

Reconciling the Righteousness in Romans to the Righteousness throughout the Word (Righteousness as Conduct & Righteousness as a Gift)

(When quoting scriptures, from the Rotherham Emphasized Bible New Testament, I will substitute the Hebrew words Yahoshua (yeh-ho-shoo' - ah) for Jesus, Yahweh and Elohim for God and the LORD and ruah for pneuma (spirit).)

*"The Eyes of Yahweh, are towards the Righteous,
And, His Ears, towards their cry for help:
The Face of Yahweh, is against such as do wickedness,
To cut off, from the earth, their memory
For Righteous is Yahweh,
Righteousness He loveth,
The Upright shall behold His Face."
(Psalm 34:15-16; 11:7)*

Yahweh is Righteous, so then his characteristics then become the ultimate standard of human conduct. Mankind's existence centers around righteousness. His righteousness can result in him receiving an age-abiding life and receiving rewards in this life and in the life to come. Paul unveils a righteousness of Yahweh, through faith in Christ unto all that have faith but what righteous requirement applies to those who died before Christ's sacrifice, or who have never heard of the Word of Yahweh? How does the righteousness of Abel, Job, Noah, Abraham, David, etc. etc. reconcile with the quote from Romans 3:10-12, 15-18, which states, *"Even as it is written—there is none righteous, not even one, There is none that discerneth, There is none that seeketh out Yahweh: All, have turned aside, together, have become useless, There is none that doeth kindness, not so much as one... Swift, are their feet to shed blood; Destruction and misery, are in their ways, And, the way of peace, have they not known: There is no fear of Yahweh before their eyes;"* when we read concerning Noah, *"...Noah, was, a righteous man, blameless, in his generations,—with Elohim, did Noah walk"* (Gen. 6:9); when we read of David, *"Yahweh therefore repaid me, according to my righteousness,—according to my pureness before his eyes"* (2 Sam. 22:25). This article will discuss the gift of the righteousness of Yahweh through faith in Christ (Rm. 3:22), as presented in Romans and Galatians along with the good works of righteousness. The righteous conduct of individuals coupled with them receiving Yahoshua as their Lord will result in them receiving praises and rewards in this corruptible life and praises, rewards and life age-abiding in the coming incorruptible life. Also, this article will address questions that are not fully answered in Yahweh's Word, such as what happens to the righteous people who had no access to the Word of Yahweh; to those who presently do not have access to the Word of Yahweh; to those who had access to the Word of Yahweh but who died before Christ's death and to those children who died before their age of accountability.

For whatever reason, it appears that pastors, etc. perspective are totally centered only on our age, the age beginning in Acts 10. If you ask them, 'How are people saved,' instead of asking you, 'In what age do these people live,' they will quote you Romans 10:9 and Ephesians 2:8, stating it is not by works, totally disregarding the people who came before this age and the people who will come after this age. No reference is made to Revelations 20:12, which states, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and, books, were opened, and, another book, was opened, which is, the book, of life; and the dead, were judged, out of the things written in the books, according to their works." Did Abel make Yahoshua Christ his Lord and believe that Yahweh awoke him from among the dead? Also, there is a total disregard for the people who have never heard of the Bible, those being numbered in the billions. Concerning righteousness, Martin Luther wrote in his Commentary on Galatians, "Now, the true way to Christianity is this, that a man does first acknowledge himself, by the law, to be a sinner, and that it is impossible for him to do any good work. For the law saith, "Thou art an evil tree, and therefore all that thou thinkest, speakest, or dost, is against God." (Matt. vii. 17.) Thou canst not therefore deserve grace by thy works: which if thou go about to do, thou doublest thy offence: for since thou art an evil tree, thou canst not but bring forth evil fruits, that is to say, sins. For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." (Rom. xiv. 23.) (Commentary on Galatians, pg. 132.) The book of Romans and Galatians have to be understood in the light of the other sixty-four books. Yahoshua, before his death, was teaching people that if you obey the ten commandments (Law of Moses) you will receive life age-abiding; "Teacher! by doing what, shall I inherit, life age-abiding? And, he, said unto him—In the law, what is written? how dost thou read? And, he, answering, said—Thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim, out of all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thine intention; and thy neighbour, as thyself? And he said unto him—Rightly, hast thou answered: This, do, and thou shalt live" (Lk. 10:25-28). Can you imagine Yahoshua answering the person who asked him, 'Teacher! by doing what, shall I inherit, life age-abiding,' with, 'Thou art an evil tree, and therefore all that thou thinkest, speakest, or dost, is against God,' as Martin Luther stated? This article will present the righteousness that is throughout the Word of Yahweh, not just in Romans and Galatians.

THE NARRATIVE OF MANKIND

Beginning at the End of this narrative, will give us 20/20 vision of mankind's history. I have divided mankind's ages into 10 periods of time: (For more information, read the article, 'Ages, Periods and Epochs of Mankind in the Word of Yahweh,' Teleios Vol. 1.)

(Age 10) In Revelations 21, Yahweh has become King of the Earth, descending from Heaven to dwell upon the Earth where there is no longer death, evil and an adversary; all is Righteousness, his will being done! He is sharing his throne with his Only-Begotten Son, the man Yahoshua, who is of the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, the Mediator between Yahweh and fallen mankind. Yahweh, was in Christ, reconciling, a world, unto himself, not reckoning, unto them...(2 Cor. 5:19). (*All are Righteous.*)

(Age 9) King Yahoshua had been ruling the Earth for 1,000 years, which ended when death, Sheol, wicked mankind and the adversary were all thrown into the Lake of Fire (the Second Death), after which he subjected himself to his God and Father, Yahweh. (*Yahoshua is Righteous.*)

(Age 8) The precursor to the ninth age was the tribulation age. Yahoshua, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, was the only one worthy to open the scroll and the seven seals of destruction, which were opened upon unrepentent mankind, killing 1/2 of mankind (cleansing the Earth); "In a fiery flame; holding forth vengeance—against them that refuse to know Yahweh, and them who decline to hearken unto the glad-message of our Lord Yahoshua, Who, indeed, a penalty, shall pay—age-abiding destruction from the face of Yahweh and from the glory of his might" (2 Thes. 1:8-9). This age occurred after Yahoshua had come for his Body, the Body of Christ, meeting them in the air, ever to remain with them. (*The two witnesses are Righteous.*)

(Age 7) Yahweh, the Head of Yahoshua had made Yahoshua the Head of the assembly of Yahweh, where there is neither Jew nor Nation, where believers received the righteousness of Yahweh, through faith in Christ and received the gift of holy ruah (spirit). This is our present age. (*All believers have the righteousness of Yahweh.*)

