst news”
      - i. That “righteousness” was revealed in the flood, and at Sodom, and at Sinai, etc.
      - ii. It is this same idea that makes the Sermon on the Mount the most condemning passage in all the bible to the unbeliever

- iii. Read Luther's experience in this regard
- 2. God's righteousness was known in this way before the cross, and His holiness and justice was well documented and understood
  - i. But the truth of the depth of His righteousness came in Christ, where His perfection and wrath are matched and surpassed by His love; this is the true and full expression of His righteousness
- 3. "Righteousness of God"- That righteousness which comes from God and satisfies God
  - i. Righteousness- That which conforms to God and His demands
    - a) That which is pleasing to God
    - b) That which is acceptable to God
  - ii. The gospel is every bit as concerned with righteousness as the law was, in fact it in no way makes void the law nor God righteous demands, it fulfills them
    - a) Matt 5:17-18- "Think not I am come to destroy the law, I came to fulfill"
    - b) This is one of the main errors of Dispensationalism
- iii. Rom 3:31- "We establish the law" (meet its demands)
  - a) The gospel doesn't just circumvent the law, it is not a legal loophole
  - b) The gospel is not simply the forgiveness of sins, the gospel is Rom 1:17 and the righteousness of God imparted to sinners
    - 1) Job 9:2- "How can a man be just with God?"
      - (a) The gospel answers this question
    - 2) The gospel enables a man to stand justly before God, to be brought back to God as the Son Himself
      - (a) Not knowing this is the thing which leads to "believism" rather than faith
      - (b) Many thing salvation is no longer fearing hell alone, or forgiveness of sins alone, but what about the righteousness of God, and hungering after it and to know God?
- iv. Job 9:2- How can a man be just with God?
  - a) He must first have kept the law every jot and tittle, and honored God with every thought and action
  - b) He must be freed from the law's condemnation and penalty
    - 1) The gospel reveals God's method of solving this problem
    - 2) God has provided a method whereby He can be justly and perfectly satisfied in Christ
      - (a) Christ has satisfied the law perfectly and in every detail
        - (1) He became flesh
        - (2) He was made under the law

- (3) He received the penalty of guilty sinners upon Himself
- (4) He received the law's punishment and condemnation
  - I. Once met, justice cannot demand a second payment, or it is not justice
  - II. 2 Cor 5:21- This makes it possible to not only cancel all our debt, but to credit all Christ's merit to us
  - III. I stand before God in/as Christ (Rom 3:19-22, Phil 3:4-9)
  - IV. Read first stanza of Eternal Light
  - V. Read first stanza of Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness
  - VI. This is the heart of salvation rather than my experiences

IV. Because the gospel shows how this righteousness comes to us

A) "From faith to faith" (faith is mentioned 4 times in Rom 1:16-17)

B) What is faith? Is it simply a "believism?"

1. 2 Thess 3:2- "Not all men have faith"

- i. Faith is not some inherent quality which must be "drawn out" from us
- ii. Neither is faith simply as we live daily by the numbers
  - a) Some say we live by faith in everything we do: we have faith in a car when we ride, or a plane when we get on, or in the chef when we eat his food, etc.
    - 1) This isn't faith, it's simply playing the odds, or a calculated decision

2. Eph 2:8-9- Faith is a gift from God, it is a powerful thing come from without and entered within, it is from another source external to man

- i. Faith is the method and means, or the peculiar power whereby God passes righteousness to us, it is "by faith" and not "because of faith"
- ii. Faith is not a condition that must be met, neither a merit which must be found
  - a) Dispensationalism has presented faith as a "lighter requirement" than law
    - 1) "In O/T they had to keep the law, thank God we live in this new Dispensation where salvation is so much easier"
    - 2) If God ever changes, then He is not perfect
    - 3) The righteousness of God can't bypass or circumvent the law, otherwise He is not just
    - 4) Rom 3:25-27- God is "just and the justifier of him that believeth"

C) "The righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith"

1. Therein "the righteousness of God by faith" is revealed "by/through faith"

2. “By faith” is opposite of “by works” or any other method, God has determined to do it “by faith”
  - i. Faith excludes merit or worthiness, if you still possess worth, you have not faith
  - ii. Our faith doesn’t produce or constitute our righteousness
  - iii. Faith is the instrument by which we “receive” righteousness (imputed)
    - a) “My faith” would justify “my glory”
    - b) Where are not justified by our faith we are justified by the righteousness of Christ
      - 1) In other words we can stand before God because we are clothed in Christ perfect righteousness, and not because of our powerful faith
      - 2) Faith is the means God uses, but it is Christ’s righteousness that satisfies (Rom 3:21-22, Phil 3:9)
      - 3) Gal 6:14- God forbid that I should glory, save in Christ crucified for me
    - c) So then God determined as His method of salvation, before the foundation of the world, righteousness by faith, not by works, ceremony, activity, etc.
      - 1) This fact is revealed to the gifted faith in the believer, as it was when the fulness of the time came to Martin Luther
3. “Faith to faith”
  - i. Some say this is from O/T faith to N/T faith
  - ii. Some say this is from weak faith to stronger faith
    - a) These are both true statements, yet in the context that can’t be it
  - iii. 1 Cor 1:9-14- God’s righteousness by faith is revealed only to the one that has faith given him
    - a) This is the spiritual counterpart of the miracles of Christ in the gospels
      - 1) Opening the eyes of the blind
      - 2) Making the dumb to understand
      - 3) Healing the deaf
      - 4) Circumcising the heart
      - 5) Acts 16:14- Lydia
      - 6) Luther’s “I broke through”
    - b) Matt 11:25-27- “I thank Thee oh Lord, because Thou hast hid these things from the prudent, and revealed them unto babes”
      - 1) How does this “revelation” take place? By faith!
        - (a) Look at how Luther saw it and where, was it in some ceremony, or some work?

(b) “Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”

(c) “At the Cross”

(d) “I Saw the Light”

D) Hab 2:4- All of this was written before by the prophets

1. Habakkuk, as with O/T prophecy, saw an immediate and a temporary earthly consideration concerning Israel and the remnant in captivity, but the truer and deeper meaning of prophecy lies always in the spiritual fulfillment, as with 70ad -vs- the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming
2. “Those that are righteous by faith shall live!”
3. Rom 8:31-39- If God be for those that are made righteous by Him through the means of faith, then who can be against them or prevent them from coming to Him? Nobody!