

Righteousness by Grace

RIGHTEOUSNESS DENIED - RIGHTEOUSNESS RESTORED

“For if by one man’s **offence death** reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of **grace** and of the **gift of righteousness** shall reign in **life** by one, Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:17).

“By one man’s offence death reigned by one”: So we understand that Adam committed a transgression and the curse of death came upon him and all his descendants - so death reigns by one offence. Whereas those who receive “the **gift of righteousness** shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” In this way, Jesus became the second or “last Adam” (or federal head) who can bring upon us the reign of life. For this we must abide in God’s “**grace**” that we might have the “**gift of righteousness**” and thus receive eternal life. This verse (Romans 5:17) highlights the great conflict requiring the saviour:

offence verses **righteousness**
death verses **life**

Righteousness Denied

God’s righteousness was denied in the beginning. Firstly by the serpent, declaring that “ye shall not surly die” - in effect calling God a liar - and so casting God as un-righteous, and denying His right to be obeyed. Then Adam and Eve followed the council of the serpent and so they too denied God’s righteousness in practice, eating of the forbidden fruit, disobeying His commandment. They thus were cursed with a change of nature that befitted their sin.

This being so, what could “the righteous God” (Psa.7:9) do that mankind might be reconciled, and have access to the powers of the tree of life again?

Righteousness Restored

There was only one way God’s Righteousness could be restored: that is, by it being upheld and complied with. This work of God was done in a representative man, a “last Adam” as a federal head; in which God could declare and demonstrate, his righteous judgement on the fallen state of the Adamic nature.

The heavenly Father established a way whereby his righteousness would be publicly proclaimed, declared, complied with and restored, for all who would be saved, to acknowledge. The next verse continues:

“Therefore as by the **offence** of one judgment came upon all men to **condemnation**; even so by the **righteousness** of one, the free gift came upon all men unto **justification of life**” (Rom. 5:18 KJV).]

For “**righteousness of one**” some KJV Bible Margins offer “**by one righteousness**”. This alternative rendering is supported by the original Greek words here as follows:

ἐνὸς **one**
δικαιώματος **act of righteousness**

The word δικαιώματος (dikaionatos) here in Romans 5:18 is in the singular and signifies ‘**one act of righteousness**’; this is further strengthened by the preceding word “ἐνὸς” (henos) meaning ‘one’ so the greek is emphatic that “Justification of life” came by ‘**one act of righteousness**’.

The English Standard Version (and others) translates this verse as follows:

“Therefore, as one **trespass** led to **condemnation** for all men, so one **act of righteousness** leads to **justification** and life for all men” (Rom. 5:18)

So to emphasize, here we read:

“one **trespass** led to **condemnation**”
“one **act of righteousness** leads to **justification**”

Therefore justification unto life eternal comes because “one **act of righteousness** leads to **justification**” - one act, NOT many. So justification did not come by the many righteous acts that Jesus did in his mortal life, but by **One Act**. What was the “**one act of righteousness**”? Before we move to that we would just add **verse 21**:

“That as **sin hath reigned unto [in] death**, even so might **grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life** by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

So comparing the three verses considered so far, we see that the Righteousness which saves comes by Grace through one act of Righteousness:

“**grace** and the **gift of righteousness**” (v17)
“one act of **righteousness**” (v18)
“**grace** reign through **righteousness**” (v21)

Now there can be only one Righteousness that can defeat the power of death, and that is the restoration of the Righteousness of God. So what is this one act of righteousness, that restored the righteousness of God (denied by the serpent, and Adam and Eve)? It is referred to in Romans chapter 3:

“Whom **God** hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in his blood, **to declare his [God’s] righteousness** for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom. 3:25).

“**propitiation**” signifies; ‘an atoning sacrifice’. How did God declare His righteousness in and through, the sacrifice of Christ? Well it allowed Him to show his righteous judgment upon the fallen state of the race of Adam. As it is written:-

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**” (Rom. 8:3).

And this was done:

“To declare, I say, at this time **his righteousness**: that he might **be just**, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:26).

So God’s Righteousness was declared, in that He (acceptably) “**condemned sin in the flesh**” (Rom. 8:3) in the crucifixion of Christ (the **propitiation** Rom. 3:25)

God “condemned” [katakrino- judged against] the sin in the flesh that we all bear (the physical state of our flesh), and in this way his righteousness was declared. This was the “one act of righteousness”; even God’s righteousness declared in Christ’s sacrifice. To be saved faith in these things is essential.

We have Romans 8:3 and 3:25-26, brought together in this way in the BASF:-

XII. That for delivering this message, he was put to death by the Jews and Romans, who were, however, but instruments in the hands of God, for the doing of that which He had determined before to be done, viz., **the condemnation of sin in the flesh**, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, **as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God**, as a basis **for the remission of sins**. All who approach God through this crucified, but risen, representative of Adam’s disobedient race, are forgiven. Therefore, by a figure, **his blood cleanseth from sin**.