(Age 6) Preceding the seventh age, Yahoshua lived a sinless life, fulfilling all of the Father's will and died a sacrificial death that would redeem mankind from death, thereby reconciling mankind back to Yahweh by his shed blood. (*Zachariah was Righteous.*)

(Age 5) Before Yahoshua's ministry, mankind received the Law of Moses to live by, looking for the promised Semach;¹ "Lo! days are coming, Declareth Yahweh, when I will raise up to David, A righteous Bud [semach], And he shall reign as, king, and prosper, And shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:5). King David was of this age, from whom the Messiah would come. (*Moses was Righteous.*)

(Age 4) Abraham and Sarah, from whom mankind's redeemer would come, preceded the fifth age. They knew nothing of the Mosaic Law or the coming Semach but they lived a righteous life because "...he [Abram] had faith [aman] in Yahweh,—so he [Yahweh] reckoned it to him, as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Abraham offered up Isaac, as commanded by Yahweh, when "...the messenger of Yahweh, out of the heavens said, Abraham, Abraham!...for, now, know I that, one who reverest Elohim, thou art, when thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only one, from me" (Gen. 22:11-12). (*Abram was Righteous.*)

¹ 06780 סמך semach seh' - makh

(Age 3) Preceding Abram was Noah and his family, the only righteous ones among billions of people. They repopulated the flooded Earth. The coming deliverer would come from Noah's son, Shem. (*Noah was Righteous.*)

(Age 2) The age of Cain, preceding the age of Noah, ended in the flood where "...great, was the wickedness of man in the earth, and that, every purpose of the devices of his heart, was only wicked all the day" (Gen. 6:5); "...Cain, was, of the wicked one, and slew his brother! And, for what cause, slew he him? Because, his works, were, wicked, whereas, those of his brother, were, righteous" (1 Jn. 3:12). The only-begotten son of Yahweh would come from his brother, Seth, "...For Elohim hath appointed me Adam & Eve) another seed instead of Abel, because, Cain, slew him" (Gen. 4:25)! (*Abel was Righteous.*)

(Age 1) The beginning age, explains the fall and death of the first of mankind, Adam and Eve, who were created in the image and likeness of Elohim to rule the Earth; who were given the opportunity to eat of the Tree of Life and live age-abidingly. Their action necessitated the requirement of a Redeemer for the children of Adam. The cost of their redemption would be the very sinless life of Yahweh's Only Begotten-Son; the seed of the woman, who would crush the head of the serpent after his own heel was bruised. (*Sin entered mankind.*)

I will present my theory on mankind's creation, which I believe is validated in the Word of Yahweh. I believe that mankind's creation would not occur without the coming birth of the seed of the woman (Yahoshua), he being the only man that could live a sinless life and give his life for all of mankind's redemption; if there was no coming Yahoshua, then Yahweh would not have created mankind because their existence would have always ended in sin and death. (For more information read the article, 'Who is this Man,' Teleios Vol. 2.) Yahoshua is Lord of all mankind, whether or not people actually knew of his existence. This man is mankind's only hope for an age-abiding life. People receiving life age-abiding is only because of his sacrificial death. If they did not know of his existence, they will acknowledge him at their resurrection. They will then be enlightened concerning his life, death and resurrection, bowing at his feet proclaiming his Lordship over their lives; by not doing so they would be rejecting the Creator, resulting in their perishing.

HIERARCHY

Hierarchy means 'sacred ruler,' but has now taken on the meaning of a system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority. Yahweh is the Head of Christ and Christ is our Head; "And, ye, are Christ's,—and, Christ, is, Yahweh's" (1 Cor. 3:23). Yahweh's heavenly system is a hierarchy, as can be viewed in Revelation chapter four and five. This heavenly hierarchy, from what has been written, consists in the following ranking: Yahweh, Yahoshua, twenty-four elders, four living creatures and then messengers. Yahweh's earthly kingdom will also

have a similar ranking, consisting of Yahweh, Yahoshua, Twelve Apostles², then the greatest servants followed by the worst servants.³ These positions are based on the individual's works of righteousness, from Yahoshua performing the greatest works, to people like David, Paul etc., down to the person who did the bare minimum. People are not taught these truths because they have been taught that everyone is going to be in Heaven, co-equal, where hierarchies do not exist because, "There's nothing you can do to make God love you less,"⁴ or "God's love for us is Unconditional,"⁵ (For more information, read the article, "A Different Gospel (*The Gospel of "God's Unconditional Love"*)" in Teleios Vol. 3.) People are not taught truths, such as, 'The Meek shall inherit the Earth.' The New Earth will be a Kingdom, ruled by Yahweh and Christ, with all of it's hierarchy, as our's is today.

GOOD WORKS & WICKED WORKS

"Then, will the king say to those on his right hand: Come ye, the blessed of my Father! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; For I hungered, and ye gave me to eat, I thirsted, and ye gave me drink, a stranger, was I, and ye took me home, Naked, and ye clothed me, sick, and ye visited me, in prison, was I, and ye came unto me. Then, will the righteous answer him, saying: Lord! when, saw we thee—hungry, and fed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink...And, answering, the king will say unto them: Verily, I say unto you—Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my least brethren, unto me, ye did it" (Mt. 25:34-40). Except for our present age, Good Works have always been the criteria to receive life age-abiding, as will be demonstrated in these scriptures:

(Daniel 12:1-2) "And, at that time, will Michael, the great ruler who standeth for the sons of thy people, make a stand, and there will be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, up to that time,—and, at that time, shall thy people, be delivered, every one found written in the book; and, many of the sleepers in the dusty ground, shall awake,—these, shall be to age-abiding life, but, those, to reproach, and age-abiding abhorrence."

(John 5:29) "and shall come forth,—they who, the good things, have done, unto a resurrection, of life; but, they who the corrupt things, have practised, unto a resurrection, of judgment.

(Revelation 20:11-12; 21:8) "And I saw a great white throne, and him that was sitting thereon, from whose face fled the earth and heaven, and, place, was not found for them.

² Lk. 22:29-30 And, I, covenant unto you—as my Father hath covenanted unto me—a kingdom, That ye may eat and drink, at my table, in my kingdom, and sit upon thrones, judging, the twelve tribes of Israel.

³ Mt 5:19 Whosoever, therefore, shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and teach men so, shall be called, least, in the kingdom of the heavens; but, whosoever shall do and teach, the same, shall be called, great, in the kingdom of the heavens. Lu 7:28 I say unto you—A greater, among them that are born of women, than John, is there none; but, he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.

⁴ <https://newspring.cc/devotionals/theres-nothing-you-can-do-to-make-god-love-you-less>

⁵ http://www.awmi.net/reading/teaching-articles/gods_love/

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and, books, were opened, and, another book, was opened, which is, the book, of life; and the dead, were judged, out of the things written in the books, according to their works...But, as for the timid, and disbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the false, their part, is in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,—which is the second death;"

(1 Cor. 6:9-10) "Or know ye not that, wrong-doers, shall not inherit, Yahweh's kingdom? Be not deceiving yourselves:—neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor sodomites, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners—shall inherit, Yahweh's kingdom."

"Then, will he say unto those also, on his left hand: Depart ye from me, accursed ones! Into the age-abiding fire, which hath been prepared for the adversary and his messengers; For I hungered, and ye gave me not to eat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me not to drink, A stranger, was I, and ye took me not home, naked, and ye clothed me not, sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Mt. 25:41-43). Righteous works are definitely the criteria for receiving life age-abiding. (This subject will be discussed latter in greater detail.)

BLOOD SHEDDING FOR THE REMISSION OF SIN

Mankind, created in the image and likeness of Elohim, created a little below Elohim, rulers of the Earth, committed adultery⁶ when they gave their love to the serpent rather than to Yahweh. Adultery is a capital offense, of which they were warned, "dying thou dost die." All of mankind must pay the price of death, unless there could be a substitute. Christ became that substitute by his shed blood. The shedding of blood is the loss of life as stated in Levitius 17:11, which states, "For, as for the life of the flesh, in the blood, it is, therefore have, I, given it unto you upon the altar, to put a propitiatory-covering over your lives,—for, the blood, it is, which, by virtue of the life, maketh propitiation [kaphar]."⁷ Kaphar means 'to cover over sin (adultery)' and thus pacify Yahweh. Hebrew 9:22 states, " And, nearly, all things, with blood, are purified, according to the law, and, apart from blood-shedding, cometh no remission [aphesis 859]."⁸ Yahweh accepted a temporary substitute, it being the blood or life of an innocent animal, for mankind's sins but "... the law, having in a shadow of the destined good things, not the very image of the things, they can never, with the same sacrifices which year by year they offer evermore, make them who approach,

⁶ And Yahweh said unto me, in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen what, apostate Israel, did? She used to go upon every high mountain, and beneath every green tree, and commit unchastity there. And I said, after she had been doing all these things, Unto me, shall thou return? and she returned not,—and her treacherous sister Judah saw, it! Though she saw that, for all this, apostate Israel having committed adultery, I had sent her away, and had given a scroll of divorcement unto her, yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but, she also, went and committed unchastity. Yea though it had come to pass that, through the levity of her unchastity, she had defiled the land,—and committed adultery with Stone and with Tree, (Jer. 3:6-9)

⁷ 03722 כפר kaphar kaw-far'

⁸ 1) release from bondage or imprisonment

perfect [teleioo];⁹ Else would they not, in that case, have ceased being offered, by reason of those rendering the divine service having no further conscience at all of sins, being once for all purified? But, in them, is a recalling to mind of sins, year by year, For it is impossible for blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4).

Christ became the perfect sacrifice; "...Christ also, once for all, concerning sins, died,—Just in behalf of unjust,—in order that he might introduce us unto Yahweh..." (1 Pe. 3:18); "...When Christ approached, as high-priest of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tent, not made by hand, that is, not of this creation,—Nor yet through blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood he entered once for all into the Holy place, age-abiding redemption discovering. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the profaned, halloweth unto the purity of the flesh, How much rather shall the blood of the Christ, who through an age-abiding spirit offered himself unspotted unto Yahweh, purify our conscience from dead works, to the rendering of divine-service, unto a Living Elohim" (Heb. 9:11-14)!

The Greek word, 'aphesis' (af'-es-is), meaning to release from bondage or imprisonment is translated remission in Ephesians 1:7, which states, "In whom we have the redemption through his blood, the remission [aphesis] of our offences, according to the riches of his favour." Aphasis was used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew word, 'derôr',¹⁰ in Isaiah 61:1 (Lk. 4:18), which states, "The spirit of Adonai Yahweh, is upon me,—Because Yahweh, Hath anointed me, to tell good tidings to the oppressed, Hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, To proclaim, To captives, liberty [aphesis (Greek), deror (Hebrew)], To them who are bound, the opening of the prison." (Also compare Lev. 25:10, Jer. 34:8, 15, 17.) Sin binds and imprisons all mankind but the blood of Yahoshua paid the price of redemption for those who call upon his name, setting the captives free! The shedding of blood and the remission of sins go hand in hand, as is stated in Matthew 26:28, which states, "For, this, is my [Yahoshua] blood of the covenant, which, for many, is to be poured out, for remission of sins."

LIFE AGE-ABIDING BEFORE CHRIST'S DEATH

Receiving life age-abiding is a two part endeavor. First, one must receive the Redeemer, who is Christ (we can not redeem ourselves) and Second, one must obey the first two commandments, they being, "Thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim (or Creator)—with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. In these two commandments, all the law, is contained, and the prophets" (Mt. 22:37-40). We can not receive life age-abiding by performing the latter but rejecting the former. In many cases, people who know nothing of the Word of Yahweh or nothing of Yahoshua will perform the latter before they receive the former. For example, Abram and

⁹ 5048 τελειόω teleioo tel-i-o'-o 1) to make perfect, complete

¹⁰ 01865 דרור d'rowr der-ore' 1) a flowing, free run, liberty

Sarai knew nothing of Yahoshua but they Loved Yahweh and their neighbor, thereby performing the latter. They will perform the former by receiving Yahoshua as their Lord (Redeemer) when they are awoken from among the dead by him.

What about the people who have no information concerning the Word of Yahweh? Billions of people having lived without have any knowledge of the Word of Yahweh. William Whiston, a mathematician and close friend of Isaac Newton, estimated that there were 550 billion people before the flood of Noah (a 1656 year period when people lived to the ages of 900 years).¹¹ Since Yahweh is righteous and just, these people can not be held accountable in obeying the Mosaic law which they knew nothing of. Paul stated, in Romans chapter two, that people can live a righteous life without the knowledge of the Mosaic law. These people innately knew nine of the ten commandments (they could not be held responsible for keeping the Sabbath day). These people will be judged, by Yahoshua, by their works, which are based on their obedience of the nine commandments. The ones whose conduct were righteous, will be given life age-abiding while the others will perish. Since these people chose to live a righteous life, they will humbly bow to their Redeemer, Yahoshua, when they are awoken from among the dead, in the first resurrection, the Resurrection of the Just. They will then be instructed in the full ways of Yahweh. They will receive Yahoshua as their Lord, Savior, Redeemer and King, as well as Yahweh being the name of their Creator, whom they have bowed down to in the past.