(The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, Clause 12)

Notice that Clause 12 brings together **Romans 3 and 8** as:-

“the condemnation of **sin in the flesh** (Rom. 8:3), through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, **as a propitiation** (Rom. 3:25) to **declare the righteousness of God** (Rom.3:25,26), as a basis **for the remission of sins** (Rom. 3:25).

So we have a “blood” sacrifice or “propitiation”, in which God’s “righteousness” was submitted to, and complied with (by the last Adam), and demonstrated and declared, to any in the world that would be saved.

Lets just run through Romans chapter 3:21-26 with comments:-

“But now **the righteousness of God** without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even **the righteousness of God** which is **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference ...” (vs 21-22).

Here we see how by compliance with God's righteousness as worked out in Christ, children of Adam can have - through faith - the declared righteousness of God imputed to them: "Even **the righteousness of God** which is by **faith of Jesus Christ**" (vs 22).

We read on:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his **grace** through the **redemption that is in Christ Jesus**: (Rom. 3:23-24).

So we can be "justified"- have imputed **Righteousness by Grace**- "in Christ Jesus:" by the following means:

"Whom God hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in his blood, **to declare his [God's] righteousness** for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time **his [God's] righteousness: that he [God] might be just**, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25-26).

Verse 26 emphasises that God "might be **just**" that is **Righteous**: this is the first essential thing. Mankind must first acknowledge God's declared righteousness in the sacrifice of Christ, before God can justify (render righteous) "him which believeth in Jesus."

So the declared "Righteousness of God" is the Righteousness that, by Grace can be imputed to believers unto Life Eternal.

So we glean from the above verses in **Romans 3** the following:

- 22 Even **the righteousness of God** which is by **faith of Jesus Christ**
- 24 justified freely by his **grace** through the **redemption that is in Christ**
- 25 a **propitiation** through **faith in his blood**, to declare **his [God's] righteousness**
- 26 To declare, I say, at this time **his [God's] righteousness: that he [God] might be just**, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The Weymouth translation of Romans 3:26 is as follows:

"with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the **giver** of righteousness to those who **believe in Jesus**" (Rom. 3:26).

We have to believe in "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (**1Cor 2:2**). But to believe, we have to understand what the crucifixion was; the "propitiation through faith in his blood", only then can God through His grace account us righteous. This was the only way that the-All-Righteous Creator, who cannot look upon iniquity, could render man in the sinful state, righteous: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity ..." (Hab. 1:3). God declared His Righteousness in the sacrifice and we must suitably acknowledge it.

**CHRIST NEEDED GOD’S GRACE,
AND THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

In accordance with God’s appointment, Christ submitted to the declaration of God’s righteousness and manifested faith in God’s gracious acceptance of his sacrifice.

In Christ, the believer submits to and has faith in the same things in accordance with God’s requirements for believers.

The principles that justified Christ are the same principles that justify the believer in Christ. The principles that justified Christ are the same principles that justify the believers in Christ. Everything is done in faith so that the believers and Christ (as their representative), are justified by Faith. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace” (Rom. 4:16)

The principle being that without the grace of God no son of Adam could be saved- not even Jesus:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”. (Eph. 2:8-9).

This is so “that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (ie. in God - 1 Cor. 1:29-31).

Jesus, and those in Christ are saved by faith in his blood sacrifice:

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place**, having obtained eternal [aionios-perpetual] redemption *for us*” (Heb. 9:12).

The words “*for us*” are in italics because they are not in the original. It was first for Christ and then for the believer in Christ. The word “**obtained**” in the Greek is a participle, signifying: something done in which the doer shares. The blood sacrifice that brings eternal redemption to the believer, first brought it to Christ; as we also read:

“Now the God of peace, that **brought again from the dead** our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, **through the blood** of the everlasting **covenant**” (Heb. 13:20)

“the everlasting covenant” only works by faith; to be “**brought again from the dead**” by it, Jesus had to have faith in it. In principle, Salvation by faith always requires the “abundance of **grace** and of the **gift of righteousness**” (Rom. 5:17)

Jesus needed faith in the power of his own sacrifice, and this shows clearly that he benefited from his own sacrifice without which, he could not have been saved.

“Who by him do believe in **God**, that **raised him** up from the dead, and **gave him glory**; that your faith and hope might be in **God**” (1 Pet. 1:21)

Everything Christ has was gifted to him by God. When God raised Jesus it was an answer to his prayers:

“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to **save him from death**, and was **heard in that he feared**; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being **made perfect**, he became the **author of eternal salvation** unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:7-9).

Jesus prayed to God that he might be “**saved** from death”, his prayers were heard and he was “made perfect” by God. He did not earn his salvation, it was a gift given to him by God.

Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ also show the same principle:

“**Give** the king thy judgments, O God, and **thy righteousness unto the king’s son**” (Psa. 72:1).

Here the king and the king’s son refer to Christ, who is a king, and being the son of God, is a king’s son also. This is a key point: the prayer was that God would “give” his “righteousness to the king’s son - it was a gift! Jesus himself had to be given righteousness: it was not of his own self*.

So we have seen:-

“**by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place**” (Heb.9:12)
“brought again from the dead...**through** the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20)

“**God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory**” (1 Pet.1:21)

* There are those who baulk at this, saying that Jesus was good and righteous of his own self, and did not therefore need to be given righteousness. But the Lord had this to say in response to someone who addressed him as “good master”: “... Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God ...” (Mat. 19:17). The point is, that the source of all goodness is God himself - any goodness that Christ had was derived from his Father, who is altogether good and righteous in every respect.

The Scriptures plainly teach that in the “flesh” of man, “dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18), and the Lord, being “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4) knew what was in man (Jno. 2:25). The Scriptures are equally clear in teaching that in Jesus, God’s Righteousness was seen (Rom. 3:25-26): Although Jesus did no sin, yet God “made him to be sin for us” (2Cor. 5:21) being “made of a woman” having the same sinful flesh as we have. Hence his confession: “There is none good but one, that is, God”: he specifically referred all goodness to his Father in Heaven. According to the Divine arrangement, not even Jesus could boast of his own inherent goodness. All was of the Father, Whose Grace and Truth was revealed in His Son (Jno. 1:17). Jesus did not have to die in order to appease the wrath of God as the churches teach, but rather God was the prime-mover in all things to do with salvation. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19), God condemned sin in the flesh of His Son (Rom. 8:3), and God declared His Own Righteousness by so doing (Rom. 3:25). All, “that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26).

“him that was able to **save him** from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb.5:7)

“**Give thy righteousness** unto the king’s son (Psalm 72:1)

Salvation is not of works, the same holds true for Jesus as well as us:

“Not of works, **lest any man should boast**. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:9-10).

Christ also was God’s workmanship, his conception, his development, his anointing with the Holy Spirit without measure. Jesus of course had to play his part but God was working through him.

WE NEED GRACE, AND THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be **made the righteousness of God in him**” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Christ through sacrifice submitted himself “unto the **righteousness of God**” and thus God imputed to him “the righteousness of God”. We too must submit to “the righteousness of God” in the way appointed to us- in Christ. Israel failed in this particular:

Rom.10:3 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**.

Christ obtained the Grace which he shares with believers:

“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the **grace of God**, and the **gift by grace**, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (Rom. 5:15).

Christ submitted to the Righteousness of God in crucifixion, wherein God righteously condemned sin in the flesh. Christ did so in faith and the Righteousness of God was imputed to him, and in Christ (as Representative) it is imputed to the believer. Thus as we read (above) “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2Cor.5:21)

So the Righteousness of Faith as manifest in Abraham, has added details in the Righteousness of God as manifest in Christ. Concerning Abraham Paul writes:

“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:21-22).

It is the same righteousness of Faith now, but with added details about the perfecting of The Christ, as:

“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Rom. 4:23-24).

Abraham, of course believed in the coming saviour, who would be the perfect sacrifice for sin, and that the promises made specifically to Abraham were also specifically to his greater descendent The Christ, as Galatians 3 says:

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16).

And so as Jesus said in John 8:56: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”

***THE PURPOSE IS: GOD TO BE PRAISED
AND GLORIFIED FOR HIS GRACE***

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the **glory** and **praise** of **God** (Phil. 1:11).

“so that for all future time (L in the ages to come) he could show the very great exceeding; overwhelming riches of his **grace** by being kind to us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7 Expanded version)

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that **God in all things may be glorified** through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1Pet. 4:11).

“ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the **praise** of the **glory** of **his grace**, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have **redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of **his grace ...**” (Eph. 1:5-7).

“ ... And in Him, having heard and believed the word of truth—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the **praise** of **his glory** (Eph. 1:13-14).

We close with a Psalm of Christ:

“Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. (Psa. 69:20-23).

Verse 21 “they gave me vinegar to drink” is recorded as fulfilled on the cross in all four Gospel records.

Verses 22,23 is quoted by Paul in Romans 11:9,10 and applied to the Jews rejection of the things of Christ.

Verse 18 Shows Christ needed redeeming: “Draw nigh unto my soul, and **redeem** it: deliver me because of mine enemies” (Psa. 69:18).

And so it was:

Righteousness denied by the first Adam
Righteousness restored by the last Adam

Or as the Psalm 69 puts it:

“They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then **I restored that which I took not away**” (Psa. 69:4)

“Even the **righteousness of God** which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22).

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