What about the children who died before their age of reason? In my opinion, the purpose of Christ's 1,000 year reign upon the earth is as follows. Why doesn't Yahweh bring the New Jerusalem to the New Earth (Rev. 21) after Yahoshua defeats the adversary in chapter nineteen? The White Throne Judgment should have begun after his victory and death and Sheol should had been thrown into the Lake of Fire, along with the adversary, which ushers in Yahweh as King, where "...death, shall be no more, and grief and outcry and pain shall be no more..." but this is not the case. The adversary is not thrown into the Lake of Fire with the wild beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19:20) but rather is bound for 1,000 years to be let loose again. Why? Mortals will still be living on the earth while Christ is King. How do I know that? These mortals, who will be as the sand of the sea, will be devoured by fire out of the heaven when they battle against Christ. The book of Isaiah describes these mortals (Is. 65:17-25). Why 1,000 years when 20 years would accomplish the time needed to give children, who lived through the tribulation, the necessary time to chose Christ or perish? I believe that extra 980 years will be for mortals who did not reach the age of maturity before they died, such as children. These individuals, I believe, will be given mortal life, such as occurred to Nicodemus, so they can chose life or death under Christ's reign. These individuals also will be required to receive Christ as Redeemer and obey the great two commandments. This is only my speculation but we know Yahweh is righteous and just and he allows everyone to chose him or reject him. Many people declare that these children, upon death, go to Heaven but that would make abortion and death the

¹¹ A New Theory of the Earth; Ch. 3 The Antediluvian State of the Earth; 1755

gateway or portal to Heaven, which is a demonic teaching. No earth born mortal is alive in Heaven, except for Christ, the first-born from among the dead. All mankind who have died are asleep, awaiting their awakening (egeiro). All of mankind's existence is based upon the choice of whether to bow to Yahweh or to reject him. We are either Cain or we are Abel. (For more information, read the article, "The Awakening," in Teleios Vol. 2.)

RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT = RECEIVING LIFE AGE-ABIDING

Throughout the Word of Yahweh (except for our present age, the Age of the Sacred Secret) mankind's conduct (Obeying the 10 Commandments) determines whether they receive life age-abiding, enabling them to live on the New Earth or they perish.¹² (For more information read the article, 'Life or Death, not Heaven or Hell,' which is in Teleios Vol. 3.) This includes the people who will live during the tribulation period.¹³ The righteousness of Yahweh, through faith in Christ, is only available in our present age. This gift was not available to those who lived before Christ's sacrifice, which is a period consisting of approximately 4,000 years and will not be available to those who remain on the earth after Christ's Parousia for his Body, whose commandment will be, "Become thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:8-11).

All of mankind has an innate knowledge of the Creator and their duty to love him and their neighbor as themselves, otherwise Yahweh could not justly judge anybody on their righteous and wicked conduct (Rm. 1:18-32). The understanding of righteousness begins with embracing the total narrative of mankind's existence; mankind being divided into two segments: those who have no knowledge of the Word of Yahweh and those that do. The people who live and die without any information concerning the Word of Yahweh can not be held accountable under the same standards as we, because they have no revelation. These individuals are fully aware of the Creator, but not as Yahweh, and what is expected of them. They are aware of their future death and they are also aware of a future life that can be age-abiding. These two states are based upon conditions. These conditions are that they love their Creator and love their neighbor as their self. These concepts and commandments are innate¹⁴ in all mankind who have a mind of reason. These individual's conduct determines whether they perish or receive life age-abiding.

The people who have access to the Word of Yahweh are fully aware that if Adam and Eve would have obeyed Yahweh, then we would all be living an age-abiding life, without sin, in the Garden of Eden, but Eve and Adam did sin, which resulted in mankind being sold into bondage. Our bondage necessitated a need for a redeemer. The price of our

¹² "And lo! one coming near unto him, said, Teacher! what good thing shall I do, that I may have life age-abiding...Yahoshua, said—These: Thou shalt not commit murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal,—Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honour thy father and thy mother,—and—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as, thyself" (Mt. 19:16-19). Ez. 3:17-21, Ch. 18, Ch. 33; Psalm 37 etc. etc.

¹³ Rev. 2:7, 11; 3:5; 14:9-12

¹⁴ Existing in a person (or organism) from birth; belonging to the original or essential constitution (of body or mind); inborn

redemption was for our redeemer to live a sinless life and then to die in our place, which pays the price for our redemption.

Ezekiel, chapters three, eighteen and thirty-three, gives Yahweh's requirements to those who existed before Christ's sacrifice; the conduct required to receive life age-abiding. It is also noted that not only was righteous conduct required but a restitution was required for wicked conduct performed. A summary is presented in Ezekiel 33:12-16, which states, "...The righteousness of the righteous man, shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression, And, as for the lawlessness of the lawless man, He shall not stumble thereby, in the day of his return from his lawlessness,—Nor shall, the righteous man, be able to live thereby, in the day of his sin. When I say of the righteous man, He shall, surely live, but, he, hath trusted in his righteousness and committed perversity, None of his righteous deeds, shall be mentioned, But, by his perversity which he hath committed—thereby, shall he die. And, when I say to the lawless man, Thou shalt, surely die, but he shall turn from his sin, and do justice and righteousness: The debt-pledge, the lawless man shall restore, Plunder, shall pay back, In the statutes of life, hath walked, so as not to commit perversity, He shall, surely live, he shall not die:— None of his sins which he hath committed, shall be called to mind against him,—Justice and righteousness, hath he done, He shall, surely live."

Righteousness was accomplished by doing the statutes and commandments of Yahweh; "So then Yahweh commanded us to do all these statutes, to revere Yahweh our Elohim,—for our good, all the days, to preserve us alive, (as at this day); and, righteousness, shall it be to us,—when we take heed to do all this commandment, before Yahweh our Elohim, as he commanded us" (Deu. 6:24-25). The Law "...indeed, is holy, and the commandment, holy, and righteous and good" (Rm. 7:12), but all of mankind still need the perfect sin sacrifice to receive remission of our sins.

ABEL, NOAH, ABRAM, MOSES & AMAN (FAITH)

Before Christ's final sacrifice, performing the Mosaic Law, for those who were aware of it, was necessary to receive life age-abiding. Before Moses, but beginning with Abram, circumcision was necessary to receive life age-abiding, to those who were aware of the requirement. Before Abram, but beginning with Noah, Noah's instructions on righteousness to his children, was necessary to receive life age-abiding. Before Noah, but beginning with Abel, Abel's instructions to his children were necessary for life age-abiding. Aman¹⁵ (faith) has always been part of the equation; "By faith, a fuller sacrifice, did Abel, offer unto Yahweh, than Cain,—through which, he received witness that he was righteous, there being a witnessing upon his gifts, by Yahweh; and, through it, though he died, he yet is speaking;" "By faith, Noah, having received intimation concerning the things not yet seen, filled with reverence, prepared an ark to the saving of his house—through which he condemned the world, and, of the righteousness by way of faith, became heir;" "By faith,

¹⁵ 0539 אמן 'aman aw-man' At the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty. Ge 15:6 And he hath believed [aman] in Jehovah, and He reckoneth it to him — righteousness. (Young's Bible)

being called, Abraham obeyed—to come forth into a place he was destined to receive for an inheritance; and he came forth, not well knowing whither he was coming;" "By faith, Moses, when grown up—refused to be called the son of a daughter of a Pharaoh." The heart of righteousness is declared in Hebrews 11:6, "But, apart from faith, it is impossible to be well-pleasing; for he that approacheth unto Yahweh—must needs have faith, that he is, and that, to them who seek him out, a rewarder he becometh." The faith of Abram is associated with righteousness by faith, as unveiled in Romans chapter four and Galatians chapter three. The foundation of these chapters is, "And he [Abram] hath [perfect state] believed [aman] in Yahweh, and He reckoneth it to him — righteousness [sedaqa]¹⁶" (Gen. 15:6).

One additional lesson concerning the faith of Abraham is presented in James 2:14-26, where works will be associated with faith. "What profit, my brethren,—if one should be saying he hath, faith, but hath not, works; can his faith save him? If, a brother or sister, should be naked, and coming short of the daily food, And one from among you should say unto them—Withdraw in peace, be getting warmed and fed, but should not give them the things needful for the body, What the profit? So, also, faith, if it have not works, is dead, by itself. But one will say,—Thou, hast faith, and, I, have works, show me thy faith apart from thy works, and, I, unto thee, will shew, by my works, my faith. Thou believest that Yahweh is, one: thou doest, well—Even the demons believe, and shudder! But art thou willing to learn, O empty man! that, faith, apart from works, is, idle? Abraham our father, was it not, by works, he was declared righteous—when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that, his faith, had been working together with his works, and by his works did his faith become full-grown [teleios],— And the scripture was fulfilled which saith—And Abraham believed Yahweh, And it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and, Yahweh's friend, was he called: Ye see that—by works, a man is declared righteous, and not by faith alone. And, in like manner also, Rahab the harlot, Was it not, by works, she was declared righteous, when she gave welcome unto the messengers, and, by another way, urged them forth? Just as, the body, apart from ruah (breath), is dead, so, our faith also, apart from works, is dead."

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF YAHWEH AS A GIFT

Today, our identity is in Christ's accomplished feat. He was our substitute, who fully obeyed the Mosaic Law. He accomplished the righteousness of Yahweh by always obeying his Father. He was holy enough (sanctified) to receive holy ruah. He is seated in the Heavens. He lives to die no more. He has the authority and power over heaven and earth. We are his Body, he being our Head. His accomplishments become our gifts when we receive him as our Master. Receiving the righteousness of Yahweh, as accomplished by Christ, as a gift, is an event in time; "Not by works which we had done in righteousness, but, according to his mercy, he saved us—through means of the bathing of a new birth,

¹⁶ 06666 צדקה sedaqa sed-aw-kaw'

and the moulding anew of holy ruah (spirit)" (Titus 3:5, Eph. 2:1-10). Righteous, in this context, is the remission of sins; it is not the good things that you have done but rather it is the remission of the wicked things that you have done; it erases one's negatives (sins), making one positive (righteous).

Romans 4:1-8 defines righteousness as the forgiveness of sins; "What then shall we say— as touching Abraham our forefather? For, if Abraham by works was declared righteous, he hath whereof to boast; nevertheless, not towards Yahweh,— For what doth the Scripture say? And Abraham believed in Yahweh, and it was reckoned unto him as righteousness. Now, unto him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned by way of favour but by way of obligation, Whereas, unto him that worketh not but believeth on him that declareth righteous the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. Just as David also affirmeth the happiness of the man unto whom Yahweh reckoneth righteousness apart from works:

*Happy, they whose lawlessness's have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered,
Happy, the man whose sin Yahweh will in nowise reckon" (Ps. 32:1¹⁷; Rm. 4:1-8).*

In the above verses, Paul defines righteousness by faith as the remission of sins rather than living standards set out in the Word of Yahweh. I will now substitute the phrase, 'remission of sins,' for 'righteousness.' "Knowing, however, that a man [*sins have not been remitted*] is not declared righteous by works of law, nor at all save through faith in Christ Yahoshua; even we, on Christ Yahoshua, believed, that we might [*have our sins remitted*] be declared righteous—by faith in Christ, and not by works of law; because, by works of law, shall no flesh [*sins be cleansed*] be declared righteous. Now, if in seeking to be declared [*sinless*] righteous in Christ we, ourselves also, were found sinners,—is Christ, therefore, a minister, of sin? Far be it! For, if, the things that I pulled down, these, again, I build, a transgressor, I prove, myself, to be. For, I, through means of law, unto law, died, that, unto Yahweh, I might live:— With Christ, have I been crucified; and, living no longer, am, I, but, living in me, is, Christ,—while, so far as I now do live in flesh, by faith, I live—The faith in the Son of Yahweh, who loved me, and gave himself up in my behalf. I do not set aside the favour of Yahweh; for, if, through law, is righteousness [*remission of sins*], then, Christ, without cause, died" (Gal. 2:16-21). Yahoshua was the perfect sacrifice for the remission of our sins, which the animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law could not accomplish; "For the law, having in a shadow of the destined good things, not the very image of the things, they can never, with the same sacrifices which year by year they offer evermore, make them who approach, perfect; Else would they not, in that case, have ceased being offered, by reason of those rendering the divine service having no further conscience at all of sins, being once for all purified? But, in them, is a recalling to mind of sins, year by year, For it is impossible for blood of bulls and goats to be taking away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4).

¹⁷ How happy is he whose transgression is forgiven! whose sin is pardoned! How happy the son of earth, to whom Yahweh will not reckon iniquity! and in whose spirit is no guile!

For I delivered unto you, among the first things, what also I received:—how that Christ died for our sins [righteousness], according to the Scriptures, (1Co 15:3)

Because, Christ also, once for all, concerning sins [our righteousness], died,—Just in behalf of unjust,—in order that he might introduce us unto Yahweh... (1Pe 3:18)

And, if Christ hath not been raised, to no purpose, is your faith, yet, are ye in your sins [unrighteous]! (1Co 15:17)

And Peter said unto them—Repent ye, and let each one of you be immersed, in the name of Yahoshua Christ, into the remission of your sins [into the righteousness of Yahweh],—and ye shall receive the free-gift of the holy ruah (spirit); (Ac 2:38)

Being freed from sin equals righteousness even though no righteous conduct has occurred.

Him who knew not sin, in our behalf, he made to be, sin, that we might become Yahweh's righteousness in him. 2Co 5:21

Who, our sins, himself, bare up, in his body, unto the tree, in order that we, from our sins getting away, in righteousness, might live,—by whose stripes, ye have been healed; 1Pe 2:24

And, being freed from sin, ye were made servants unto righteousness; Ro 6:18

For, when ye were servants of sin, ye were free as to righteousness; Ro 6:20

Our performing the works of the law, although is righteous and pleasing to Yahweh, could never undo or free us from the unrighteous deeds we committed. Animal sacrifices, even the Day of Propitiation, could not remove mankind's unrighteous deeds. These deeds made mankind unrighteous, regardless of the righteous deeds they performed. Only the perfect sacrifice, Christ, could cleanse us from this wickedness, making us the righteousness of Yahweh.

In our present age, the instant we made Yahoshua our Master, in word and deed (Ja. 2:14-26), then Christ became our identity, resulting in us receiving holy ruah (spirit), being made the righteousness of Yahweh, being justified, being sanctified, enabling us to receive life age-abiding because we became sinless. This is an event, a moment in time. We are as pure and innocent as a new born baby, without sin, totally equipped by it's parents to achieve success, but we know that the conduct of the baby will determine it's future rewards and not it's birth. It will always remain a child of it's parents, but it's future conduct will determine whether it is pleasing to it's parents; whether it has communion and

fellowship with it's parents; whether it's future position in the family business will be high up or very low; whether the parents will proclaim, "This is our beloved child in whom we are well pleased."

RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT PRODUCES REWARDS

Many people today, including pastors and seminaries, have confused the event of receiving the righteousness of Yahweh by faith in Christ with our daily conduct of obeying the Word of Yahweh, which is walking in righteousness. (Read Appendix A) We have been commanded to be imitators of our Head, who is Christ, we being his Body.¹⁸ Living a righteous life is expected and demanded; "And, every one to whom was given much, much, shall be sought from him... (Lk. 12:48);" "For ye have been bought with a price! Therefore glorify Yahweh in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20); For, the love of the Christ, constraineth us; — Having judged this,—that, one, in behalf of all, died, hence, they all, died; and, in behalf of all, died he,—in order that, they who live, no longer for themselves, should live, but for him who, in their behalf, died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). A few additional verses are listed below:

1 Cor. 15:34 Wake up to sobriety, in righteousness, and be not committing sin; for some have, an ignorance of Yahweh: for shame, unto you, am I speaking!

Eph 4:22 That ye were to strip off—as regardeth the former behaviour—the old man, who corrupteth himself according to his deceitful covetings,

Eph 4:24 And were to put on the man of new mould, who, after Yahweh, hath been created in his truthful righteousness and hewed.

Col 3:9 Be not guilty of falsehood one to another: having stript off the old man, together with his practices,

Rom 12:2 And be not configuring yourselves unto this age, but be transforming yourselves by the renewing of your mind, to the end ye may be proving what is the thing willed by Yahweh—the good and acceptable and perfect.

1Ti 6:11 But, thou, O man of Elohim! from these things, flee! and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness;

1Jo 3:7 Dear children! Let, no one, lead you astray! He that is doing righteousness, is, righteous, just as, He, is righteous:

1Jo 3:10 Herein, are, manifest, the children of Yahweh, and the children of the adversary: Whoever is not doing righteousness, is not of Yahweh, nor yet he that is not loving his brother.

We were cleansed of our sins, being made righteous by Christ's sacrifice, when we made him our Lord but our sins from our daily walk are not cleansed by Christ's sacrifice unless we confess them to Yahweh (1 Jn. 1:9). We are commanded to strip off the Old Man with

¹⁸ 1Co 4:16 I beseech you, therefore,—become imitators of me. 1Co 11:1 Become imitators of me,—even as, I also, am of Christ. Eph 5:1 Become ye, therefore, imitators of Yahweh, as children beloved, Php 3:17 Imitators together of me, become ye, brethren, and keep an eye on them who, thus, are walking,—even as ye have, us, for, an ensample.

it's works of the flesh and put on the New Man, which is created in Righteousness, which is works!

RIGHTEOUS INDIVIDUALS WHO YAHWEH REWARDED

Andrew Wommack stated, concerning righteousness, "A layman's definition of righteousness is simply, "right standing with God." Righteousness is the condition of being in right relationship with the Lord. This can only happen through TOTAL faith and dependence upon Christ. There is no other way, and there is nothing we can add to our faith to obtain right relationship with the Lord...That is to say, we are not made righteous by what we do." (See Appendix A) This appears to be a very common understanding in the Protestant Church, beginning with Martin Luther. The following is a list of people who were rewarded by Yahweh for their faith and their righteous conduct:

Eze 14:14 Then, should these three men be in the midst thereof, Noah, Daniel, and Job, They, by their righteousness, should deliver their own lives—Declareth My Lord, Yahweh.

Lk. 4:25-27 And, of a truth, I say unto you—Many widows, were in the days of Elijah, in Israel, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine upon all the land; And, unto none of them, was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta of Sidonia, unto a woman that was a widow. And, many lepers, were in Israel, in the time of Elisha the prophet, and, not one of them, was cleansed, save Naaman the Syrian.

Lk. 1:5-7 It came to pass, in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, that there was a certain priest, by name Zachariah, of the daily course of Abia; and that he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and, her name, was Elizabeth. Now they were both righteous before Yahweh, walking in all the commandments and righteous appointments of the Lord, blameless; and they had no child, inasmuch as Elizabeth was barren, and, both, had become, advanced in their days.

Mt 1:19 Moreover, Joseph her (Mary's) husband, being, righteous...

Lu 23:50 And lo! a man, by name Joseph [of Arimathaea], being, a councillor,—a good and righteous man

Lk. 2:25 And lo! there was, a man, in Jerusalem, whose name, was Symeon; and, this man, was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and holy ruah (spirit) was upon him;

Lk. 2:36-37 And there was one Hanna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; -the same, advanced in many days; having lived with a husband seven years

from her virginity, and, she, had been a widow for as long as eighty-four years,—who left not the temple, with fastings and supplications, rendering divine service night and day;

Acts 10:1-2 But, a certain man in Caesarea, by name Cornelius, a centurion of the band called Italian,— Devout, and fearing Yahweh with all his house, doing many alms unto the people, and supplicating Yahweh continually,

Mt 13:17 For, verily, I say unto you—Many prophets and righteous men, have coveted to see what ye see, and have not seen, and to hear what ye hear, and have not heard.

Mt 23:35 That there may come upon you—all righteous blood poured out upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous, unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye murdered between the Temple and the altar.

2Pe 2:7 And, righteous Lot, when getting worn out by the behaviour of them who were impious in wantonness, he rescued

Yahweh has always rewarded those who have faith and walk in righteousness. Today is no different. Giving and receiving, sowing and reaping, are foundational truths that are manifested throughout Yahweh's creation. To believe that all those who have received the righteousness of Yahweh, receive the same blessings from Yahweh regardless of whether their conduct is righteousness or wicked is deception. What is popularly said today is, "There is nothing you can do to make God love you less," is basically the same deception. As action verbs, love and giving, go hand in hand. To say, 'There is nothing you can do to make God give you less,' is deception. Would Yahweh give his blessings to a child of his that is an murderer, adulterer, robber etc.?

REWARDS

People today, it appears, believe in a socialist Heaven, where all will have the same position, standing and wealth before Christ. There will be no favorites with Christ, because "It's not by works of righteousness but by his grace alone." To these people, sowing does not equal reaping, it's all grace. This mental attitude is contrary to the ways of Yahweh and sabotages the will of Yahweh. Yahweh has always encouraged and rewarded the righteous, in this life by promising them rewards in the coming New Earth. Just read Hebrews chapter eleven. Abraham and Sarah, on the New Earth, will receive, in full, Yahweh's promise that he will inherit the land.¹⁹ Yahoshua "...in consideration of the joy lying before him, endured a cross, shame, despising! And, on the right hand of the throne of Yahweh,

¹⁹ Ex 32:13 Have remembrance of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thyself, and didst speak unto them saying, I will multiply your seed, as the stars of the heavens,—and, all this land of which I have spoken, will I give to your seed, and they shall inherit it to times age-abiding.

hath taken his seat" (Heb. 12:2). "Yahoshua said—Verily, I say unto you—There is, no one, who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for the sake of me, and the glad-message, who shall not receive a hundredfold, now, in this season, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands,—with persecutions, and, in the age that is coming, life age-abiding. But, many, shall be—first-last, and Last-first" (Mk. 10:29-31). A list of verses on this topic are below:

...And, he that formeth thy soul, himself, know? and bring back to a son of earth according to his deed? (Prov. 24:12)

Great in counsel, and mighty in deed,—Whose eyes are open on all the ways of the sons of men, to give unto every one, According to his ways, and, According to the fruit of his doings: (Jer. 32:9)

And can ye then say, The way of The Lord will not be equal? Every man—according to his own ways, so will I judge you, O house of Israel? (Ez. 33:20)

And, thine, O My Lord, is hewed,—For, thou, wilt pay back unto every man—according to his deed. (Ps. 62:12)

Who will render unto each one according to his works: (Rm. 2:6)

... For, all of us, shall present ourselves unto the judgment seat of Yahweh; (Rm. 14:10)

Each one's work, shall be made, manifest; for, the day, will make it plain, because, by fire, is it to be revealed,—and, each one's work, of what sort it is, the fire itself will prove:— If, anyone's work, shall abide, which he built, a reward, shall he receive (1 Cor. 3:13-14)

Be not deceiving yourselves! Yahweh, is not to be mocked; for, whatsoever a man soweth, the same, shall he also reap, (Gal. 6:7)

Knowing that, each one, whatsoever he may do that is good, the same, shall he receive back from the Lord, whether bond or free. (Eph. 6:8)

For, he that acteth unrighteously, shall get back what he had unrighteously done, and there is no respect of persons; (Col. 3:25)

Yahweh is a rewarder to them who seek him out.²⁰ We, as saints, who have received the righteousness of Yahweh will be rewarded according to our daily righteous conduct, in this life and in our incorruptible life on the coming New Earth.

CONCLUSION

Righteousness is the fulfillment of Yahweh's will in an action which is pleasing to Him! Faith is a requirement to be well pleasing unto Yahweh.²¹ In the end, all who will receive life age-abiding, will bow to Yahoshua, our Mediator, making him their Lord because he is the only way to the Father. His sacrifice made available the remission of sins of those who will make him their Lord, which is equivalent to being made Righteous. What can I say but, "Lo! days are coming, Declareth Yahweh, when I will raise up to David, A righteous Bud, And he shall reign as, king, and prosper, And shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days, Shall Judah, be saved, And, Israel, abide securely,—And, this, is his name whereby he shall be called, Yahweh, our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:5-6). Today, those who have access to the Word of Yahweh, must make Yahoshua their Lord, which is equivalent to loving Yahweh²² (which is performing his commandments),²³ by which they receive the righteousness of Yahweh by faith in Christ. They, by receiving this free gift of righteousness, are going to receive life age-abiding upon the New Earth. What position and rewards they receive on this Earth and on the New Earth will be determined by their faith and righteous conduct after they received the righteousness of Yahweh. Those who have never had access to the words of Yahweh will receive life age-abiding by performing righteous conduct, according to Yahweh's will, through faith. Upon their resurrection they will make Yahoshua their Lord, Savior and King, enabling them to live on the New Earth under his reign. Those who had access to the words of Yahweh, before our age, will be responsible to perform the righteous conduct that had been given to them. These also, will make Yahoshua their Lord upon their resurrection.

Yahweh's love for us, issued forth into his Only-Begotten Son, who accepted his Father's will to be the Redeemer of mankind. As to an hierarchy and New Earth, "...Yahweh, hath said unto me, My Son, thou art, I, today, have begotten thee: Ask of me, and let me give nations as thine inheritance, and, as thy possession, the ends of The Earth..." (Ps. 2:7-9). Our conduct is to "...love our enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for, nothing, back; and our Reward shall be, great, and we shall be Sons of the Most High" (Lk. 6:35).

²⁰ "But, apart from faith, it is impossible to be well-pleasing; for he that approacheth unto Yahweh—must needs have faith, that he is, and that, to them who seek him out, a rewarder he becometh" (Heb. 11:6).

²¹ "But, apart from faith, it is impossible to be well-pleasing; for he that approacheth unto Yahweh—must needs have faith, that he is, and that, to them who seek him out, a rewarder he becometh" (Heb. 11:6); "... But, he that is righteous, by faith, shall live" (Rm. 1:17).

²² Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he, it is that loveth me; and, he that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and, I, will love him, and will manifest, myself, unto him.

²³ 1Jo 5:2 Hereby, perceive we, that we love the children of God, as soon as, God, we love, and, his commandments, we are doing.

Appendix A

Whose Righteousness?

(By Andrew Wommack)

(http://www.awmi.net/reading/teaching-articles/whose_righteousness/)

The word “righteousness” has become a religious cliché that has lost its meaning to many people. Even Christians are confused about what righteousness is and how to receive it. This has left our society without a clear understanding of what it takes to have a relationship with God. This is reflected in our nation’s moral collapse. It’s imperative that we get back to the basics of righteousness.

“Righteousness” and its counterpart, “righteous,” appear 540 times in 520 verses of the Bible. In contrast, “faith,” “faithfulness,” and “faithful” are only used 348 times in 328 verses. This means that there are 1.5 times as many scriptures about righteousness as there are about faith. Righteousness is important.

A layman’s definition of righteousness is simply, “right standing with God.” Righteousness is the condition of being in right relationship with the Lord. This can only happen through TOTAL faith and dependence upon Christ. **There is no other way, and there is nothing we can add to our faith to obtain right relationship with the Lord** (Rom. 11:6).

One of the things that blinds people to a true understanding of righteousness is confusion about how we become right in the sight of God. It is commonly thought that our actions are the determining factor in God’s judgment of our righteousness. That’s not true. There is a relationship between our actions and our right standing with God, but right relationship with God produces actions, not the other way around. **That is to say, we are not made righteous by what we do.**

Righteousness is a gift that comes from the Lord to those who accept what Jesus has done for them by faith (Rom. 5:17-18). The gift of salvation produces a changed heart that, in turn, changes our actions. **Actions cannot change our hearts.** It’s the heart of man that God looks upon (1 Sam. 16:7), and we must be righteous in our hearts to truly worship God (John 4:24).

The mistake of thinking that doing right makes us right is the same error the Pharisees made. Religion has always preached that if we clean up our actions, our hearts will become clean too. Jesus taught just the opposite (Matt. 23:25-26). It’s through a changed heart that our actions change. The heart is the issue. Actions are only an indication of what is in our hearts. Actions are the fruit the heart produces.

Modern-day Christianity often puts the emphasis on actions instead of issues of the heart. This is reflected in Christians’ excessive efforts to legislate change in people’s actions instead of changing their hearts by the preaching of the Gospel. It’s the Gospel that contains the power of God, not political action groups (Rom. 1:16). Laws only affect actions. The Gospel changes hearts. Once hearts are changed, actions change.

Contrary to popular belief, Christianity does not promote receiving justice from the Lord. Praise God for that! The Lord has a much better plan. We get what we believe.

I once developed pictures in a photography studio for a living. People would come into the studio to look at their proofs and say things like, “This picture doesn’t do me justice.” I never had the nerve to say this, but I often thought, Lady, you don’t need justice, you need mercy.

That's the way it is with God. We sometimes call for justice but that's not what we need. As the Scriptures say, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6). Again, in Romans 3:23 the Scriptures say, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). The wonderful plan of salvation is that those who put their faith in Jesus and what He did for us get what He deserves. On the other hand, those who do not put their total faith in Christ will ultimately get what they deserve. Believe me, that is not what they want. Religion has subtly instructed people to trust in their own goodness instead of God's. This will never work. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The Biblical story of the handwriting on the wall illustrates this point (Dan. 5:1-31). Belshazzar was the king of Babylon. His father, Nebuchadnezzar, had conquered the nation of Israel and brought all the wealth of the temple, along with most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, back to Babylon. During an extravagant feast, with 1,000 of his lords in attendance, Belshazzar chose to toast his gods using the golden vessels from the temple in Jerusalem, which was in open defiance of the God of Israel.

The Lord moved swiftly and dramatically by creating an image of a man's hand, with fingers that wrote on the wall in front of Belshazzar and all his guests. Belshazzar called on all his magicians and wise men to decipher the writing, but none could. Then the queen reminded Belshazzar about Daniel who had interpreted the dreams and visions of Nebuchadnezzar when no one else could. Daniel was summoned and the writing explained.

The message from God revealed that Belshazzar had been weighed in the balances and was found wanting. Therefore, his kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians. This came to pass that very night. Belshazzar was overthrown, and Darius, the Mede (Persian), took control.

If we were weighed in the balances against God's righteousness as Belshazzar was, we too would come up short. God's righteousness is always more in quantity and quality than ours will ever be. Our righteousness is as filthy rags compared to God's righteousness (Is. 64:6).

Someone might say, "That's not fair. No one can compete with God's righteousness." That's exactly right! However, God's righteousness is the standard by which everyone must be measured. So then, how can anyone be saved? The answer is that no one can be saved, if they are trusting in their own righteousness. We all must have a righteousness that exceeds anything we could ever produce through our own effort. That's where Jesus enters.

Jesus was in right relationship with God as no one else can be. He is the Son of God. He is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). He is holy and pure and without sin, yet He became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), through no wrongdoing on His part. He took our sin in His own body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:4-5).

In return for Jesus taking our sin, those who put their faith in Him get His righteousness instead of their own. **It's not our actions that make us acceptable to the Father.** It's our trust in Jesus that imparts the righteousness of Jesus into our born-again spirits that makes us in right standing with God.

Those who don't understand this righteousness, which comes from God as a gift, become frustrated trying to establish their own righteousness through good works (Rom. 10:3). It won't work. It's an all or nothing

situation (Rom. 11:6). We must trust completely in what Jesus did for us to obtain right relationship with God. Any trust in our own goodness will void the atonement Christ made for us (Gal. 5:4).

This is precisely the condition of millions of people in the body of Christ today. They receive salvation by putting total faith in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, but then they return to believing that the Lord still relates to them on the basis of their works, even after their salvation. That's not true.

Colossians 2:6 says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." That means if you were saved by putting faith in God's grace alone, then you maintain that relationship in the same way. Some people sing "Just As I Am Without One Plea" when they are born again. They need to sing this song all the way through their Christian lives.

Failure to understand this truth is at the root of all guilt and condemnation. Satan's only inroad into our lives is sin. If we understand our right standing with God on the basis of what Jesus did for us, and not by our own actions, then Satan's power to condemn is gone. Those who live with a feeling of unworthiness are not trusting in God's righteousness but are looking to their own actions to obtain right standing with God. That will never work.